

The Political and the Private

Political and Private Violence in Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation*
and *The Little Red Chairs*

Samira Fetahaj
4081560
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Utrecht University
Supervisor: prof. dr. Ann Rigney
Second reader: dr. Roselinde Supheert
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Introduction

Among critics (Greenwood, Hatheway, Ingman, Morgan), the work of the Irish author Edna O'Brien is known for the exploring of “problematic issues of female identity in a highly patriarchal society (...) explicitly from a woman’s point of view” and for “focusing on women’s bodies, women’s sexuality and women’s emotional dilemmas” (Lindahl-Raittila, 74). The role of women, the role of their bodies and violence against women, especially in a patriarchal society, are recurring themes throughout O'Brien’s oeuvre. Next to her reception as a feminist writer, O'Brien is also considered a political writer, “who seeks to challenge the gendered nationalism of her native country” (Lindahl-Raittila, 75). O'Brien’s novels deal with nationalism and national identity. All of the themes above are described primarily within the specific context of Ireland: Irish nationalism, identity and culture (Lindahl-Raittila).

In exploring these themes, O'Brien touches upon issues like abortion, female sexuality, rape and the role of religion – sensitive issues that were condemned and oppressed by the state policy dominated by the Catholic Church (Murphy-Lawless, 53) and therefore controversial in Irish culture in the 1960s and 1970s, when O'Brien’s first novels were published. Her first books in the trilogy *The Country Girls* (1960), *The Lonely Girl* (1962) and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964) were banned on grounds of obscenity by the Irish Censorship Board, burned, and denounced from pulpits. O'Brien left Ireland behind in the 1960’s and to date, lives in England to continue writing¹, which has resulted in an extensive oeuvre consisting of eighteen novels, nine short story collections, four works of non-fiction and various poems and plays.

At the beginning of her career, critics mainly considered O'Brien’s novels as autobiographies or works of romance. As a result, the political and cultural aspect of her texts were consistently overlooked (Ingman, 253). In the 1990s, O'Brien published another trilogy

¹ If she had stayed in Ireland, O'Brien reckons she “wouldn’t have been as free” as a writer (Freyne).

consisting of *House of Splendid Isolation* (1995), *Down by the River* (1996) and *Wild Decembers* (1999). As Ingman emphasizes, this trilogy “clearly demonstrated a willingness to engage with politics and issues of national identity” and caused a shift in O’Brien’s writing career as well as her critical reception: critics began to focus on the political nature of her work as well (Ingman, 253).

The main themes in O’Brien’s work have often been explored by critics. They have analysed how O’Brien’s novels revolve around women (Hatheway, Morgan), Irish culture and identity (Harris, Harte, Lindahl-Raittila) and politics (Ingman). In these works, the connection between two of these themes in O’Brien’s work is analysed. However, there is no extensive research on how all three of these themes are connected.

In this essay, I aim to explore the connection between the role of women, Irish identity and culture, and politics and nationalism in O’Brien’s work, by focusing on the representation of violence. In doing so, I will compare two of her novels: *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs*, to demonstrate how political, public violence and domestic violence against women relate to each other in O’Brien’s recent fiction.

O’Brien’s novel *House of Splendid Isolation* was published in 1994. The novel, set in the Republic of Ireland, describes the unusual relationship between the widow Josie and the IRA terrorist McGreevy. McGreevy unexpectedly enters Josie’s house to hide, and keeps Josie hostage in doing so. In their isolated circumstances, Josie and McGreevy are dependent on each other, which results into a complicated relationship of intimacy, respect, fear and disgust. Violence is a central theme in the novel. *House of Splendid Isolation* deals with different kinds of (heavy) violence, not only within the context of a war, but also within the domestic arena. On the one hand, McGreevy’s and other IRA fighters’ violent experiences in the bloody events of the Irish conflict are described. On the other hand, Josie is the victim of an abusive marriage, hostage, suppression and physical mistreatment.

O'Brien's most recent novel, *The Little Red Chairs*, published in 2015, deals with themes similar to *House of Splendid Isolation*, as both novels describe the relationship between a woman and a war criminal.² In this novel, an exotic man with a Balkan background enters a small, isolated Irish town called Cloonoila. This holistic healer and poet, Dr. Vlad, intrigues the small community. One of the inhabitants, Fidelma, falls under his spell and starts a secret affair with him. When he is revealed to be one of the most wanted Balkan war criminals, Fidelma is desperate to flee him. Again, violence plays a significant role. The heavy violence of the Yugoslav war is reflected on, but Fidelma is subject to violence as well: both her husband and her lover abuse her. Furthermore, Fidelma meets a lot of female refugees after she flees, who have all experienced domestic and sexual violence as well. Thus, *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs* both represent violence in the political sphere (the war), as well as the private sphere (Josie and Fidelma's lives).

In 1970 Carol Hanisch, member of the Women's Liberation Movement, published an essay that stated that "the personal is the political" (113). In this essay, Hanisch argues that the personal life of women is strongly connected to social and political structures. Political life influences the personal sphere and vice versa. Ever since, the entanglements between public and private sphere have been a key element in feminist theory, with various interpretations of Hanisch' slogan (Elshtain, Gavison, Landes).

The interaction between the political sphere and the private sphere can be connected to the representation of violence in O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs*. By relating the private sphere of the female protagonists Josie and Fidelma to the political sphere of war, and by portraying violence in both spheres, O'Brien is able to connect both spheres and demonstrate how they relate to each other.

² By war criminals, I refer to individuals who committed war crimes as defined by the Geneva Convention ("Rule 156. Definition of War Crimes").

In this essay, I will compare the two novels in order to analyse the representation of the relationship between political violence and violence in the private sphere – sexual and domestic violence – in O’Brien’s work. In doing so, I aim to answer the following question: how is the portrayal of political violence used to comment on private violence and vice versa? In answering this question, I will indicate how O’Brien uses political violence in *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs* to show how nationalism (in this case ethnic nationalism³) and the male-dominated public sphere are connected, and consequently, how political violence leads to violence in the personal sphere, especially aimed towards women. Furthermore, I will argue that O’Brien portrays different cultures and wars to show that the relationship between political and private violence is not an issue limited to Irish nationalism and the Irish conflict, as is the case in *House of Splendid Isolation*, but an issue that occurs in different cultures and wars, as *The Little Red Chairs* demonstrates. Thus, the issue addressed in these novels has a global character. At the same time, O’Brien illustrates how the domestic sphere affects the public realm as well, by aiming to understand and reduce public violence.

First of all, I will introduce (feminist) theory about the definition of and the relationship between the public/political sphere and the private sphere, using the works of Elshtain, Gavison and Landes as the basis of my research. Second of all, I will explore and compare the representation of violence in the political sphere and private sphere in *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs*. To prove how the connection between political and private violence is a transnational issue, regardless of culture, I will use theory and discussions on multidirectionality by Rothberg to compare the representation of the Irish conflict and Yugoslav war in O’Brien’s novels.

³ *House of Splendid Isolation* describes nationalism related to the Irish conflict, which is based on “ethnic identity associated with being part of a Protestant or a Catholic community” (Miller, 32). *The Little Red Chairs* describes nationalism related to the Yugoslav war, which is a conflict between Balkan ethnic communities and ethnically motivated (Miller, 109).

Chapter 1 – The Personal is Political

Even though Carol Hanisch denies the invention of the phrase ‘the personal is political’, her similarly titled essay popularized the slogan and is considered a key work in a wide range of interpretations of the entanglements between the personal and the political (“The Women’s Liberation Movement Classic with a New Explanatory Introduction”). The phrase became the slogan of second-wave feminism in the 1960s (Landes, 165). The essay stimulated discussion about the relationship between the private sphere and the political sphere in feminist theory, as well as about the position of the woman within the interaction between the private and the public. Before elaborating on the interpretations relevant to my research, it is useful to dissect the statement in order to get a full understanding of it.

‘The personal is the political’ refers to the distinction between the personal, private sphere and the political, public sphere. In her article “Feminism and the Public/Private Distinction”, Ruth Gavison aims to define ‘political’ and ‘private’. The political and the private can be considered realms of life. In such an understanding, the political ideally represents “the welfare of all”, as opposed to the private, which ideally “promote[s] private interests” (5). Based on Hannah Arendt’s theory of the realms in *The Human Condition*, the political is the public, the observed, the controlled, the collective, the governed. In contrast, the private is the personal, the unobserved, the freedom, the individual and the domestic (Gavison, 6).

While the personal and the political are, as Gavison indicates, initially separated, or even opposites, they are dependent on each other. After all, “nothing is self-regarding or free in the sense of the autonomous, unconstricted, or unaffected by cultures and social norms” (Gavison, 19). Decisions, ideas, events, arrangements and law in the public realm are bound to influence the private sphere, and vice versa. Personal ideas, beliefs and acts can affect the

public realm: voting, for example, brings these ideas and beliefs to the political sphere and can affect laws and political measures.

Feminist theory acknowledges the interaction between the private and the public sphere, but undermines the strict distinction between the two realms. As the slogan ‘the personal is the political’ indicates, feminist theory suggests that the private and the public should not be defined as realms that entirely exclude each other, and has been stressing the blurring of boundaries ever since the publication of Hanisch’s essay (Landes, 165). In her work *Public Man, Private Woman* Elsthain argues that there cannot be a strictly political realm if it so deeply intertwined with the personal: “Minimally, a *political* perspective requires that some activity called ‘politics’ be differentiated from other activities, relationships, and patterns of action. If all conceptual boundaries are blurred and distinctions between public and private are eliminated, no politics can exist by definition.” (201). Rather, politics is strongly connected to personal activities and decisions. Blurring the boundaries, she argues, can illuminate the personal nature and influence of political decisions, but also the political foundation of personal issues (202). There cannot be a strictly personal realm either, because personal decisions are dependent on the “constraints and (...) availability of legitimate options” (Gavison, 19).

Consequently, feminists argue, political problems are personal and, more importantly, the other way around: personal problems are deeply political. A political problem that is personal arises when individual problems become a collective problem. A personal problem, like a contagious illness, can lead to an epidemic that demands intervention of the government, for example. Thus, a private problem becomes a matter of the political sphere and needs to be resolved by the political sphere, even though the domestic sphere ‘caused’ the problem.

Vice versa, personal problems can be politically caused. In this case, the problem of an individual is the result of social structures. If, for example, a woman is pregnant against her will but lives in a place where abortions are illegal, her continued pregnancy is a personal issue indirectly ‘caused’ by the political sphere. Because private problems are labelled ‘personal’, they “stop conversations, critique or accountability” in the public realm and, consequently, are not acknowledged as symptoms of a social problem (Gavison, 20). As a result, the resolution or prevention of private problems caused by the political, is not provided by the public realm – rather, individuals have to resolve the problems themselves. In her essay, Hanisch emphasizes the role of the political sphere in this issue: “Personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action and collective solution” (114). Seemingly individual problems are “the reflection of undesirable social structures”: a problem (indirectly) caused by the public realm, but not resolved by the public realm precisely because the problem occurs within the private sphere. As a result, dominant persons or groups are usually stimulated while minorities are disadvantaged (Fraser, 64). It is a vicious circle.

With regard to violence, which my research will focus on, Fraser, Gavison and Weintraub use the example of domestic abuse to demonstrate in what way particular (female) private problems can be caused, but not resolved by the political sphere. Domestic violence is, by definition, considered as belonging to the private sphere. However, domestic violence can (partly) be considered a result of social structures, for example a patriarchal society (Gavison, 20). Thus, it is a social problem rather than an individual problem. In the public realm, however, domestic violence is considered a private issue. As a result, the abuse is shielded from “political scrutiny or legal redress” (Weintraub, 29). By not acknowledging domestic violence as a political problem and resolving it in specialized institutions⁴ instead of

⁴ For example institutions associated with family law, social work, and the “sociology and psychology of ‘deviance’” (Fraser, 73).

preventing it, the public realm “serves to reproduce gender dominance and subordination” (Fraser, 73). And so, domestic violence (in a patriarchal society) will continue. If the personal is political, it is a self-reinforcing process.

Such a construction can only be broken down if the personal problems are acknowledged by the political sphere:

To effectively recognize that the structures are partly responsible for these ‘personal’ problems, society must first identify the symptoms as part of a social problem. We should then seek to make the underlying problem visible (instead of encouraging the secrecy and shame which are too often the accepted approaches to personal inadequacies) and to mobilize individuals to regard the situation as political, enlisting the forces of political and social reform for change. (Gavison, 20)

The fact that political structures cause personal problems is strongly connected to the feminist theory that the public and private realms are “symbolic structures of gender”: traditionally, the political is identified as male, the private as female (Landes, 168). Men are associated with labour, politics and economics, women with family life, the household and manual housework (Landes, 169 and 172). This puts women, who belong to the private realm, in an inferior position to men, as Sherry Ortner explains in her article “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?”:

It is hardly contestable that the domestic is always subsumed by the public; domestic units are allied with one another through the enactment of rules that are logically at a higher level than the units themselves; this creates an emergent unit – society – that is logically at a higher level than the domestic units of which it is composed.

Now, since women are associated with, and indeed are more or less confined to, the domestic context, they are identified with this lower order of social/cultural organization.

(33)

Even though in contemporary society, men are increasingly part of the domestic sphere and women are not exclusively confined to the domestic sphere anymore, this traditional distinction between the spheres is useful to understand how the relationship between the public and private sphere is often used in feminist theory to explain “women’s powerlessness” (Landes, 165) and understanding the oppression of women (Weintraub, 29).

Not only does the public affect the personal according to feminist theory, it works the other way around as well. With regard to violence in political and private sphere, radical feminists propose that the political and the private are dependent on each other because of said male/female distinction: the male political needs the female private in order to achieve a morally balanced, improved political sphere. Elshtain describes how radical feminists are convinced that “the male element is a destructive force, stern, selfish, aggrandizing, loving war, violence, conquest, acquisition, breeding in the material and moral world alike discord, disorder, disease and death. The need is (...) womanhood, to exalt purity, virtue, morality, true religion, to lift man up into the higher realms of thought and action” (232). Even though Elshtain rejects these radical and traditional dichotomies (205), she argues that blurring the lines between the public realm and the private realm can reduce or temper violence and immorality in both spheres. In the context of a war, for example, (primarily) men are located in the public realm when they fight. The fights are ‘immoral’: destructive, violent and fatal. According to the theory, if the pacifying women interfered more with the political sphere, the men would be influenced by their ‘morality’ and rationality, reducing their practice of violence.

Thus, in contrast to women's "powerlessness" to escape their inferior position in the domestic sphere compared to the political sphere, feminist theory understands women as powerful within their domestic sphere. By using this power of rationality and morality, social chaos can be prevented – an example of how the private can influence the public from a feminist perspective (232).

The distinction between the private sphere as female and the public sphere as male plays an important role in portraying violence in Edna O'Brien's novels, as I will argue in the following chapters.

In short, the personal is political because private issues are deeply political, and vice versa. To change or even resolve the personal issues, such as domestic violence, the discourse in the public realm should acknowledge private problems as political. On the other hand, the private sphere can use personal beliefs and ideas as a means to affect or change political issues, such as a war or political conflict. Texts, such as the novels *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs* by Edna O'Brien, can contribute to changing the discourse by describing the relationship between political and private problems in a concrete, understandable or even relatable way. This way, writers like O'Brien can raise awareness of the political nature of private issues and vice versa.

Taking the interpretations on violence in the private and political sphere into account, I will argue in the following chapters that in her novels *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs*, Edna O'Brien undermines the strict distinction between the private and the political, while she maintains the female/male distinction between the spheres. In doing so, she aims to demonstrate and comment on how personal problems are political and vice versa, by portraying violence in the public realm and the private sphere.

Chapter 2 – The Political, the Personal and Violence in *House of Splendid Isolation*

In her analysis of Edna O'Brien's critical reception, Iris Landahl-Raittila writes about *House of Splendid Isolation* that "the most obvious issues dealt with in the novel are of a more acutely political kind, usually seen by critics as lying outside O'Brien's range of subjects" (77). Throughout her writing career, O'Brien has mainly been regarded by critics as a writer of female romance (Hatheway), a feminist writer (Morgan), an autobiographical writer (Peggy O'Brien), or an author who portrays Irish society and culture (Harris, Ingman). Even though recent academic research (Harris, Ingman, Landahl-Raittila) defines O'Brien as a political writer, critics consistently failed to do so before. This is mainly due to the controversy surrounding her work, and the censorship and bans by the Irish Censorship Board (Landahl-Raittila, 74).

Indeed, her earlier works, such as *The Country Girls* trilogy (1960 – 1964), *August Is a Wicked Month* (1965) and *A Pagan Place* (1970), focus on the personal lives of female characters in the rural communities of Ireland, from childhood to adulthood. The novels explore themes like family life, friendship, (sexual) relationships and love, and youth. Thus, O'Brien's early works mainly focus on the private sphere.

Nonetheless, O'Brien's novels touch upon political issues, especially her later works. As I have indicated in my introduction, the 1990 Trilogy forms a turning point in the themes of O'Brien's works. *Down by the River*, published in 1997, deals with the controversial topic of (the illegality) abortion in Ireland. *Wild Decembers*, published in 1999, discusses the politics of landownership. *In the Forest* (2002) sheds a light on the harsh life in borstals and ecclesiastical institutions. Even though the main characters in O'Brien's novels are always female and the novels are written from a personal perspective in both early and later works, the themes in her oeuvre have evidently developed from a personal focus to a more collective,

political focus. Thus, in her later works, the political context of the women's lives is more thoroughly examined, and both the political and the private sphere are involved. Two of her works explore war as a political issue, and oppose war in the political sphere to the personal lives of women: *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs*.

Arguably one of O'Brien's most political novels is *House of Splendid Isolation*, published in 1994, as it explores the Irish conflicts in the 1920s and the 1960s with an intimate setting as starting point. The novel describes the unusual relationship between Josie and McGreevy. Josie O'Meara is an old, widowed lady who returned to her house in the countryside of the Republic of Ireland after spending some time in a nursing home, to spend her last days there. McGreevy is a Northern-born IRA fighter, who has come to the Republic on a mission and uses Josie's house to hide. In their isolated situation, an unusual relationship develops.

Even though Josie is the main protagonist and the novel is primarily written from her perspective, O'Brien frequently switches between narrators: McGreevy, the police looking for McGreevy and an all-known narrator are also speaking, which allows the reader to regard the situation from different points of views and beliefs. As my research will point out, this is helpful in analysing the nature, motivations and experience of violence in the novel.

The novel is evidently divided into two spheres: the Irish conflict in which McGreevy participates as the political sphere, and the isolated house, where Josie resides, as the private sphere. In this chapter, I will explore the relationship between the political sphere and the private sphere in *House of Splendid Isolation* by focusing on violence, to examine how the representation of violence in the political sphere is used to comment on violence in the private sphere and vice versa. I base my analyses of violence on the definition used by the World

Health Organization, which includes physical abuse, psychological harm and self-abusive acts (“World Report on Violence and Health”, 5).⁵

2.1 The Political Sphere

*House of Splendid Isolation*⁶ is set in the 1960s, in the Republic of Ireland. At this time, the Republic had been independent from Northern Ireland for forty years.⁷ The separation was a result of different perspectives of the Protestant, Unionist North and the Catholic, Nationalist South on the British control (Cairns, 755). The Troubles (1967 – 1998) was a struggle between, on the one hand, those in favour of Northern Ireland as part of the UK, and on the other hand those who desire a reunification of Northern and Southern Ireland. The political conflict was ferocious and bloody one, with about thirty years of uninterrupted violence. This resulted in over 3000 deaths and 30 000 injured (Cairns, 756). The IRA, a paramilitary organisation, was partly responsible for this violence. Originally fighting against the British occupation in the Irish War of Independence, the IRA split after the Republic became independent in 1921. The majority of the IRA compatriots continued fighting for a unified Ireland, but went largely underground between 1923 and the 1960s. Against the background of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement and the militarisation by the IRA that followed, the IRA assumed a leading role and started a campaign to free Northern Ireland of any British presence. This history of conflict forms the context for the political sphere in *HoSI*, as well as the ongoing fights in the 1960s against British influence, when the Troubles

⁵ “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”

⁶ From here on, I will refer to *House of Splendid Isolation* using the abbreviation *HoSI*.

⁷ The Anglo-Irish Treaty, which concluded the Irish War of Independence, was signed in 1921. Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland separated. Officially, Southern Ireland became a republic in 1948, when the Republic of Ireland Act 1948 was signed.

took off and political violence transformed from “specifically targeted assassinations” to “plainly random sectarian killings” (Cairns, 757).

As an IRA-fighter, the character Mo Chara Sláin Go Fóill, known as Mac or McGreevy, actively takes part in this conflict in *HoSI*. Originally from Northern Ireland, he already has a very violent past and a prison punishment behind him when he flees to the Republic of Ireland in the 1960s to carry out a secret mission. Even though McGreevy himself never admits to any crimes, except that he has killed (111), he is known for different offences throughout the Republic. Josie is aware of the ruthless crimes he committed before she met him:

Wanted on all sides, his own side and the other side. A bit of a soloist in his deeds. Would stop at nothing. In gaol had a scheme to have two hundred pounds of explosives brought in, in a digger. Was prepared to have the whole place blown up, staff wardens, et al., was only foiled because the plan which he had the gall to put inside a crucifix he carved, was discovered. She hears too of his journey, his journey from North to South, and thence to her, how for part of it he held a girl, in a fast food van, at gunpoint, made her drive him fifty miles, then putting tape over her mouth and leaving her in the middle of nowhere handcuffed, with four flat tyres, had the gall to tell her it wasn't personal. (106)

Next to the kidnapping and his willingness to destroy an entire building full of people, McGreevy has “twenty murders if not more to his name” and carried out bombings back in Northern Ireland (106). He is also known for breaking into a house, and removing the fingers of the man who lived there, with chisel and hammer (106). Because of these atrocities, McGreevy is already known as “The Beast” who has “violent outbursts even in unthreatening situations” by the time he enters the Republic (155). His deeply corrupted, dangerous character is reflected upon by the local people in an unnamed town in the province of

Munster, where Josie lives, who come across McGreevy in person but mainly know him from the news and national television (11). They denounce McGreevy as a “terrorist” (12), a “murderer” (16), a “criminal” (61), a “maniac” (69), an “animal” (76), the “most vile and violent psychopath” (99), an “out and out savage”, a “pervert to the boot” (151) and a “sicko” (225). At the same time, they shelter him from the police – when he enters several household to ask for food, the residents do as he asks, without informing the police during his visit or after out of fear to get arrested themselves (16, 20).

Next to his ferocious past, McGreevy admits to Josie that he intends to kill more in the future (111). Eventually, he leaves Josie’s house to steal a priest’s car and carry out his mission, the assassination of a retired English judge, accompanied by two compatriots. McGreevy’s killing is ruthless: when admitting that he has killed and will continue killing, “there [is] no tremor in his voice, no inconclusiveness, (...) like shooting a wall” (97). Even though the IRA comrades consider themselves liberation fighters, McGreevy’s numb attitude towards murdering and his maniac reputation and actions undermine his credibility as a liberation fighter in the eyes of the police of the Republic, and the inhabitants as well. Rather, he acts as a war criminal, by wilfully killing people, torturing them and treating them inhumane, and by taking people hostage (ICRC).

His violent acts are, in essence, aimed at Great Britain and the British Army. As an IRA fighter, McGreevy strives for a Northern Ireland independent from Great Britain.⁸ In practice, however, McGreevy also acts abusively towards non-British people and institutions, for example his fellow inmates in prison and the girl he kidnapped. These acts merely help him continue his fight and are therefore a means that serves the purpose. In addition, McGreevy appears to be prepared to act violently against inhabitants of the Republic of Ireland as well. Even though they are Irish, they are considered traitors in McGreevy’s eyes.

⁸ McGreevy has a tattoo of the Tricolour on his wrist (*HoSI*, 74), a symbol of a united Ireland and, by extension, a division between Northern Ireland and Britain.

He remarks that the republicans abandoned and forgot Northern Ireland, “let them rot” by becoming independent, disrupting a unified Ireland (68). He states that “now there are two wars... one with the English and one with ourselves” (99). Presumed violence against inhabitants of the Republic is apparent in the fact that the locals are scared of McGreevy, convinced that he will murder them as soon as they cross his path (63, 69, 103, 107).

What motivates this kind of violence? In his many conversations with Josie inside the isolated house, McGreevy reflects upon his strong desire to keep on fighting, even though Josie proposes he could give it all up any time to live a regular life (191). He disagrees, mentioning first of all that his upbringing and course of life prepared him for the life he leads:

Not to grow up in hate, not to have been Papist leper scum, not to have been interned at fourteen and fifteen and sixteen, not to have been in the Crum and Long Kesh and waiting to go on the blocks, now that would have been out of this world. To be an ordinary bloke with a wife and kids – I just can’t imagine it. (113)

This passage implies inevitability: McGreevy is convinced that because of the way he was raised, he was determined to fight for better conditions and therefore joined the IRA movement (Harte, 165). He emphasizes that he has no choice, but that his desire to fight for an independent, unified Ireland is “his oath to himself, made long ago, drunk at the breast” (164). A fatalism that is also reflected in his name: Mc means ‘son of’ and Greevy means ‘grief’.⁹ His powerlessness against his “oath” is emphasized by different reflections on another life he could lead, a peaceful and simple family life (113, 202), indicating an underlying desire to escape his situation while simultaneously not being able to.

⁹ McGreevy can also be considered a variant of McGillivray, which means “servant of doom” and also indicates predestination (Harris, 117).

What mainly motivates McGreevy's violence is patriotism: the absolute belief that the Irish should not be dependent on the British, and that Northern and Southern Ireland should be united and liberated from British rule. When asked what the purpose of his crimes is, McGreevy explains that he wants to remove the British people and government from Ireland to achieve "justice for all. Peace. Personal identity. Racial identity" (77). Nationalism, mixed up with the religious identities of and differences between the Protestant North and the Catholic South, is a main driving force for the Irish conflict (Innes, 47).

His nationalist sentiments and the fatalism that McGreevy feels subjected to are strongly intertwined, as Heather Ingman points out in her article "Edna O'Brien: Stretching the Nation's Boundaries". O'Brien emphasizes how, from a young age, Irish children in the novel are taught about Irish history in a nationalist manner at school, and their role in it: the boys are to guard the country's heritage, even if it leads to their deaths, while the girls should support and sustain them (*HoSI*, 50). McGreevy, as well as other characters in *HoSI*, are conscious of their position in a continuous past¹⁰, so deeply rooted in and connected to the bloody, violent Irish history that a "mood of tragic fatalism" arises (Harte, 58). As a result, McGreevy feels obliged to keep on defending the Irish heritage – he is hostage to it (*HoSI*, 53). The fatalistic weight of history on the shoulders of McGreevy is emphasized in the very first sentences of *HoSI*, spoken by an unidentified, all-knowing narrator: "History is everywhere. It seeps into the soil, the sub-soil. Like rain, or hail, or snow, or blood. A house remembers. An outhouse remembers. A people ruminate. The tale differs with the teller." (1) Hence, McGreevy prioritises war over everything and feels surrounded by it – it is his ultimate purpose in life: "War in the sky and war on the ground and war in his heart" (7).

This does not apply solely to McGreevy. Other characters in the book experience the same sense of predestination that history has brought upon them. Paud, the boy who helps

¹⁰ When asked what will happen when he leaves the IRA, McGreevy replies that "there would be another to take my place and another after him... That's us" (182).

Josie maintain her house, declares that “the future lies in a united Ireland”, and he is willing to die for the cause after taking an oath (52). It is questionable to what extent this can be considered his own decision: Paud is simple-minded, and evidently indoctrinated by his education. When asked what he knows about Irish history, Paud “burst into a recitation of what Miss McCloud his teacher had dinned into him and others day after day, how their country, their beloved country has been sacked, plundered and raped by the sister country” (50). Education as portrayed in *HoSI* encourages Irish nationalism by teaching about Irish history from a patriotic perspective¹¹ (Ingman 261).

In a flashback to the 1920’s, described in *HoSI*, Paud hid weapons for the IRA. Josie’s husband James, who was still alive then, supported him – even though he opposed the IRA, in this critical situation “every bit of Fenian feeling that he ever had” was fuelled (53). This is similar to the anti-IRA republican farmer who offers McGreevy a meal when he unexpectedly shows up at his farm (17).

The policemen Rory, Tommy and Ned, who hunt McGreevy down to kill him, feel pressured by Irish history as well. They are patriotic, considering themselves keepers of the country’s “soul and heritage” (174). Even though killing is a traumatic experience for them, as is evident in their breakdown after shooting (117), they continue because it is what they consider their duty. In this respect, history is a “constraint that forces one to act in socially acceptable, but personally self-destructive patterns” (Harris, 113).

In conclusion, the Irish blood-spattered history, accompanied with nationalism, motivate McGreevy’s and other characters’ violent acts and atrocities in the public, political sphere.

¹¹ When asked what he knows about Irish history, Paud “burst into a recitation of what Miss McCloud his teacher had dinned into him and others day after day, how their country, their beloved country has been sacked, plundered and raped by the sister country” (50).

2.2 The Private Sphere

HoSI mostly takes place in the private sphere of Josie's isolated house. The novel begins with Josie's relationship with her husband James, followed by an account of the time, years later, when Josie is held hostage by McGreevy.

Josie is subjected to various acts of violence. Shortly after marrying James, their relationship transforms into an abusive marriage. On the one hand, the abuse is mental. James becomes "the wrong kind of drinking man" (189) and frequently intimidates and scolds Josie (43, 44). On the other hand, there is physical abuse. In an animalistic rape scene, James has sex with Josie despite her exclaiming "no and stop and no" (44). To James, Josie is merely a means to producing children: he praises her "haunches", describing her as a "good mare" (29), whom he can "mount" when he pleases (44).¹² During the act, he calls her "muddy, short for mother and mud", which confirms Josie's role as breeder. When it takes long for Josie to get pregnant, James begins to turn on her.¹³ He also hits Josie (36, 53).

Josie feels captured by James. She realises he "possesses" her (44) and, after he has died, she reproaches James, for he "held her like she was gossamer" (59), something precious belonging to him only. Shortly after her reminiscences about the past, McGreevy enters her home and she is held captive once more.

Unlike James, McGreevy never physically abuses Josie. However, he invades her house without permission, which leaves Josie feeling intimidated, scared ("I tremble at every stir" (78)) and insecure about her situation.¹⁴ Her privacy is violated: the house is "her house

¹² The relationship between James and Josie is often described in equine terms, in which Josie is the "mare" that James possesses. Josie feels jealous towards the horses her husband owns, as he thinks of horses "as concubines" (*HoSI*, 61). Thus, their relationship has an animalistic nature, but the horse metaphor also emphasizes Josie's role as a child bearer, owned by James. In this metaphor, Josie is the breeding mare owned by James, a means for breeding purposes that he can "mounts" when it suits him.

¹³ During the 1920's, women were considered inferior if they were not mothers (Murphy-Lawless, 53).

¹⁴ Josie frequently wonders what McGreevy intends to do with her, and vividly imagines different violent scenes (63 – 64, 71)

and yet not hers” (75). Furthermore, McGreevy humiliates Josie (76). He commands and dominates her with a “chilling authority” (75).

Josie constantly longs for McGreevy’s departure. Yet, when he leaves her house to carry out his mission, Josie has a breakdown. In her fragile state, she leaves the house to look for him. In “History’s Hostages: Edna O’Brien’s *House of Splendid Isolation*”, Josie’s search is explained by Liam Harte as a “peculiarly Irish version of Stockholm syndrome” (166), a syndrome common amongst women who have been abused mentally or physically.

Next to violence inflicted by the men she shares a house with, Josie indirectly practices self-abuse. After finding out she is finally pregnant by James, she visits a woman who illegally¹⁵ performs an abortion using a wire. The operation is radical and physically painful, but also leaves a psychological scar.

Thus, even though the abuse is occasionally physical, Josie is primarily a victim of mental violence: she is intimidated, humiliated and oppressed by the men she lives together with.

2.3 The Relationship Between the Political Sphere and the Private Sphere

As my descriptions above have shown, violence in the political sphere in *HoSI* is mainly physical: McGreevy, his comrades and the police fighting McGreevy murder and physically abuse their victims. In contrast, violence in the private sphere in *HoSI* is more psychological: Josie is intimidated, humiliated, threatened and frightened. How is the representation of political violence used to comment on private violence and vice versa?

As I have explained in chapter 1, the political and private realm are traditionally gendered, but, as various critics argue, no longer in any straightforward way. The political

¹⁵ Abortions are prohibited by law in Ireland, as the mother’s right to life is not superior to that of her unborn child (Murphy-Lawless, 53).

sphere is male, the private sphere is female, a distinction that places women in an inferior position to men. Traditionally, C. L. Innes argues, this division characterises Irish society, like most other societies. Not only has Ireland frequently been allegorised as a woman¹⁶, in nationalist sentiments of the 18th and 19th century, Ireland is the mother who awaits redemption – the men (“sons”) must avenge her in combat and sacrifice their lives for her, while the women must “either inspire or resist” rather than participate (47). Consequently, women were encouraged to exclude themselves from the Irish political sphere in the late 18th and 19th century (110).

O’Brien reflects on this involuntary exclusion in *HoSI* through Josie. Even though Josie is aware that the Irish conflict is “not her war” (*HoSI*, 74), she emphasizes frequently that if women were included in the political sphere, it would drastically reduce political violence, thereby demonstrating how the private affects the public. She tells McGreevy that “if women ran your organisation there would be no shootings... No bombs” (77), arguing that women give life instead of taking it, as opposed to the killing instinct of men (17, 87). She suggests he fulfil his duty to save the country without taking innocent lives. In response, McGreevy affirms Josie’s place in the private sphere: “Look... Missus... You stick to your gracious living and your folklore” (85). Josie’s belief that female influence in the political sphere would decrease political violence is in line with Elshtain’s theory that the male political needs the female private sphere for a morally balanced political sphere. The portrayal of political violence in *HoSI* is therefore commented on by demonstrating the male irrationality of nationalism as a motivation for murder and torture.

However, in *HoSI*, if Josie represents the female private sphere and McGreevy the male political sphere, the private realm is unable to reduce violence in the political sphere. This becomes clear when Josie admits to McGreevy:

¹⁶ Ireland has been represented as, among others, Hibernia, Eire, Erin, Mother Ireland, the Poor Old Woman, the Shan van Vocht, Cathleen ni Houlihan and the Dark Rosaleen (Innes, 2).

‘I thought that by being here... that by us talking... something would happen... A sea change... I’d save you... You’d see the light; you’d quit.’

‘That’s nuts... nothing will make me quit...Ever.’

As these examples indicate, O’Brien seems to confirm the traditional dichotomy of the female private sphere and the male political sphere, and the distinction between the female instinct as nurturing and pacific and the male instinct as destructive and aggressive as described in feminist theory.¹⁷ Overall, *HoSI* is therefore rather schematic when it comes to the distinction between male and female characters. However, the novel occasionally goes beyond these stereotypes by portraying men and women in contrast to their traditional gender roles.

McGreevy, for example, shows a caring side to his personality when he shares the house with Josie. Josie describes how, next to his cruel tendencies, McGreevy is “decorousness itself”,

the way he reached down for it when my shawl slipped, the way he draws his hands up under his short sleeves and asks if I am all right or if I have slept well. He brought cushions for the cane chairs, found them in another room and aired them on the stone hot-water bottle that he found in the pantry. (99)

Portraying McGreevy as nurturing, caring and domestically involved undermines an unilateral perspective on his aggressive character and makes him more humane. This can explain why Josie is convinced she can make him see the light: she has seen another, non-violent side of McGreevy. By stimulating this side, she hopes to reduce his (political) violence.

¹⁷ See chapter 1.

Similarly, Josie's acts are occasionally political. Even though Josie is the "*Bhean an Tighe*"¹⁸ (76), a powerful figure within her domestic sphere, her death¹⁹ is regarded a political event: a sergeant who witnessed her death claims she "had to die. (...) For Ireland. For martyrdom" (208). She is shot because she has hidden McGreevy without turning him in to the police, which is also seen as a political act (208). Such passages where the stereotypes of women belonging to the private sphere and men to the political sphere show a nuanced understanding of the female/private vs male/public distinction, and blurs the lines between the private sphere and the political sphere as well: one cannot be exclusively confined to a particular sphere, and the spheres affect one another.

This is evident in how violence in the political sphere affects violence in the private sphere. Political violence appears to enhance violence in the domestic sphere, as the recurring associations with war emphasize. Josie's husband, who was raised with Fenian sympathies and is haunted by the violent history of Ireland²⁰, is described as a "man-of-war" when he brutally rapes Josie (44). When McGreevy shows up at a farmer's house, he is offered a meal by the owner. When the farmer's wife wants to inform the police, her husband destroys her personal items and threatens to kill her. This scene demonstrates how the "repercussions of the conflict in Northern Ireland" extends to the domestic sphere (Harris, 116). Furthermore, there is the public McGreevy – the murderer, terrorist and criminal – who is violent in the domestic sphere as well, as he oppresses, humiliates and threatens Josie.

Essentially, all this violence is driven by nationalism, and the legacy of a violent history. It directly motivates violence in the political sphere, but consequently, violence is used in the domestic sphere, primarily aimed against women, as is illustrated in the cases of Josie and the farmer's wife. Thus, political violence is portrayed in *HoSI* to comment on

¹⁸ Woman of the house.

¹⁹ Josie is shot when she approaches the soldiers who hunt down McGreevy to capture him, in order to "see to [McGreevy's] deliverance" (204).

²⁰ At night, James hears "the chains of the dead", convinced that they are "coming for him" (73).

private violence by exposing how violence against women in the domestic sphere, is rooted in the public realm: domestic abuse is a political problem.

The men are held hostage by (Irish) history and nationalism in the public realm, the women in turn are held hostage by men in their private sphere. In that sense, the personal is political in Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation*. However, the novel indicates a way forward. In the epilogue, O'Brien writes that this cycle of violence can be broken down by going "right into the heart of the hate and the wrong and to sup from it and be supped. It does not say that in the books. That is future knowledge. The knowledge that is to be" (216). Just as Josie tries to understand McGreevy's motivations better by asking him questions and exchanging ideas, so too must one aim to understand what drives the violence and the hate that it accompanies. Only when the violence is fully understood,²¹ it can be rooted out and reconciliation can occur - in that sense, the personal can affect the political.

Thus, O'Brien conveys an important message to her (female) readers in her novel: understand, accept and forgive the reasons for political violence for a pacifying effect on political and by extension private violence. It is questionable to what extent this quite simple solution will have the desired outcome – ironically, Josie fails to change McGreevy and gets herself killed in her mediating attempts. The distance between the female private and the male political in *HoSI* seems too large and the gendered distinction too crude to reconcile the two spheres. The novel, however, germinates an idea of stimulating the non-violent, nurturing and private side of politically violent figures – a possible first step to change on a greater level.

²¹ Josie fails to fully understand McGreevy and his motivations, distancing herself from the public sphere he is part of: "It's not my war" (74).

Chapter 3 – The Political, the Personal and Violence in *The Little Red Chairs*

Twenty years after publishing *House of Splendid Isolation*, Edna O'Brien's novel *The Little Red Chairs* was published – another novel that focuses on political issues. Like *House of Splendid Isolation*, *The Little Red Chairs* explores war in the public realm from the perspective of an intimate relationship.

The Little Red Chairs is set in the 21st-century Republic of Ireland, in the fictional, isolated town Cloonoila. The Serbian Dr. Vlad, an holistic healer and poet, causes commotion in the small community with his mysterious appearance. Fidelma, the protagonist, is married to a husband she cannot have children with.²² She gets in touch with Dr. Vlad in the hope he will heal her infertility. This results in a secret affair, and Fidelma becomes pregnant. After finding out Dr. Vlad's criminal past in the Yugoslav war, Fidelma flees to England and resides at different refugee shelters until he is tried by the International Tribunal on War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia. She travels to the Netherlands to attend the trial and meet Dr. Vlad one more time.

Similar to *House of Splendid Isolation*, the novel portrays different forms of violence, both in the political sphere and the private sphere. In this chapter I will analyse the violence in both spheres to examine how violence in the political sphere is used to comment on violence in the private sphere and vice versa. Then, I will compare my findings of the two novels to further analyse how O'Brien exposes that the issue of violence in the private sphere motivated by political violence is transnational.

²² She gets pregnant twice, but has a miscarriage both times (43).

3.1 The Political Sphere

Even though *The Little Red Chairs*²³ is set in the Republic of Ireland, the novel does not portray violence in the Irish public realm. Rather, *TLRC* explores violence in the context of the Yugoslav war. In this complex war, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia fell apart as a result of a series of armed conflicts (Ramet, 87). Various civil wars, in which Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo fought for independence from Serbia, led to hundreds of thousands of casualties. It is estimated that in the Bosnian civil war from 1992 to 1995, the Yugoslav conflict that *TLRC* is based on, about 102000 people were killed (Tabeau, 207). The Bosnian war is known for the bloodiest event during this civil war, the fall and genocide of Srebrenica, but also for the horrific, inhumane crimes that took place, especially the systematic use of rape as a war strategy (Snyder et al, 190).

In *TLRC*, the character Vladimir Dragan, or Dr. Vlad, had a leading role in the Bosnian civil war. As commander of the Serbian army that invaded Bosnia, he is held responsible for the many war crimes during this conflict, including the siege in Sarajevo and the genocide in Srebrenica. In the novel as well as the real events, the genocide was a means of ethnic purification, aimed to rid the country of Bosnian muslims to achieve a ‘pure’, Orthodox Christian, Serbo-Bosnian population and, in broader context, a Greater Serbia (Snyder et al., 190). Therefore, the International Tribunal for War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia in The Hague aims to arrest and sentence him. Dr. Vlad goes into hiding in Cloonoila.

Several critics and reviewers agree that Dr. Vlad is arguably based on Radovan Karadžić (Cussen, 80, Nordin, 250), a psychiatrist and poet who became the first president of the Serbian Republic (Dekleva, 485). After the fall of Yugoslavia, Karadžić went into hiding for thirteen years under the pseudonym Dr. Dragan David Dabic. Karadžić and Dr. Vlad

²³ From here on, I will refer to *The Little Red Chairs* using the abbreviation *TLRC*.

partly share their name. Their occupation is similar, as well as appearance, with a long white beard and lengthy haircut. Karadžić was extradited to The Hague in 2008, and sentenced to 40 years imprisonment for crimes and war crimes against humanity. Part of O'Brien's research for *TLRC* consisted of attending Karadžić's trial in The Hague.²⁴ Even though the novel is based on real events and persons, the story is entirely fictional.

When Dr. Vlad first enters Cloonoila, the inhabitants are unaware of Dr. Vlad's past, even though they sense evil ever since he arrived (4). But when one of the inhabitants of Yugoslav origin, Mujo, recognises Dr. Vlad, his deeds come to light. Through the stories of characters that experienced the war first hand²⁵, O'Brien reflects on Dr. Vlad's atrocities. As the commander of the Serbian army, Dr. Vlad gave the order to board eight thousand Bosnian men onto buses, "assured of their safety, driven off and herded into a concrete emporium, where, it is said, the shooting began after dark" (70). Dr. Vlad participated in these shootings (129). During the siege of Sarajevo, 300 shells a day were used to blow up the city (250). Furthermore, the Serbs set up so called "killing factories" (206). Mujo possesses court documents that describe how, in such a factory, Muslim Bosnians were tortured to the point where they were forced to mutilate each other to death (143). All in all, 11541 Bosnians were killed during the siege of Sarajevo, both in the representation of the book (*TLRC*, 73) as well as in the real events²⁶. Eventually, Dr. Vlad is charged with the following crimes by the Tribunal in The Hague:

²⁴ Furthermore, O'Brien "visited shelters for refugees in London, listened to countless stories and spent time at a dog shelter where part of Fidelma's story is set" (Sulcas) to portray the migrant women in the novel realistically.

²⁵ Either refugees living in Cloonoila, like Mujo, or refugees that Fidelma meets in the English shelters.

²⁶ The title of the novel refers to the memorial event Sarajevo Red Line, where 11541 chairs were laid out along the Sarajevo high street on 6 April 2012, the twentieth anniversary of the siege of Sarajevo – one chair for each killed Sarajevan. 643 small chairs were used to represent the children killed. The amount of deaths has been confirmed by the Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo (Tokača).

[The prosecutor barrister] enumerated the thousands of civilians arrested, brutalised, killed, the tens of thousands uprooted by force, the hundreds of thousands besieged for months, years, killing sprees, cyclones of revenge, detainees held in dreadful places of detentions and hundreds executed. (260)

After his trial, the charges are confirmed and Dr. Vlad is convicted, which confirms Dr. Vlad as a war criminal: the crimes meet the Geneva Convention definition of ‘war crimes’ (“Rule 156. Definition of War Crimes”).

Like McGreevy, Dr. Vlad has a numb, ruthless attitude towards murdering. On the night that a massacre took place during the siege, Dr. Vlad drinks many toasts, to celebrate the murder of Muslim Bosnians (67). His companion in war, named K., states in an illusion of Dr. Vlad that the siege “broke many hearts, but not ours” (68). Indeed, Dr. Vlad even takes pride in being the “supreme leader, the mastermind” behind the siege of Sarajevo (69). The conflict is merely a game to him (129). Amongst Yugoslavs and, eventually, the inhabitants of Cloonoila, Dr. Vlad is known as “The Beast” (110) - a nickname he shares with McGreevy -, “*svinja*”²⁷ (111), the “devil” (124) and a “monster” (270).

Regarding the motivations behind his violent acts, nationalism is a main driving force. Dr. Vlad “loves [his] country and vowed to leave it a better place than when [he] had been born into it” (71). Nonetheless, Dr. Vlad firmly asserts: “I am not a nationalist (...) but I think races should not mix... when I meet a real Frenchman or a real German or a real Irishman... they have something that flowers have... a distinct scent of their own” (269). His desire to preserve an assumed ‘pure’ race, however, does arise from nationalist sentiments: the belief that the (in this case) Serbian nation is superior to others and should maintain its identity. In

²⁷ Serbo-Croatian for ‘pig’.

court, Dr. Vlad states that “If I am crazy then patriotism itself is crazy” (264), indicating that in the end, he identifies himself a patriot, despite his statement of not being a nationalist.

Throughout the book, the Serbs are presented as patriotic. An example is the joke a stranger in a bar, who sympathises with the Serbs, tells Fidelma:

‘What’s the difference between a Muslim, a Croat and a Serb? A Muslim will smile to your face and stab you in the back, a Croat won’t smile but maybe won’t stab you in the back, Serb will look at you proudly and deal with you like a man.’ (281)

The joke not only illustrates how Serbs consider themselves superior to supposedly conniving non-Serbian Yugoslavs, but also the patriotic pride they take in defending themselves. The phrase “like a man” furthermore implies the (Serbian) belief that fighting and taking pride in doing so defines a man, which is in line with the traditional dichotomies between men and women as presented by Elshtain.²⁸

Above all, Dr. Vlad experiences the same pressure of inevitability as McGreevy and the other participants in the Irish conflict in *HoSI* do. When Fidelma asks about his reasons for committing the many war crimes, he answers: “I had to” (275). It is a duty, tied in with the history of Serbia, the “sacred duty to God and [his] own people” to right his “wronged race” (102, 69). Dr. Vlad feels that by invading Bosnia and purifying it, he avenges Serbia. This is evident in his poetry:

²⁸ See chapter 1.

*When the time comes for gun barrels to speak,
For heroic days, valorous nights,
When a foreign army floods your country,
And wreaks havoc and causes damage in it,
That condition must be righted:
Then you roam your homeland on foot,
And your boots fight side by side with you. (129)*

The words ‘heroic’ and ‘valorous’ reflect the pride in fighting for the country, while lines 3 to 5 indicate the notion of justice.

As in *HoSI*, the sense of fatalism is caused by the pressure of history on the shoulders of the Serbian characters. Like many Serbs, Dr. Vlad comes from a family whose ancestors have died on the battlefield for years, fighting for their country (97). To Commander Vlad, these deaths are merely a necessity, as there can be “no song without suffering” (68). The fatalist inescapability of war is emphasized by the stranger in the bar who tells Fidelma that after thousands of years of war “sixty years of peace [is] too much for warring men”, causing negativity and unrest amongst the Serbs: they *have* to fight (281). The urge borders on instinct²⁹ – “our dogs know it before they do” (281) – implying that Serbs cannot be fully accountable for their acts.

Indeed, Dr. Vlad denies his deeds, or by all means their cruelty. After his first hearing, he declares himself upset that “they paint me a monster, when all the time I was seeking to create a homogeneous space” (268). In one specific passage, he states that his war crimes were merely self-defence on behalf of his country, his people and himself (276). But on most occasions, he fully denies the acts, for example when he claims in court that “Serbs did not

²⁹ To the point where they can not explain the urges’ origin (*TLRC*, 287).

have any intention of taking that city, that there had been no siege and that it was a delusion and invention on the enemy's part" (264).

The motivation behind the violent acts in the public realm in *HoSI* and *TLRC* are similar: the Irish in *HoSI* and the Serbs in *TLRC* both fight because of nationalist reasons, but also feel pressured because of the (violent) histories of their societies. A deadly combination of patriotism and determinism. However, whereas the Irish in *HoSI* take full responsibility for what they have done, the Serbs in *TLRC* regard their war crimes as necessities or self-defence and therefore deny their cruelties. To use Dr. Vlad's metaphor of the lamb and the wolves³⁰, the Serbs in *TLRC* consider themselves lambs³¹, the victims defending their country, whereas the Irish in *HoSI* are the wolves, ready to attack and defeat their enemy.

3.2 The Private Sphere

The private sphere in *TLRC* is represented through all the confined spaces in which Dr. Vlad and Fidelma meet, converse, and practice their affair, and the home of Fidelma and her husband Jack. But it also embodies the many domestic lives of the women Fidelma meets in refugee centers when she flees from the Republic of Ireland to England.

Fidelma is subjected to different forms of violence, physically and mentally. Even though Fidelma considers her husband, Jack, the type of man who "never harms anyone in his life" (103), Jack has sex with Fidelma against her will. Scared, she hides herself and asks Jack "not to violate her", which he does (115). According to her, his erection is an expression of hatred (244). When Fidelma returns home from sleeping with Dr. Vlad, Jack suspects her infidelity.³² He does not harm Fidelma, but shows her a dead bat. He explains that, while

³⁰ "With a breakdown happening in my country, in my people, in my psyche, lain down like a lamb for the wolves to arrive" (276)

³¹ Ironically, Dr. Vlad frequently calls himself Vuk, which is Serbo-Croatian for 'wolf'. The Serbs are regularly referred to as wolves in the novel, contrasting the perception of themselves to the perception of others.

³² Fidelma states that she knew from the moment she returned that Jack "had guessed her crime" (121).

Fidelma was away, he found two bats clung together. It is described how Jack “squashed [the male bat] to death, blood and pus spewing out like slime, black and bloodied, while the second one, the she-devil, escaped through the window” (103). It is implied that the bats form a parallel to Dr. Vlad and Fidelma. Jack emphasizes how he “would have pulped her too” (103), expressing his violent urges while indirectly threatening Fidelma.

Years later, when Fidelma is pregnant by Dr. Vlad, she is violated again. In a horrific scene, three former members of the Preventiva³³ and former companions (“blood brothers” (136)) of Dr. Vlad kidnap Fidelma. The three men no longer support Dr. Vlad, because protecting him resulted in losing everything (“our fathers, our comrades, our land” (144)). At the same time, Dr. Vlad gained more power and money and neglected to cover and help the Preventiva’s (144). The three men threaten and humiliate Fidelma because she slept with Dr. Vlad and, in an isolated building, abort Fidelma’s unborn baby using a crowbar. Afterwards, they leave her to die.

Fidelma survives, and after she has recovered from her severe injuries, she flees to England. Dr. Vlad’s identity has been revealed in the meantime. Fidelma meets a lot of migrant women, primarily war refugees, at the refugee shelters in England. Some of the women survived the siege of Sarajevo. Upon finding out that Fidelma was pregnant with Dr. Vlad’s child, one of the survivors humiliates Fidelma by confronting her with her war experiences, while forcing her to watch photos of the Bosnian war and calling her “[Dr. Vlad’s] accomplice, his whore, his slut” (252).

The migrant women have all been subjected to violence as well. They are “the hunted, the haunted, the raped, the defeated, the mutilated, the banished, the flotsam of the world” (203). The women tell stories of the rape, mutilation, sexual intimidation and domestic violence they were subjected to in their home countries.

³³ A secret network of men in powerful positions, such as the government and the police, that protected Yugoslav (war) criminals.

In short, *TLRC* primarily portrays sexual violence towards women, whereas the violence in *HoSI* was more psychological, where Josie was repeatedly intimidated, humiliated and oppressed within her domestic sphere. Throughout *TLRC*, women are raped, sexually mutilated or robbed of their ability to bear children. In addition to the private violence directed towards women, Fidelma expresses her own violent tendencies. About Dr. Vlad and his three former companions, she states: “I hate [Dr. Vlad], I want to inflict every punishment on him, including taking his voice, his voice box out, and strangling it syllable by syllable. I want the three men pulped” (217), like Jack pulped the bat that represented Dr. Vlad. This is a significant difference between *HoSI* and *TLRC*. Josie never acts violent, nor expresses a desire to do so. Rather, she believes that by rational conversation, she can reduce the violence practiced by McGreevy and her husband. Fidelma, on the other hand, believes that “only violence will end the violence” (217).

3.3 The Relationship Between the Political Sphere and the Private Sphere

As I have argued in chapter 2, public violence was mainly physical in *HoSI*, while private violence was more psychological. In *TLRC*, public violence is primarily physical as well, but so is the private violence. In the political sphere, Dr. Vlad and his army murder, torture and rape their victims. In the private spheres of *TLRC*, women are sexually abused and mutilated, but also suffer mental violence like intimidation and humiliation.

Public and private violence are strongly connected in *TLRC*. It is described by several women how they were raped or witnessed rape by Serbian soldiers during the siege. On the one hand, the rape takes place within the domestic sphere – the homes where the women live – and serves to “humiliate, stigmatize and terrorize women” (190). On the other hand, wartime rape should be understood as an act of war, belonging to the public realm. As described by Snyder et al. in “On the Battleground of Women’s Bodies: Mass Rape in

Bosnia-Herzegovina”, wartime rape was a war strategy widely used by the Serbs during the Yugoslav war – between 25,000 and 50,000 women were raped (189). It was particularly used during the occupation of Bosnia: Snyder et al. refers to “the systematic and organized use of war rape as a strategy to achieve ethnic cleansing” (190). Rape was considered a means to ethnic cleansing because in Balkan culture, a child always inherits the nationality of the father. Thus, raping women, even if they were non-Serbian, would expand the Serbian nation.³⁴ In addition, the lineage of the raped woman is symbolically dishonoured, and by extension, the entire ethnic culture to which she belongs (190). Wartime rape therefore increased the Serbian nation and simultaneously annihilated the non-Serbian Yugoslav heritage: “Sexual violence against women became a tool of genocide for destroying the enemy’s honour, lineage and nation (...) and became an extremely effective weapon of war” (191).

O’Brien reflects on this purpose of rape in *TLRC*. When Fidelma is pregnant with Dr. Vlad’s child, he emphasizes that the unborn child will be Serbian: “Yes, a nice little Serb boy or girl is planted there” (216). The belief that the child will ‘inherit’ Serbian culture and beliefs is evident to the survivors of the siege: one of the women expresses her disgust with Fidelma, because Dr. Vlad “[pumped] his evil into you... a bayonet up the vagina” (251), which also associates their intercourse with warfare. In his poetry, Dr. Vlad refers to their intercourse using words associated with war as well, such as ‘spear’ and ‘mortal metal’ (134). The belief that a Serb’s child inherits the father’s nationality is also the reason that Dr. Vlad’s ex-blood brothers violently abort Fidelma’s unborn child: to prevent the Serbian lineage from expanding. Even though Fidelma did not have sex with Dr. Vlad against her will, these passages demonstrate how in *TLRC*, impregnating women is understood as a strategy of nationalism and, by extension, warfare.

³⁴ To speed up the process, rape camps were set up to breed Serbian children (Snyder et al., 190). O’Brien refers to these camps in *TLRC* in the testimonies against Dr. Vlad (261).

The Serbian reasons motivations for the rape of Bosnian women in *TLRC* illustrates how sexual violence is a political act. This applies to other forms of domestic violence as well, as the following passage indicates. After the refugee women have all told their personal stories of domestic abuse by their husbands and fathers in their home country at war, the following situation between two of the women occurs:

Suri is indignant. (...) She goes ballistic, asking why they have to listen to this crap when they are there to talk politics and not somebody's mother. Varya interrupts and very gently points out that everything in this world is political. The bread you eat, the water you drink, the mattress you lie down on, war or peace, everything at root is political. (212)

This passage is in line with the belief that 'the personal is the political': all private issues are essentially affected by the political, by cultures and social norms. This way, Varya emphasizes that the domestic violence that the women have been subjected are part of a political structure, as Gavison argues.³⁵

As is the case in *HoSI*, *TLRC* also touches upon the private sphere as an influence on the political sphere by opposing the morality of the female characters in the private sphere to the immorality of the political. War provides for an immoral political sphere, a Czechoslovakian war refugee emphasizes:

'My friends I tell you this, we are a jolly group but put us in uniform and all that change. In war I don't know who my brother. In war I don't know who my friend. War make [*sic*] everybody savage. Who can say what lies inside the heart of each one of us when everything is taken away.' (55)

³⁵ See chapter 1.

The description of the many horrific war experiences contribute to the portrayal of the public sphere as immoral. In addition, the realm is identified as male: the Serbs believe that only men are able to fight and kill (*HoSI*, 94).

Compared to the male public sphere, the private sphere is seen by the characters as female. When Dr. Vlad is arrested by the Garda because the illegality of his teaching activities, he declares that a fellow schoolteacher did not inform him about the illegality. When the Garda asks if the teacher did not know the law, Dr. Vlad states that “she’s a woman” by way of explanation, indicating that women are excluded from the public sphere and not familiar with politics. They are, however, in charge of the domestic sphere. This is especially evident when Dr. Vlad describes the home he grew up in, and the dominant roles of the women in it: “The women in my life have been the stronger force, totemic figures who never raised their voices yet I knew that I must not disobey them” (93).

TLRC explores the idea that the female private sphere could potentially influence the male political sphere. Similar to Josie’s statements in *HoSI*, Dr. Vlad is convinced that “there is deep inside man the instinct to kill, just as there is deep inside woman the instinct to nurture” (94). Right before the Preventivas abort Fidelma’s unborn baby, the chauffeur Tyrone, who brought the Preventivas and Fidelma to an isolated place, has a “brainwave”, realising Fidelma could be the key to resolving violence, since she has “has the woman’s means to save herself, to save them both” (140). He tells her the following:

‘Be sweet... Be gentle... Do not argue (...) God made woman for Adam to be happy. Eve have emotional mind... Adam have logical mind... Bring them to emotional mind... talk to them... you have soft voice, remind them that women follow the body of Christ to the tomb (...) Ask them to have pity... Be wise with them and their craziness past.’ (140)

Men and women's instincts are believed to be counterparts that could be balanced out, which explains why after Tyrone's advice, Fidelma tells one of the Preventivas "You have a mother" (145) right before he aborts her child. By reminding him of (the nurture instinct of) his mother, she hopes to prevent the man from acting violently. She is the "nice English lady [who] comes to help (...) to delineate the dark" (284). In order to help, to affect the public sphere and reduce the violence, Fidelma realises she needs to understand the "need to kill, that desire to kill" (287).

However, her attempts are in vain. Fidelma can not 'heal' Dr. Vlad. She was convinced that "he would show some grain of remorse... a single word... what goes on inside him.. the inner footage" (287). Instead, Dr. Vlad does not even admit to his crimes. The Preventiva talks about how he loves his mother, while he continues to violate Fidelma (145). The private sphere, and the women and their "instinct to nurture" in it, are unable to influence the public sphere.

By the end of the novel, all the stories and experiences of her own, but of the other women she met as well, have affected Fidelma's view on men in the public sphere. This is evident in the scene where she visits Dr. Vlad in prison. After calling him a monster, she is evicted from the prison cell by the guards. Fidelma feels highly intimidated by them: "She has to wait on their pleasure, their whim, their tyranny. (...) She thinks, these brutes have absolute power over me now" (270). Her panic does not seem to correspond to the situation. The guards go through a process that is merely part of their job – checking her bag, signing papers before she can leave the prison – and do not act aggressively. Rather, her thoughts seem to reflect how oppressed Fidelma feels by men in the public sphere, a feeling of powerlessness and the impression that men have a tendency to act violent. The distance between men and women and, by extension, the public sphere and the private sphere is therefore increased, which reduces the possibility of reconciliation.

As this analysis shows, *TLRC* initially appears to confirm the traditional female/private and male/public distinction – in that sense, the novel is rather schematic in dividing female and male characters, just like *HoSI*. However, various passages in the novel go beyond the gendered distinction of spheres. Like McGreevy in *HoSI*, Dr. Vlad’s ‘nurturing’ side is portrayed: he prepares dinner for Fidelma, looks after her health, decorates his house with care – a domesticized “man of feeling” (101) in contrast to his cruel public acts. Even though Fidelma is disgusted with Dr. Vlad when she finds out about his atrocities, she only knows about his violent side because of the stories that Yugoslavs told her – to her, he is a caring, thoughtful man of whom she has nothing but good memories (268). This image contrasts with Dr. Vlad’s ‘public image’ as a war criminal, but at the same time reinforces a hope in Fidelma that this nurturing side can be stimulated in order to change Dr. Vlad (287).

Another aspect that goes beyond the stereotypes gender distinction of spheres is Fidelma’s aggression. This is evident in the passage where she admits to her desire to strangle Dr. Vlad, and when she states that only “only violence will end the violence” (217). Her adultery is frequently referred to as a “crime” (121), contrasting the assumed pacific nature of women. O’Brien therefore transcends the idea of a male, destructive public sphere and a female, nurturing private sphere by blurring the lines of gender and spheres.

In conclusion, the portrayal of political violence is used to comment on private violence in *TLRC* by demonstrating that the domestic abuse of women is politically motivated. Nationalism and a violent heritage drives the fighting parties in the public sphere of *TLRC* to political violence (war crimes) but, by extension, domestic violence against women as well. This is illustrated by the many violent histories of the female characters during wartime, as well as rape as a war strategy. Once more, O’Brien exposes how violence against women in the domestic sphere is a political problem: the personal is political.

But is political violence a problem that can be resolved in the private sphere as well? Even though it is suggested in *TLRC* that the (female) private sphere can affect the public violence and Fidelma attempts to detect what makes Dr. Vlad's act so violently, she realises that she cannot change him. Despite Fidelma's belief that only violence can end violence, the novel closes with a notion of forgiveness. The women in the refugee centre perform an interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is described how "wrongs were righted, true love and its virtuous properties restored" (297). The lines "*Give me your hands if we be friends / And Robin shall restore amends*" suggest how the women in *TLRC* make progress towards reconciliation with their past and those who subjected them to violence: not fighting violence with violence, but with forgiveness is the next step.

TLRC therefore seems to convey the same message to its readers as *HoSI* formulates: understanding and forgiving public violence can reduce it. This idea contrasts with Fidelma's execution. As is the case with Josie in *HoSI*, Fidelma's attempts fail. Forgiving Dr. Vlad only allows Fidelma to continue her life without resentment, but doesn't change Vlad's mindset or undo or prevent any atrocities. Again, the schematically portrayed division of gendered spheres obstructs a significant impact on political and private violence. Overcoming the distinction by stimulating the blurring of gender roles, for example by appealing to a man's 'domestic' side, therefore appears to be the first step to reconciliation and the decrease of violence.

3.4 The Transnationalist Issue of Political Violence vs Private Violence

As an Irish author, Edna O'Brien always stayed close to her cultural background – even after leaving the Republic of Ireland. All her novels are located in Ireland and/or reflect on Irish culture to some extent. *The Little Red Chairs* is a striking exception. Even though the novel is set in Ireland, it is essentially about the Yugoslav war and non-Irish war refugees.

As I have illustrated in the previous chapters, O'Brien explores the relationship between political violence and domestic violence in both *HoSI* and *TLRC*, to indicate how domestic violence is a political issue, driven by nationalism and the nation's history. This is true for Irish political violence, but O'Brien portrays how this is an issue in the Yugoslav war as well. What is the importance of describing two different conflicts to expose the political nature of private violence?

To fully understand the importance of why, as an Irish-focused author, O'Brien deals with a war she is not directly related to, and locates the aftermath in Ireland, Michael Rothberg's theory of multidirectionality is useful. In *From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory*, Rothberg argues that comparing seemingly distinct conflicts can highlight their similarities and help the oppressed groups, by demonstrating how "the public articulation of collective memory by marginalized and oppositional and social groups provides resources for other groups to articulate their own claims for recognition and justice" (524). Public memory of conflicts is therefore multidirectional, marked by "transcultural borrowing, exchange and adaptation" (524). This way, different histories and conflicts can be brought together to emphasize similar issues, primarily of the victimised groups in these conflicts.

In *TLRC*, an "alternative history" (Cussen, 80) is presented, in which a Yugoslav war criminal does not hide in the Balkans, but in Ireland. The novel draws explicit parallels between Yugoslavia and Ireland. When Dr. Vlad first enters Cloonoila, he discusses the similarities between Yugoslavia and Ireland with barman Dara. Dara reflects on the comparable landscapes, and the similarities in culture:

Hewn into the rocks [of Montenegro] were little churches and monasteries, without windows, where people came to pray in the same way that Irish people were known to pray. Celts, he was told, had lived in the gorges of the Dolomite Mountains and along the river Drina in the

centuries before Christ and the link between Ireland and the Balkans was indisputable.

Scholars who had studied hieroglyphics in scrolls and artefacts in the several museums had traced the resemblance in the type of weaponry and armour that was worn. (8)

By portraying the similarities between Ireland and the Balkans, O'Brien immediately emphasizes their inseparability at the beginning of *TLRC*. With regards to the Irish conflict and the Yugoslav war, Dr. Vlad mentions that "your people have suffered injustices just as my people have" (8). By illustrating the "shared ancestors", the same landscapes and the similar sufferings, O'Brien draws clear parallels between the two cultures.

By intertwining the (aftermath of the) Yugoslav war and Irish culture, O'Brien appropriates a non-Irish conflict to expose the similarities between the two areas, but most importantly between the Yugoslav war and the Irish conflict. It indicates how the conflicts are not self-contained, but rather transnational.

O'Brien demonstrates how in both the Irish conflict (*HoSI*) and the Yugoslav war (*TLRC*) the nationalism that drives public violence is highly related to violence in the domestic sphere. From a multidirectional perspective, O'Brien therefore shows that this issue is not related to a specific conflict or culture, but rather is a transnational issue. In short, a comparison of the relationship between political violence and private violence in *HoSI* and *TLRC* illuminates how O'Brien does not only portray domestic violence as a political issue, but exposes how this is a global issue as well. This also puts her suggestion of a reconciliation between the two spheres in another light: not only can the Irish women in *HoSI* affect the political sphere by forgiveness and understanding, but women all over the world can do so. Irrespectively their culture or nation, women have this power to make a change, O'Brien points out.

Conclusion

The feminist slogan ‘the personal is the political’ has inspired interpretations of the relationship between the personal and political sphere. The phrase refers to the way in which the personal and the political depend on each other, and more specifically, how personal issues are essentially political. With regards to violence, this interpretation exposes how, for example, domestic abuse is (partly) the result of a social structure rather than an individual situation: private violence as a result of public structures. The traditional distinction between the male public sphere and the female domestic sphere plays a key role in feminist theory about the personal and the political.

In this essay, I have compared the novels *House of Splendid Isolation* and *The Little Red Chairs* to analyse how Edna O’Brien explores the relationship between the public sphere and the private sphere by portraying violence in both spheres. In both novels, domestic abuse of women is measured against atrocities in the public conflicts of Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. I aimed to answer the following question: how is the portrayal of political violence used to comment on private violence and vice versa?

In both novels, the political violence consists of murder and physical abuse (such as torture or rape). Nationalism is a main driving force for using violence in the public sphere, but the fighting Irish (*HoSI*) and Serbs (*TLRC*) also feel subjected to their nation’s history, which brings about a sense of inevitability or determinism. A main difference between political violence in the novels is that whereas in *HoSI*, the Northern Irish do not downplay the cruelty of their deeds (even though they consider their atrocities a necessity), the Serbs in *TLRC* consistently deny their crimes, claiming they did not occur or that it was self-defense. Their motivations are, nonetheless, similar.

As I have argued, *HoSI* and *TLRC* illustrate a clear relationship between public violence and private violence. In *HoSI*, the rape of Josie, the oppression of Josie by a war criminal and the threatening of the farmer's wife, for example, are all associated with war, suggesting the political foundation of the domestic violence. *TLRC* reflects on the political reasons behind rape, but also emphasizes that private problems can be a result of political norms and structures.

The novels deal with domestic violence in different ways. *HoSI* mainly portrays the mental abuse of women. Josie is oppressed, dominated, humiliated and threatened by the men close to her, but she is physically abused by her husband as well. *TLRC*, however, focuses more on physical violence and sexual abuse in particular. Fidelma and the female war refugees have all been confronted with violence in the domestic sphere.

Even though the women in *HoSI* and *TLRC* suffer different forms of private violence, they respond similarly to public violence: Josie and Fidelma have many conversations with respectively McGreevy and Dr. Vlad, in an attempt to understand their motivations and reasons for political violence. Ultimately, they hope to bring about a change in their beliefs, either to stop them from fighting (*HoSI*) or to make them show remorse (*TLRC*). Josie and Fidelma are convinced that in that sense, the private sphere can affect the public sphere. However, their attempts fail, as they cannot fully identify with McGreevy and Dr. Vlad's beliefs. Nonetheless, O'Brien proposes in both novels that a reconciliation between the two spheres can reduce political violence and, by extension, private violence. Forgiveness and understanding are the key in achieving this reconciliation.

It is very questionable to what extent this is an effective solution. Josie and Fidelma's attempts do not solve anything – in fact, McGreevy and Dr. Vlad continue their politically violent acts without changing their minds. In an interview, Edna O'Brien admits that “those

who start and perpetuate wars are not going to be changed by my book³⁶”, but that she wanted to write a story “that combined the demonic and the human” (Sulcas). However, the demonic and the human are not necessarily combined in *HoSI* and *TLRC*, but rather opposed because of the crude distinction between the gender roles assigned to the political and private sphere. Even though O’Brien occasionally blurs the gendered distinction as I have argued, the political is overall portrayed as the male sphere, the demonic sphere, whereas the private is female and human. The spheres as portrayed in *HoSI* and *TLRC* are too much in line with Elshtain’s radical theory of traditionally gendered spheres for the attempts to reduce violence to have the desired effect. Perhaps a co-operation between the private and the political sphere can reduce violence in the future, but the gendered roles assigned to these spheres should be broken down first.

Nonetheless, O’Brien exposes the important issue of domestic violence as a political issue and the personal nature of political problems. In addition, she shows how this does not just apply to the Irish in *HoSI*. By involving another conflict, the Yugoslav war, while portraying the same issues of public violence versus private violence, O’Brien touches upon the transnational character of, on the one hand, domestic violence as a political issue, and on the other hand the power of women to make a change. Which is what Edna O’Brien, by showing her readers how private issues are political, aims to do:

‘Everything is political: one’s upbringing, the culture in which one grows up, even religion is political, whether we like it or not. (...) Fiction is fiction and hopefully imagination and the power of language always stirs the reader. It would be absurd and it actually would be banal to simply have a political agenda and put it down. Story is imperative.’ (O’Brien in Lindahl-Raittila, 84)

³⁶ She refers to *The Little Red Chairs*.

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Plagiarism Rules Awareness Statement



Universiteit Utrecht

Faculty of Humanities
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PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

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Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

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Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
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- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the

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- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
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I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.
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Student number: 4081560
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