Haunting and Transitional Justice: On Lives, Landscapes and Unresolved Pasts in Northern Ireland

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1. Introduction

Building on approaches to ghosts and haunting by Avery Gordon and Jacques Derrida, this chapter is concerned with practices of haunting and ghosting after conflict related loss. This is not to suggest a focus on the occult or the paranormal, but to use these phenomena as a prism through which to understand the intersection between unresolved pasts and the transmission of trauma post-conflict. At first blush, the field of transitional justice – the overarching term for recognising and addressing a legacy of large-scale past human rights violations - may appear to have little in common with notions of ghosting or haunting. I would, however, argue that the opposite is true: ghosts can be key to understanding how the effects of mass murder, genocide, slavery or colonial oppression extend far beyond the moment of atrocity to engender trauma that echoes for generations (Schwab 2010; Schindel 2014). Likewise, the work of truth, justice, accountability and memory is precisely about responding to the unsettled ghosts of the past and their presence amongst the living. Indeed, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a powerful advocate of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission because of his hope that it would tackle the problem of the past's "uncanny habit of returning to haunt one" and its refusal to "lie down quietly" (TRC Report vol 1, 7). Conversely, writing about the cultural memory of Soviet terror, Alexander Etkind (2009) argues that Russian civil society is haunted by the "unquiet ghosts" of the unburied Soviet past.

The ghost, according to Avery Gordon (1997, 63), "is the principle form by which something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us." She proposes that we do not think of ghosts as representations of missing or dead persons, but as "inarticulate experiences" and "haunting reminders" of the violence and complex social relations in which we live (Gordon 1997, 25). They offer a glimpse of "the fundamental difference between the world we have now and the world we could have had instead" (Gordon 1997, 127). For Derrida (1994), the spectre is the conveyor of legacies and demands from the dead. To live with, talk to and about ghosts Derrida (1994, xviii) proposes, is all done "in the name of justice". This engagement with ghosts involves a politics of mourning, of memory and of inheritances that allows for a diversity of relations to the past (Wilke 2010). Reckoning with ghosts – through processes of truth recovery or reparations for example, therefore does not negate the past but remains focused on what transitional justice can offer in the present "Because ultimately haunting is about how to transform a shadow of a life into an undiminished life whose shadows touch softly in the spirit of a peaceful reconciliation" (Gordon 1997, 208; Wilke 2010).

In this chapter I argue for three conceptualisations of haunting when past traumas remain unaddressed – the haunting of lost lives; the haunting of landscapes; and the haunting of the unresolved past. This conceptualisation demands that we, for example, see haunting as an animated state in which repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known and see place-memory as capable of embodying ghosts and haunting reminders of the past (Robinson 2017). As Gordon (1997) argues, haunting and the appearance of spectres or ghosts is one way in which we are notified that what has been concealed, repressed or remains unanswered is very much alive and present with the potential for personal, social and political disruption. Ghosts thus prohibit the separation of the past, the present and the future. The chapter focuses

on Northern Ireland, a post-conflict society described as being haunted by a "conflict calendar in which every day is an anniversary" (Rowan 2012). There, the dead remain a potent and emotive means of legitimising and perpetuating the ethnonational and sectarian characteristics of political debate (Graham and Whelan 2007). The dead have, for example, been used to perform the relevance of violence, demarcate borders, enact social martyrdom and perpetuate polarised conceptions of victimhood (Robinson 2017). The failure to "deal with" the legacy of the conflict by way of formal truth recovery means that for many victims and survivors, the spectres of the past remain in the present, precluding healing, closure or restitution and permitting space for the transmission of trauma into lives, spaces and the social and political fabric of everyday life.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. For those who are less familiar with the Northern Ireland context, the chapter opens with a brief background to the conflict, the nature and scale of victimisation and efforts to deal with the legacy of the past. It then deals with the first conceptual theme – "Haunting and Lost Lives". In this part of the chapter I explore the existence and impact of 'dead body politics' whereby victims and survivors of the conflict and legacy issues have frequently been appropriated for political gain. Yet, it is not only individual lives that have been scarred by the conflict. As Bell and Di Paolantonio (2009) argue, landscape and physical structures "hold" memories, conjuring up and housing spectres of the past. These dynamics are explored under the heading of the "Haunting of Landscape". The final conceptual theme is "Haunting and the Effect of the Unresolved Past" – how the failure to comprehensively deal with the legacy of the conflict has contributed to high levels of conflict-related mental health problems and transgenerational trauma. Through these three occasionally overlapping themes, this chapter makes two substantive contributions. First, in respect to the concept of haunting, the chapter demonstrates the relevance of the concept to the post-conflict landscape, expanding and nuancing our understanding of haunting and its different

manifestations. Second, the prism of haunting adds a further conceptual and practical layer to the field of transitional justice. As this chapter demonstrates, in post-conflict or transitional contexts, increased scholarly and practitioner awareness of the continuing physical and psychological impact of a traumatic past that transcends discussions of, for example, the utility of truth commissions or the "victim centredness" of transitional justice mechanisms, is required. Rather, a greater appreciation of practices of ghosting and the haunting impact of the past in the present presses home the importance of "dealing with" the past in all its complexity. The chapter concludes by arguing that the presence of ghosts and the experience of haunting represent a "call to action" in the quest to deal with a legacy of violent conflict and human rights abuses.

2. Northern Ireland and the Past in the Present

For those who are less familiar with the Northern Ireland context, some brief details on the nature of the conflict and efforts to deal with the past are instructive at this stage. The Northern Ireland conflict began in 1969 and lasted over 30 years. In broad terms, it was fought between Loyalist and Republican paramilitary organisations and British state forces, including the British Army, Ulster Defence Regiment (an infantry regiment of the British Army) and the police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. During this period, approximately 3,739 individuals were killed, giving an overall death rate of 2.2 per thousand of the population. It is estimated that a further 40,000 – 50,000 people were injured, while tens of thousands were displaced due to intimidation and political violence (McKittrick and McVea 2012). Research by the Commission for Victims and Survivors Northern Ireland (CVSNI 2011) reports that over one-third of Northern Ireland's population could be legally classified as a victim or survivor of the conflict.

The civilian population were the greatest casualties of the conflict. According to the Sutton Index of Deaths, 1842 civilians were killed; 1114 members of the security forces; 395 members of Republican paramilitary organisations; 168 members of Loyalist paramilitary organisations; and 10 members of the Irish security forces.[ii]Republican paramilitary organisations – the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) – were responsible for approximately 60% of all deaths, 1712 of which are attributable to the IRA. Loyalist paramilitary organisations – the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) - were responsible for over 1,000 deaths (approximately 30%), while state security forces were responsible for directly killing 363 people (10% of all deaths).[iii]

Following the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998, Northern Ireland has been an active site of transitional justice, with the reform of the criminal justice system and security forces, the release and reintegration of political prisoners, the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons and the development of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) all forming part of the peace process (Northern Ireland Office 1998; McEvoy 2001; Campbell and Ni Aolain 2003; Independent Commission on Policing 1999; NIHRC 2003). Lacking is a single comprehensive approach to dealing with the past. In this vacuum, an array of truth-finding efforts have emerged, including public inquiries such as the Saville Inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday on 30 January 1972, when British army paratroopers unlawfully killed 13 unarmed civilians; 'right to life' challenges under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights; police-led truth recovery by the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, which investigates historical allegations of police malpractice, and the Legacy Investigation Branch based within the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), responsible for a cold-case review of all outstanding conflict-related deaths; and victim-led and civil society-sponsored initiatives around, for example, local story-telling

and community-based commemoration. Largely a "criminal justice" response to a transitional context, this approach to the past has been uneven, incomplete and compromised by the weaknesses of the individual mechanisms (Lawther 2015). In response, there have been consistent calls for a full examination of the past.

The latest iteration of this debate can be found in the Stormont House Agreement (SHA), signed in December 2014 by a majority of Northern Ireland's main political parties and the British and Irish governments. Aimed at resolving the outstanding issues of the peace process, its recommendations on the past are fourfold: a Historical Investigations Unit, "an independent body to take forward investigations into outstanding Troubles-related deaths"; an Independent Commission on Information Retrieval "to enable victims and survivors to seek and privately receive information about the deaths of their next of kin"; an Oral History Archive "to provide a central place for people from all backgrounds to share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles"; and an Implementation and Reconciliation Group "to oversee themes, archives and information recovery" (Stormont House Agreement 2014). These bodies effectively amount to a 'truth commission' designed to unpack, discharge and begin to heal the wounds of Northern Ireland's past. At the time of writing, the results of a government-led public consultation on the detail of the proposed legacy bodies are under review. If agreement can be reached, particularly around the British state's unwillingness to disclose sensitive 'national security'-related information to families affected by the conflict and discussions over an amnesty for British soldiers who served in Northern Ireland, the government has indicated that the relevant bill will be introduced in Westminster in the Spring of 2019, with the mechanisms "going live" in autumn 2019.

3. Haunting and Lost Lives

Reflecting on the use of the dead for political purposes in Eastern Europe, Katherine Verderey (2000, 29) presents a powerful examination of the utility of the dead –

> Dead people come with a curriculum vitae or resume – several possible resumes, depending on which aspect of their life is being considered…Their complexity makes it fairly easy to discern different sets of emphasis, extract different stories, and thus rewrite history…. Words can be put in their mouths – often quite ambiguous words – or their actual words can be ambiguated by quoting them out of context.

Verderey's work can be readily applied to a range of post-conflict and transitional jurisdictions including Israel/Palestine, Colombia and South Africa, where the dead and their contested victimhood have become sites and sources of political and ideological conflicts. Writing in respect to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Hillel Cohen (2015, 258) describes competition over victimhood as "the greatest Jewish-Arab rivalry of all: the competition over who is the aggressor and who the victim, who the overlord and who the underdog". As Bouris (2007) points out, images of the dead and victimised are powerful, gripping and integral to helping us make sense of conflict, particularly in making moral calculations and determining who is "good" and who is "evil". Claiming ownership of the dead and the victimhood of the living therefore constitutes a powerful political resource.

In Northern Ireland, the dead and victims and survivors of the conflict have frequently been appropriated for political gain. The sharpest manifestation of this debate concerns the definition of 'who' is a victim of the conflict. The Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

provides the statutory definition of a victim or survivor. According to Article 3, Paragraph 1 of the Order, this is

(a) someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident;
(b) someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or
(c) someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related event.[iv]

As an inclusive definition of victimhood, the Order includes all those affected by the conflict – civilians, members of the security forces, former members of paramilitary organisations and their families.

While the Order passed into law in 2006 with little political opposition, it has since become a focal point for debates over so-called "innocent" and "guilty" victims and the existence of a 'hierarchy of victimhood' (Brewer 2010 and 2011; Lawther 2014a and 2014b). One of the most obvious manifestations of this debate concerns the publicity associated with the launch of the Report of the Consultative Group on the Past (CGP) in 2009. Established in June 2007 by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Hain, the CGP was mandated to

> …consult across the community how Northern Ireland society can best approach the legacy of the events of the past 40 years; to make recommendations, as appropriate, on any steps that might be taken to support Northern Ireland society in building a shared future that is not overshadowed by the events of the past (CGP 2009, 44).

Following a period of extensive public consultation, the Group published its report and recommendations in January 2009.[v] A total of 31 recommendations were made on how Northern Ireland should deal with its past. These included the establishment of a "Legacy Commission" – essentially a bespoke truth commission-like body covering the areas of "Review and Investigation", "Information Recovery" and "Thematic Examination" and, most controversially, an ex-gratia "Recognition Payment" of £12,000[vi] to all victims and survivors of the conflict.[vii]

The political spectacle that followed appeared to suggest, in Walter Benjamin's (cited in Edelman 1988) words that "even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins". Having previously briefed the media about the contents of the report, including the proposed payment to all of those defined as victims, the launch of the report in Belfast city centre, attended by the author, was marred by angry protests from different victims' groups directed against the Consultative Group themselves, prominent Republicans present such as Gerry Adams and other victims – almost all of it directed against the £12,000 payment. The recommendation provoked a very negative reaction amongst Unionist politicians in particular. For example, the then DUP leader Peter Robinson criticised the Reports failure to distinguish between "innocent victims and terrorists", while a former unionist politician critiqued the failure to respect *"our honoured dead"* (DUP 2009, 4; Lawther 2014a, 35). The dead were similarly invoked in the accompanying press coverage. One of the most lurid examples of the appropriation of victimhood came in the Irish News, the main nationalist newspaper. The weekend prior to the launch, the front page carried the headline *"Butchers, Bombers, Victims – They are All the Same."* The photographs below juxtaposed Lenny Murphy (leader of the UVF Shankill

Butchers), Thomas Begley (the IRA member killed in the Shankill bomb) and 9-year old Patrick Rooney, the first child killed in the conflict.

Integral to these debates over victimhood and the meaning of conflict is the appropriation of the dead to fulfil contemporary political and social objectives. As the above example of the framing of Lenny Murphy, Thomas Begley and Patrick Rooney illustrates, those dead who speak to key themes of competing political ideologies become the "exemplary dead" (Brown and Grant 2016). In this respect, the dead offer the living "a usable past" whereby violent histories are accommodated and used to bolster partial political perspectives (Moeller 1996). Both the dead and the living are therefore haunted by the attempt to *fix* historical meaning and to *master* a contentious past (Osiel 1997).

Equally concerning is that within the politics of the dead, certain victims' voices and their calls for truth may be prioritised because of the heavily politicised message that they carry, while leaving others at the margins. There are, as journalist Susan McKay (2018) argues, "…those who use the dead to fight old battles". For example, within republicanism, calls for truth recovery into high profile cases of suspected collusion have dominated the republican narrative on the past. Brown (2011) argues this is part of an implicit perspective on victimhood within republicanism that privileges paramilitary deaths, particularly where they relate to the purported "oppression" of the British state, over civilians in commemorative space and narrative. There is also little consideration or calls for truth into the cases of approximately 227 Catholic civilians killed by members of republican paramilitary organisations (Lawther 2014a). As regards unionist political elites, the claim has been made that members of the security forces who died during the conflict occupy a higher position in the hierarchy of victimhood than civilians (Lawther 2013). A concurrent critique, made to the author during a period of

fieldwork with victims and survivors organisations, is that individual victims whose deaths lack "political currency", have been forgotten in the call for truth and justice into collective tragedies for the unionist community. Conversely, those members of the unionist or loyalist community who are the victims of state collusion are missing from the unionist narrative on the past by virtue of the complex nature of their deaths (Dawson 2007). In the absence of a formal process of truth recovery, this contest over the rightful "status" of the dead has led to hierarchal conceptions of truth, a politically polarised privileging of the truth of "my dead" and a reluctance, if not refusal, to acknowledge the truth of "your dead".

4. The Haunting of Landscape

In 1998, the then President of Argentina Carlos Menem issued a decree to demolish the Escuela de Mechanica de la Armada (ESMA), used as a clandestine detention centre during the dictatorship of 1976-1983, in the name of "reconciliation".[viii] The building was not only a reminder of the past, but also triggered a demand in the present – *how will you live* with this unsettling presence in your midst? (Bell and Di Paolantonio 2009). Linking arguments in favour of the preservation of commemorative sites with the work of human rights, Menem's proposal was contested by a number of human rights groups, who protested that the past cannot be simply obliterated. Rather, and reflecting Derrida's call to justice, they argued that the way to live with ghosts is not to destroy their haunts, but to give ghosts their proper place in the future, in order that they might inform, abstractly, the post-conflict landscape (Bell and Di Paolantonio 2009).

This example demonstrates the capacity of conflict affected places and spaces to 'hold' memories and conjure up and house the spectres of the past. Transcending space and time,

violent events frequently mark the real and imagined landscape, irrespective of what remains of the physical fallout of the event (Trigg 2012). As the increasing attention paid to the "transformative" capacity of atrocity sites attests, the ghosts of the past can be housed and their experiences put to future use. Yet, where the past remains contested, such sites are

> …ghost-places, haunted places, places that blur the temporal lines between life and not-life. When places of memory are made, they are not made simply to put the ghosts to rest (a gravestone, a cairn, a shrine…), they are *performing their haunting in public*, and the performance is designed to instruct an audience in *how* to remember the life that was lost (Robinson 2017, 26).

As much as lives can be haunted by the past, this part of the chapter will make the case for the haunting of landscape. One of the primary ways in which landscape can be haunted is through the "freezing" of geographical space and suspension of the time-space-memory continuum. As Feldman (1991, 67) argues, "Ghost tales map the history of death in local space, disrupting the linearity of time". For Feldman, ghosts are spectral traces, whose reason for existing (or persisting) is to call attention to what happened in a particular place and to demand that that place does not pass from memory. The concept of social haunting, which Till (2005, 23) adapts from Derrida therefore demonstrates both how "The process of selectively calling forth the dead and the past through place is one way individuals and groups try to fill absence and represent loss in the present", but also how claims to geographical haunting are part of the politics of place making, memory and social identity.

Across Northern Ireland a number of "political/conflict tours" are offered by a diverse range of victim, ex-combatant, community and campaign/advocacy groups.[ix] As part of the broader practice of "dark tourism" or "conflict heritage", the tours are designed to be of interest to

visitors, students and researchers (see for example: McDowell 2008; Skinner 2016). They typically involve exploring a specific geographical area (urban and rural), with the tour guide providing an insight into the local experience of violence. Stops are frequently made at local memorials, wall murals and other unmarked sites of violence. As part of a broader project exploring the intersection between victimhood and dealing with the past in Northern Ireland[x], I undertook eight of these tours during 2016/17. One tour, led by a local victims' group in rural County Fermanagh, in the West of Northern Ireland, well illustrates the haunting of place. Described as a "educational tour given by local guides providing the stories from each region and showing the real effects of Terrorism on local families and individuals", this tour involved driving around the local area and stopping at different locations where the tour guide, a life-long resident of the area, explained particular aspects of local history and the experience victimhood and loss.[xi] Some of the stops where clearly marked with formal or informal memorials, while others bore no identifying marks.

Individually and collectively, the stops demonstrated how time can be circumscribed and memory fixed in the physical landscape. For this tour guide, as with others encountered by the author, there was a clear sense that on recounting the details of specific atrocities, both time and geography were frozen in that particular moment. Thus, a bus stop used by local school children was not just "a bus stop", but *the bus stop* at which a bomb exploded; hills and ditches in the surrounding fields were not mere aspects of topography, but part of the arsenal of paramilitary organisations who used the natural landscape to their advantage when planning operations; likewise, an empty farm building was deemed emblematic of the attempted destruction of local life and the need for constant vigilance. While this freezing of place and time may be a function of trauma, as Till (2005, 13) argues,

> Returning to places that haunt our imaginations fold and warps imagined times and selves (past, present, future), yet the ritual practice of returning creates a sense of temporal continuity and coherence. When someone goes back home (and each of us have many homes), he or she may experience such vivid memories that it may appear (even momentarily) as though the place and the person returning are exactly the same as they once were.

Equally, the specific locations chosen to be shared with visitors spoke to a particular experience of victimhood that not only fed into claims of, for this Protestant community, "innocent victimhood" and the unjustifiability of "Terrorist" violence, but the experience of violence in a rural setting and its impact upon families, farms and the close-knit nature of rural life. In this respect, the landscape was haunted physically and cognitively, acting as "the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available" (Caruth 1996, 6).

These dynamics of haunting are also replicated in respect to local forms of memorialisation. By way of example, best known for the sectarian segregation of its residential space into the two opposing neighbourhoods of the Loyalist Shankill Road and the Republican Falls Road, West Belfast sustained a high incidence of conflict-related deaths (440 out of a total of approximately 3,700) throughout the conflict, and the past is visually omnipresent in the cultural landscape (Graham and Whelan 2007). Since the paramilitary ceasefires of 1994, West Belfast, like many other areas in Northern Ireland, has been actively marked by the construction of what many local people regard as tangible sites of suffering, hurt and loss. These symbolise the locations where lives were lost and actualise many other deaths which occurred outside the area. Permanent monuments, statues, plaques and memorial gardens are all located prominently in public space (Graham and Shirlow 2002).

While acting as homes or repositories for the ghosts of the dead, local sites of memorialisation also demonstrate the disruption of the time-space-continuum and the freezing of geographical memory (Hamber and Wilson 2001). For example, as Robinson (2017) argues, if the death(s) were violent or unjust, the ghost-place may confront the audience with a violent unsettled past, and the ghosts who haunt the place may cry from within for truth and justice. Conversely, deaths that do not “fit” the dominant narrative are concealed. In Republican areas of West Belfast, for example, sites where security forces, informers and civilians were killed by Republicans are elided from the memorial landscape. Such dead remain a haunting presence by virtue of their “complex victim” status. Moreover, in her anatomy of memory, politics and place in the new Berlin, Till (2005, 9 and 195) writes of “ghosts” of places of memory being “created … to give a shape to felt absences, fears and desires that haunt contemporary society” and through which “contemporary dreams of national futures are imagined”. As Till (2005) suggests, local forms of memorialisation can be used to inscribe political meaning on space. Thus, the “duty-to-tell” function of commemorative sites in Northern Ireland has been used for partial political claims making, perpetuating polarised and hierarchal conceptions of victimhood and haunting the present with competing narratives of the past.

5. Haunting and the Effect of the Unresolved Past

That Northern Ireland has one of the highest rates of male suicide in Western Europe, a prescription rate for anti-depressants that is one of the highest in the world and increasing evidence of transgenerational trauma suggests that it is a society that is far from managing the traumatic legacy of conflict (Tomlinson 2012). This, according to Brewer et al (2018, 15), is the legacy of how “violence brutalizes everyday life”. The brutalization of everyday life is evidenced in three ways: the brutalization of mundane, common sense language, ideas and beliefs; the brutalization of everyday social practices and behaviours; and the brutalization of

everyday cultural and cognitive maps and frames through which sense is made of the world (Brewer et al 2018). The final part of this chapter focuses on the in-ward manifestation of the brutalization of everyday life - the relationship between trauma, haunting and unresolved pasts. It focuses on two areas arising from the failure to comprehensively deal with the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the failure to adequately respond to the psychological legacy of conflict – the prevalence of conflict-related mental health problems and transgenerational trauma.

The intensity and intimacy of the Northern Ireland conflict appear to have had a defining impact on its emotional and traumatic legacy. Given the small geographical size of Northern Ireland and the fact that the conflict was at its most concentrated in a small number of communities (particularly in North and West Belfast), the daily experience of violence and victimhood was personal and intimate. Research by Bunting et al (2013) estimates that in Northern Ireland, 39.9% of the population have experienced a conflict-related traumatic event (for example, bombings, shootings and mutilations), while 16.9% have witnessed a death or serious injury. Likewise, research by Shirlow, Mesev and Downs (2009) indicates that in the most conflict affected areas, at least 80% of the local population knew someone who had been killed or injured as a result of the conflict. The impact on mental health has been stark. At the time of writing, it is believed that around 15 percent of the adult population have experienced conflict-related mental health difficulties (CVSNI 2015). This equates to around 213,000 adults out of a population of 1.8 million (CVSNI 2015). Arguably the starkest indicator of the continued legacy of the conflict has been the increase in suicide deaths since the conflict ended. The number of suicides has doubled from approximately 150 deaths per year in the mid-1990s to more than 300 deaths by the year 2010 (O'Connor and O'Neill 2015). Men, and in particular young men, are at particular risk. As of November 2018, the Northern Ireland rate of suicide

deaths is 16 per 100,000 – the highest in the United Kingdom and for males, double that of England (O'Neill and Hamber 2018).

Particular mental health challenges have been identified for former members of paramilitary organisations. Influential factors include long-term unemployment, poverty, relationship breakdowns, alcohol and substance abuse and, at times, the existential anxiety of the "terrible futility of the things" they were involved in (Gallagher, Hamber and Joy 2012, 66). Recent research by the author of this chapter with loyalist ex-combatants revealed a further layer of interlinked negative emotions, including the mourning of lost friends and family members, guilt, fear, regret and humiliation experienced during interrogation and imprisonment (Lawther 2017). This assessment is further evidenced by research with former politically motivated prisoners which found that among loyalist ex-combatants, 38.4 percent reported feelings of despair and not wanting to go on living, 53.3 percent experienced intrusive memories and 65.8 percent used avoidance techniques as a coping mechanism (Jamieson, Shirlow and Grounds 2010). Across loyalist and republican ex-combatants, the same survey revealed the 68.8 percent of respondents engaged in hazardous levels of alcohol abuse, while 32.6 percent had received prescription medication for depression in the previous year – a prevalence rate that is 5 times higher than the Northern Ireland average for men. The following statement by an ex-combatant well illustrates the haunting influence of the past:

> …personally a lot of them struggle to live with the effects of what they have done, never mind speak about it…You are taking tablets, you are taking drink and a brave lot of them are committing suicide. Other ones just want to talk to people. I have people coming to me regularly, sitting to 2 or 3 in the morning and they offload quite a lot. … Then I am sitting there at 4 o'clock going 'where do I go with that', but I wouldn't turn anybody away.

Given that at least 15,000 people were incarcerated during the conflict, the effect of the unresolved past on individuals and the knock-on effect onto extended families cannot be underestimated.

The second element of the haunting influence of the unresolved past is transgenerational trauma. Perhaps most prominently associated with the Holocaust and explored in the field of psychoanalysis, transgenerational trauma is the unconscious transference of emotional, physical or social pain from one person to their descendants. This unconscious transmission is what Abraham and Torok (1994) define as the dynamic of transgenerational haunting. It is understood in a number of ways. Adonis (2016) for example points to the transgenerational haunting of colonialism, slavery, exploitation and discrimination among African Americans and the intergenerational effects associated with the traumatic history of the First Nations peoples in Canada. Others have used the term transgenerational haunting to refer to the way trauma is secreted in families and passed across generations (Luhmann 2009). Thus, while victims of trauma live with its physical and psychological scars, the recipients of transgenerational trauma live with a second hand "post memory" (Schwab 2010). Such "post memories" are received through the actual stories of parents or guardians, but also through unexplained silences and the expression of grief, rage and despair (Hirsch 2008). Transgenerational haunting thus speaks to the capacity of atrocity memories to develop a "durational time" that disrupts chronological time, but also, in its physical and psychological manifestations, how the ghosts of past traumas – "that which appears to be not there" are in fact a "seething presence" (Langer 1995; Gordon 1997).

The existence and impact of transgenerational trauma in Northern Ireland has been the focus of recent attention. A number of contextual and background factors have been put forward –

coping with the death or imprisonment of a parent(s); growing up with a parent(s) who has PTSD; living in the shadow of a brother or sister killed during the Troubles; suffering from domestic violence and various forms of physical and sexual abuse; and being forced to relocate as a result of political intimidation (Gallagher, Hamber and Joy 2012). The effects are multiple. The impact of violence, traumatic experiences and social segregation can impact upon parenting practices which affect early attachment and the capacity of the child to self-regulate, thereby increasing the risk of mental health disorders, behavioural problems and as discussed above, suicide (CVSNI 2011). Alternatively, the experience of trauma and/or victimhood may result in a parenting style that is characterised by over-protectiveness and over-identification with assumed "dangers" – resulting in a "cocoonement of over-protection" as described by one victim interviewed by the author:

> When we were at home at 19 and we were out past 10 o'clock my mother would never sleep to all of us were back in the house and the door locked. She walked the floors. So, we didn't go out, it was awful and the rows. It was all about my mother's fear of losing another child.

In children, this urge to "protect" can, as suggested above, lead to resentment and frustration, but can also translate into a hypervigilance and pervasive mistrust of others, compromising the child's "own sense of security" (Danieli 1985; Rowland-Klein and Dunlop 1998, 367). Children of ex-combatants and serving and ex-security force members may be at particular risk. Speaking to these themes in Northern Ireland, Black has reported that children of serving policing officers were impacted by fear, social isolation and their parent's mental ill health (Black 2004). Similarly, the impact of arrest, prison visits and stigmatisation and the fear of recrimination are believed to affect the children of ex-combatants (Rolston 2011).

In other cases, and as is well documented in respect to the Holocaust, many parents who have survived trauma have employed silence on the past as a way to cope with their own experience and as a way to protect their children. Yet, the unspoken can be omnipresent as this victim support group worker in Northern Ireland explained:

> There would be a picture on a wall of a man who they have never met, who is an uncle, who is dead before they are born and they go at Christmas, birthdays and Easter to the graveyard, speeches are made and stuff is done. They don't directly ask their parents or their grandparents about that person because when they do so they are upset. But it has such an effect on their lives, transgenerationally, that why does their mummy cry at night, why if the TV is on at particular times it offends them and they get angry.

Euphemisms or in Cohen's (2001) terms, techniques of interpretive denial, have similarly been employed:

> One person's grandchildren referred to it as the accident – Granda's accident – the IRA put a bomb under his car and he lost his leg and other parts of his body. Another man who was shot by loyalists and left crippled said exactly the same.

These techniques of denial and silence have been found to result in a number of maladaptive behavioural problems amongst children (McNally 2014). In their research with families affected by the Northern Ireland conflict, Downes et al (2013, 590-595) found evidence that children "invented [their] own explanations"; the existence of a physical and cognitive space where "the truth [was] dangerous"; where facts were "hidden but not hidden"; where children attempted to "block out their feeling for fear of the consequences"; and a case in which one child developed the "propensity to be the 'good girl' [in] a conscious attempt to avoid causing

her own mother any more stress". These experiences are not of course unique to Northern Ireland. They do however illustrate that ghosts or practices of haunting are not some invisible or ineffable excess (Gordon 1997). Rather, they speak to the capacity of unquiet ghosts to permeate the present, transmitting a "memory of offence" that can remain painful or disturbing generations after the original violation (Levi 1989, 47).

6. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that notions of ghosts and haunting can act as a prism through which to understand the intersection between unresolved pasts and the transmission of trauma post-conflict. Focusing on the case study of Northern Ireland, three conceptualisations of haunting were identified – the haunting of lost lives, the haunting of landscapes and the haunting of the unresolved past. Each theme demonstrates the enduring and unsettling impact of an unaddressed legacy of violent conflict and human rights abuses – on individuals, communities and societies. Haunting and ghosting then is not about "horrorism" or the paranormal, but as Harris et al (2018) suggest, haunting can be thought of as an 'ethical orientation' that requires us to seek out and embrace ghosts in the spirit of justice. To engage with ghosts as Derrida (cited in Wilke 2010) proposes, involves a politics of mourning, of memory, and of inheritances that allows for a diversity of relations to the past. To inherit involves making a "critical choice" – "one must filter, sift, criticise, one must sort out several different possibilities that inhabit the same injunction" (Derrida 1994, 18). In more familiar phrasing, Derrida is speaking to the key tenets of transitional justice – to "narrow the range of permissible lies", to counter denial and to flatten hierarchies of victimhood (Ignatieff 1996, 113). Expanding the transitional justice gaze to practices of ghosting and haunting can therefore contribute to the realisation of truth,

justice and acknowledgement and the ultimate hope of transforming "a shadow life into an undiminished life" (Gordon 1997, 208).

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[i] The fieldwork on which this chapter is based was made possible by the award of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Early Career grant – AH/N001451/1 - 'Voice, Agency and Blame: Victimhood and the Imagined Community in Northern Ireland'.

[ii] Sutton Index of Deaths: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/ (accessed on 10 October 2018).

[iii] This final figure leaves out the matter of state collusion. It is now clear that the security forces and intelligence services had infiltrated both Republican and Loyalist paramilitary organisations and were complicit in multiple murders.

[iv] The Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/2953/contents (accessed on 4 December 2018).

[v] The group received 290 written submissions, 2086 standardised letters and met privately with 141 individuals and groups.

[vi] The figure of £12,000 was derived from the Irish Government's 'Remembrance Fund' and 'Acknowledgement Payment' of €15,000 to the surviving spouse, their children or the parents of an individual who was either fatally injured in Ireland or who was resident in Ireland at that time.

[vii] The controversy surrounding the 'Recognition Payment' closed down debate and discussion on the Report of the CGP. The Group's legacy proposals concerning 'Review and Investigation', 'Information Recovery' and

‘Thematic Examination’ have however closely informed subsequent efforts to deal with the past, including the past facing mechanisms proposed in the Stormont House Agreement.

[viii] Approximately 30,000 people disappeared during the Argentine ‘dirty war’.

[ix] See for example: https://deadcentretours.com/; http://coiste.ie/tours/; https://www.rucgcfoundation.org/ruc-gc-memorial-garden/.

[x] Victims and Dealing with the Past, available at: https://victimsandthepast.org/ (accessed on 16 December 2018).

[xi] https://seff.org.uk/research-and-publications/ (accessed on 17 December 2018).