Trauma, Place and the Politics of Memory: Bloody Sunday, Derry, 1972–2004

by Graham Dawson

On 30 January 1972, British soldiers shot dead thirteen unarmed Irish nationalist civilians and seriously wounded fifteen others (one of whom subsequently died), on the occasion of a civil-rights demonstration held in the city of Derry to protest against the inequalities, structural discrimination and state repression suffered by Northern Ireland’s Catholic minority. This event, known as ‘Bloody Sunday’, is the most devastating instance of the British state’s use of armed force against a section of its own citizens since Peterloo in 1819. It is also the most important single case of the abuse of state power perpetrated by the British Army in the course of its long counter-insurgency campaign in Northern Ireland. As such, it occupies a pivotal position in the unfolding history of the Troubles, not least due to its centrality in Irish nationalist popular memory. In 1992, twenty years after Bloody Sunday, as the Irish war continued unabated, the local Derry
Fig. 2. Candlelit march from the Bogside to the Derry Guildhall, Sunday 26 March 2000, to mark the public opening of the Saville Inquiry the following day, organized by the Bloody Sunday Trust. Free Derry Wall is visible in the background. Young relatives carry poster portraits of the dead.

Fig. 3. Bogside Artists’ Bloody Sunday mural depicting Jack Duddy carried from the killing ground, led by Fr. Daly with his white handkerchief. In the background is the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march, while in the foreground an armed paratrooper tramples on the bloodstained NICRA banner. Behind left a second gable-end mural depicts the Battle of the Bogside.
human-rights organization, the Bloody Sunday Initiative, described the atrocity as:

a microcosm, a symbol of what Britain does in Ireland. The British state and its agencies still kill people, deliberately, as a matter of policy without any compunction, often with no regret. It kills as a first step not as a last resort. It systematically manipulates the judicial processes of the courts or inquests in order that the law becomes an instrument to exonerate the state for its actions… It establishes inquiries to conceal what has happened and to exonerate those responsible. It censors and distorts the view of those who disagree with it.²

As this statement implies, Bloody Sunday is also a ‘contested past’,³ since the soldiers were exonerated of any wrong-doing at the Public Inquiry set up by the British Government to investigate the killings in their immediate aftermath, conducted by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery. The Widgery Report instituted an ‘official memory’ of Bloody Sunday, substantially adopted by Northern Irish Unionists as well as majority public opinion in Britain, that served the interests of the British military and political establishment as it conducted its ‘propaganda war’ in Northern Ireland.⁴ This rested on the Tribunal’s endorsement of the Army’s narrative of events – that British soldiers fired only at identifiable targets in self-defence, having come under sustained attack from the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which was held responsible for initiating the violence – and its failure to clear the names of the dead from unfounded Army allegations that they were gunmen and nail-bombers.⁵ In the years since 1972, Irish nationalists and Republicans developed and sustained an annual Bloody Sunday commemoration in Derry as a public arena from which to challenge this official memory, through the articulation of an oppositional narrative, or counter-memory, that asserts the innocence of the victims and denounces both the violence and injustice inherent in the British military occupation of the north-eastern corner of Ireland. These competing narratives have defined the politics of memory in the case of Bloody Sunday.

My interest in Bloody Sunday has developed in the context of a current research project on cultures of memory in the ‘Irish Troubles’ and peace process.⁶ This explores the relations between personal and collective memory, national identity and belonging, and the effects of trauma, in a situation shaped by extreme social division, violent conflict and attempts at conflict resolution. In these circumstances, memories of the war – concerning, for example, what is at stake in the conflict, the justification of organized violence, what has been perpetrated and suffered, and by whom – structure the identities of participants and underpin their broader political aspirations in respect of a settlement. My understanding of this political contestation over remembrance of the Troubles derives from the theory of
popular memory outlined and developed by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper in their work on war memory and commemoration. This analyses the making, circulating and contesting of the collective narratives of war memory as a complex hegemonic process that operates within a number of different ‘socio-political spaces’, or ‘social arenas’, each constituting different types of collectivity:

These range, in social breadth and political importance, from the networks of families or kinship groups, through those of communities of geography or interest, to the public sphere of nation-states and transnational power blocs.7

Ashplant, Dawson and Roper distinguish between these various types of collectivity in terms of the relative scope of the arenas they provide for the articulation, circulation and recognition of war memories.8 Within the more intimate, face-to-face groupings (‘ranging from family and kinship networks and gatherings of old comrades to local communities and interest groups’), individuals who have undergone a common or comparable experience – such as ‘the survivors of a…massacre’ – exchange personal stories and ‘begin to formulate a shared language and identify common themes’.9 These ‘shared/common memories’10 circulate within relatively ‘private’ social arenas and recognition remains restricted and contained within the group itself. In order to secure more extensive public recognition, the members of a face-to-face social group must create agencies capable of recasting its narratives into a new, integrated collective form and projecting this into a ‘public arena’ where it speaks to others beyond the immediate circle of memory.11

The Bloody Sunday Initiative, formed in the late 1980s by relatives of the dead intent on ‘doing something…about Bloody Sunday’, to ensure that ‘the unfinished business…at last be righted and that we should finally seek justice for those killed and injured’, was an agency of this kind.12 Through reinvigorating the annual commemoration as a ‘live human rights issue’ capable of appealing to wider constituencies, and generating the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign launched after the twentieth-anniversary commemoration in 1992,13 the Initiative constructed what Ashplant, Dawson and Roper term a ‘sectional memory’, directly oppositional to the ‘dominant national narrative’ that articulates ‘official memory’ at the level of the state.14 A process of transformation and representation is at work in this making-public of collective memory. The new, sectional public narrative ‘shapes the individual and common/shared memories from which it is composed, selecting some and excluding others, highlighting key themes and framing them within its preferred narrative tropes. Only when memories have been woven together into a narrative which is both widely held and publicly expressed do they have the power to secure political effects’.15 However, as the Popular Memory Group argued in 1982, the memory of the
past that arises from below in this way is often articulated ‘under extreme pressures and privations’, is ‘silenced’ and marginalized and ‘held to the level of private remembrance’ – that is, actively kept private, or privatized – by hegemonic public narratives, in particular those instituted publicly from above by the state. The denial of responsibility by state agencies for abuses of power and injustices committed by its forces works to privatize in this way, as a strategy of legitimation that also functions as a weapon of psychological warfare.

Following the turn towards spatial and geographical paradigms in Cultural Studies, I have become interested in the intersection of these processes with the formation of ‘cultural landscapes’, spatial identity and the sense of belonging in a particular place, and local place-based forms of memory and commemoration in key locations of the Troubles. Our understanding of conflicts over the remembered past may be deepened by integrating theories and methods developed by social anthropologists and cultural geographers to investigate the subjective identities, meanings and memories that become attached to, and invested in, the objective, physical spaces of the social world. This ‘imaginative geography’ involves the setting up of ‘boundaries in our own minds…designating…a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs”’; a process intrinsic to the formation of collective identities defined in opposition to others. Spatial identity, based on feelings of belonging in a place, develops over time as ‘layers of meaning’ and remembered associations accrue to a location in the course of everyday life.

The ‘identifiable sites’ formed in this way are shaped by the emotional investments made in them, but also by ‘wider issues of power, group dynamics, conflicting ideologies and institutions’ that affect ‘both the physical appearance of places…and the way they are conceptualized’, giving rise to disputes over the possession of territory, and to what the Australian cultural geographer and historian, Peter Read, has called ‘contested attachments’ to the same place. The concept of imaginative geography points to the interconnections between these cultural and political processes and the psychic and emotional dimensions of attachment and identification. The anthropologists Stewart and Strathern offer a useful conceptual clarification of these interconnected aspects, when they distinguish between a ‘place’ (a ‘socially meaningful and identifiable’ material environment) and its characteristic spaces and sites, ‘to which a historical dimension is attached’ through social activity; a ‘cultural landscape’, referring to the ‘creative and imaginative’ meanings and associations that are attached to a place through storytelling or practices of remembrance, and enabling a community of people to orient themselves within and inhabit that place; and the ‘inner landscape of the mind’, an internalized sense of place formed from personal memory interwoven with elements of cultural landscape introjected within the psyche.
Such consideration of the relationship between subjectivity, memory and place is especially pertinent in the context of the war in Ireland, ‘a mosaic of different types of conflict’ varying according to the intensity of violence and ‘its particular character in certain locations’. Furthermore, following the August 1994 cease-fire instituted by the IRA and its subsequent reciprocation by the Combined Loyalist Military Command, the peace process has stimulated a proliferation of activity, especially in Northern Ireland, addressing legacies of the violence through various practices of remembrance, commemoration, and reparation. Much of this work has stemmed from below, as local, community-based organizations – including oral and community-history projects, victims’ groups, and campaigns for truth and justice – have endeavoured to ‘come to terms’ with events in the conflict that occurred in their locality. In the course of this activity, unresolved psychic legacies of the Troubles have come to light: the still-persisting effects of what may usefully be described as ‘traumatic’ experiences, frequently of violent events from more than twenty years earlier. Trauma, now most commonly defined in medical terms as ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’ (PTSD), refers to a range of distressing emotional, psychological and bodily responses to terror and helplessness caused by a shocking event or circumstance, ‘out of the range of ordinary human experience in which one’s life or the lives of one’s family are endangered’. While the event occurred ‘in the past’, its impact also has delayed, persistent and long-term effects upon the psyche. These manifest unconsciously in a range of bodily symptoms, in neurotic behaviours including the mental reliving of the event, in intense emotional fluctuations, in nightmares and hallucinations, and in amnesia and other disturbances of memory. In this process, psychic ‘sites of trauma’ are formed within the internal landscape, that are derived from – and complexly related to – the material sites of violence within social environments, together with the meanings and memorial markers that constitute cultural landscapes of violence, horror, and mourning. Memories of traumatic events commonly focus on, and return in imagination to, the sites where they ‘took place’.

These considerations raise a number of questions. How are we to understand this articulation of social and psychic space in local memories and traumatic experiences of violent conflict during the Troubles? In what sense do processes of domination and contestation involving silencing and privatizing of memories, have a spatial dimension? How are conflicting senses of the presence of the past, in particular places, related to the polarized political identities that are among the most important legacies of armed conflict? In what ways might commemorative practices focused on local sites of trauma contribute towards ‘coming to terms with the past’? In this essay, I begin to explore these questions in relation to Bloody Sunday. In what follows, I draw on Stewart and Strathern’s categories to organize an analysis in three sections. First, I situate Bloody Sunday within the history of Unionist state control and nationalist resistance that has shaped the place...
where it happened, Derry City, and the associations and memories embedded in its contested cultural landscape. Secondly, I examine the spatial dimensions of the Bloody Sunday atrocity, its traumatic impact upon the local nationalist community, and the politics of collective commemoration which have transformed the sites of violence, death and trauma into a memorial landscape dedicated to ‘truth, justice and healing’. Thirdly, I turn to the inner or psychic landscapes of individuals traumatized by Bloody Sunday, to consider the continuing significance of the sites of trauma within personal memories. Finally, in the light of these arguments, I discuss some of the difficulties, contradictions and ambivalences encountered by the survivors of Bloody Sunday as they seek ‘truth and justice’ within the legal arena of the reconvened Public Inquiry led by Lord Saville.

THE HISTORICAL FORMATION OF PLACE AND CONTESTED CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN DERRY/LONDONDERRY

The Bloody Sunday massacre occurred in a place constructed during a long history of contested attachments: the city on the north coast of Ireland, known in Irish nationalist and largely Catholic culture as ‘Derry’; in Ulster Unionist and largely Protestant culture as ‘Londonderry’; and in the discourse of liberal tolerance as ‘Derry/Londonderry’. As Stewart and Strathern point out, the naming of locations is itself ‘an important aspect of how landscapes gain their meanings[,] recording aspects of history that may otherwise be forgotten’, and acting as a focal point for the ‘contestation of landscape’. This conflict over the naming of place recurs for the broader national territory in which the city is situated. Officially termed ‘Northern Ireland’, part of the ‘United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’, and known by Unionists as ‘Ulster’, whose ‘Britishness’ they celebrate and defend, for Irish nationalists and especially militant Republicans, this same small territory has historically been known and referred to as the Occupied ‘Six Counties’ of Ireland, denied their rightful belonging in an all-Ireland sovereign state by unlawful British military force.

This historic political and communal division is inscribed into the physical and imaginative geography of the city. Derry/Londonderry is a place where walls and barricades, borders and boundaries – both material and symbolic – have defined political and social life throughout its 400-year modern history. They have also structured the ways in which the past is felt to ‘live on’ in the present, in popular memories grounded in the sense of this city as a contested place. The modern city, built in the early seventeenth century on the 1,400-year-old site of the Irish settlement of Doire, anglicized as ‘Derrie’, was established after the English conquest of Gaelic Ulster in 1600–02, to exploit commercial possibilities opened up by the consequent colonial ‘Plantation’ of English and Scottish settlers on
‘lands deemed to be forfeit to the crown’. This was a loyalist and Protestant settlement financed and directed by the City of London Corporation, a connection commemorated in the change of name to ‘Londonderry’ in 1613. It was also a fortified city whose famous Walls, designed to defend the lives and property of the settlers within from the colonized Catholic Irish without, have survived intact to this day. Catholics were mostly prohibited from living within the walled city, and inhabited instead a marshy area immediately outside. This was the origin of the Catholic ghetto known as the Bogside.29 This geographical segregation of religious or ‘ethnic’ communities within the wider city was reproduced throughout the period of the Union after 1800 and that of the new statelet of Northern Ireland created in 1920, persisting into the 1960s when the Troubles erupted. In January 1972, the Bogside was to become the site of the Bloody Sunday massacre.

Throughout its history, Derry has been a place shaped by violent and traumatic conflict focused on the spatial imposition and contestation of state power, remembered in highly politicized cultures of public commemoration. The walled city became a refuge for Protestant settlers fleeing the native Irish insurgency of 1641, and a defensive bastion for Protestant supporters of King William III during the wars of 1688–91, that secured both the Protestant succession to the British Crown and the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Having withstood the famous Great Siege of Derry in 1688–89, the city was transformed into a mythical place, ‘forever memorable as an impregnable bulwark of British Protestantism, of civil and religious liberty’.30 Keeping alive the memory of the Great Siege has been the mission of the Loyal Order of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, who parade the Derry Walls every 12 August in commemoration. This ritual parading functioned to ‘[drive] home the point that, despite the Catholic majority [established since 1891], Derry would remain a Protestant city’.31 In the popular memory of Derry’s Catholics, loyalist commemoration of the Siege made Derry City and its Walls a symbol of Protestant domination and of their own second-class status. Overlooking the Bogside from their commanding position on the impregnable Walls, the loyalist parades exuded provocation and threat. The nationalists’ own smaller-scale commemorative parades, to mark the Easter Rising and Proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916, were contained in the Bogside ghetto by ‘a rigid, unwritten law that Catholics could not march within the city walls’, enforced with violence by the police.32

Londonderry’s continuing status as a ‘Protestant city’ into the 1960s and ‘70s, and the continuing exclusion of its Catholic majority from equal participation in economic, political and social life, rested on the geographical partition of Ireland by the British Government in 1920–1, when the city was placed in Northern Ireland against the wishes of its nationalist Corporation and Mayor. During the Irish War of Independence (1919–21), the British Army in alliance with local loyalist paramilitaries and the new,
almost exclusively Protestant Ulster Special Constabulary, defeated the original IRA in Derry, ensuring that the city remained within the Northern jurisdiction. By the end of 1922, the Catholic minority right across the North had been ‘terrorised into submission’,33 while partition had been further reinforced by the Anglo-Irish Treaty establishing an independent Irish Free State in the ‘Southern’ jurisdiction, from which Derry was now cut off by an international border running some four miles to its west.34

The Northern state was consolidated politically after 1922 by a further spatial manipulation, that of electoral boundaries, gerrymandered to secure the permanent political dominance of the Unionist electorate (Catholics formed two-thirds of the city’s population by 1966, but elected a minority of representatives to the Corporation); supported by ‘an elaborate and comprehensive system of discrimination in housing and jobs which kept [Catholics] in a position of permanent and hopeless inferiority’ and by a battery of draconian Special Powers legislation.35 Thus, the Catholics and nationalists of Derry found themselves caught in a double exclusion: as a powerless majority hemmed into a ghetto outside the centre of their own city; but also as a powerless minority trapped by partition within ‘a state run by their enemies’.36 Itself a contested divide, the Border reinforced the historical divisions within the contested space of the city, heightening its ‘internal borders…manifest in the slash mark between the names Derry/Londonderry; in the sectarian housing estates; in the old walled architecture of the town and in the competing histories of its development’;37 and provoking further violent conflict along these fault-lines of imaginative geography.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement launched in 1968 was an attempt to break the immurement of Catholics within these internal borders through protest and civil disobedience. The campaign for equality of citizenship implicitly confronted the spatial organization of segregation and containment upheld by the Unionist state. This challenge to symbolic space was made explicit in demonstrations that defied the ban on Catholic parades entering the walled city, and were met with brutal violence by Northern Ireland’s militarized Special Constabulary. Echoing events of the 1920s,38 police reprisals against the protest movement again took the form of violent assaults on the physical and symbolic space of the Catholic ghetto. In 1969, in response to a series of such attacks, nationalists blocked the main entrances to the Bogside with defensive barricades and declared a ‘no-go’ area from which police were barred, known as Free Derry. This clash of competing imaginative geographies, centred on the assertion of state control over all parts of the city and its transgression by popular nationalist resistance, reached an apogee in August 1969 with the ‘Battle of the Bogside’, a pivotal event in the escalation of the Troubles. Armed police joined loyalists in an attempted invasion of the ghetto, while nationalists, fearing a pogrom, successfully defended their area with petrol bombs in forty-eight hours of fierce fighting centred on Rossville Street (the location
of Bloody Sunday two-and-a-half years later); causing British troops to be introduced on to the streets of Derry ‘to restore law and order’.39

This dialectic of spatial contestation was intensified under the British military occupation in support of the civil authorities during the following months. The repressive power of the state was increasingly brought to bear on the Bogside and the adjacent Creggan and Brandywell districts, by the establishment in 1970 of a British Army Observation Post on Derry Walls to monitor all movement of people in and out of the ghetto,40 by the introduction in August 1971 of the controversial legal weapon of internment without trial, and by the use of the British Army, including its elite battlefield troops such as the Parachute Regiment, to police the nationalist ‘communities in revolt’.41 This strategy of repression provoked an intensification of popular resistance that spawned its own imaginative geography, as ‘the citizens of the Bogside and the Creggan…declared themselves independent from the civil authority and sealed off their ghetto from the rest of the city with barricades of rubble, slabs of concrete, old bedsteads, iron girders, planks of wood with rusty nails, burnt-out trucks and cars. Inside this Catholic enclave the rule of law did not exist’.42 Defended by a citizens’ militia, which developed into a re-emergent IRA waging an increasingly effective guerrilla campaign against the British military occupation with enthusiastic local support, the Free Derry no-go area was sustained until 31 July 1972.43 Together, these competing imaginative geographies of control and resistance, transforming the material territory into a cultural landscape formed on the pattern of the conflicted past, constituted the contested space within which the march and massacre of Bloody Sunday unfolded on 30 January 1972.

BLOODY SUNDAY: SITES OF ATROCITY, TRAUMA, AND COLLECTIVE COMMEMORATION

The Civil Rights march in Derry that day was in protest against internment without trial. Some fifteen to twenty thousand men, women and children set off to walk from Creggan down through the Bogside to a rally at the Guildhall in the city centre. Liam Wray, whose brother Jim was shot dead later in the day, attests to the centrality of the competing imaginative geographies of the city in defining the symbolic significance of the march, when he remembers how: ‘Derry was a nationalist city yet Catholics were treated as second-class citizens. The authorities wanted to confine us to the ghetto. Inside the city walls was the sacred territory of the unionists into which no nationalist could venture’.44 This ‘sacred territory’ – since 1971 incessantly targeted by Provisional IRA bombings of commercial premises and other buildings45 – was defended by British Army barriers preventing the march from entering the city centre, and drawing the ritual rioting by a section of nationalist youth. The main body of the march turned away to hold a rally at Free Derry Corner, itself a symbolic landmark on Rossville
Street where the boundary of the no-go area was marked by a slogan painted on the gable end of a housing terrace: ‘You Are Now Entering Free Derry’. As this rally was about to begin, an attack – described by the Army as an ‘arrest operation’ against leading rioters – was launched through the barriers by soldiers from the Parachute Regiment. They assaulted and arrested not only rioters running away from the barrier, but also marchers milling around prior to the meeting, and local residents; and as the frightened crowd fled, in a stampede south down Rossville Street in the direction of Free Derry Corner, the soldiers opened fire into it. During the next ten minutes, ‘the Paras fired 108 rounds of 7.62 [mm] live ammunition, an average of one every six seconds from different positions in a confined space little larger than a football pitch’.

The weapons used were standard NATO battlefield self-loading rifles that fired bullets capable of piercing an iron railway line at close range, and of carrying between two and three miles. Visual and forensic evidence and the unanimous testimony of hundreds of civilian eyewitnesses indicate that the soldiers opened fire unprovoked on unarmed civilians, including people who were running or crawling away, lying wounded on the ground, waving handkerchiefs as white flags, and going to the aid of the wounded and the dying. The psychological impact of this use of military force, as an assertion of power and control over the nationalist community and its territorial space, was recalled twenty years later by Bernadette McAliskey in a striking image: ‘On the day we knew real fear for the first time. When the bullets were fired, people dived to the ground and crawled away like dogs in fear of their masters.’

Within this ‘confined space’ on the edge of the Bogside, overlooked from the City Walls where other soldiers were firing down into the crowd, fatal and near-fatal shootings took place in four distinct zones: in a car park on the northern side of Rossville Flats; in a forecourt on their southern side; on a rubble barricade, part of the Free Derry defences across Rossville Street from the Flats to the gable wall of Glenfada Park; and in a courtyard of Glenfada Park and the alley leading to Abbey Park. The sites of atrocity are – or were – real geographical places in the Bogside, where everyday life was located before, and continued after, Bloody Sunday. After the atrocity, however, these places also became – and have remained – sites of trauma and memory within a transformed cultural landscape. McCann records that: ‘The next morning there were groups of people standing around in Rossville Street, staring at the spots where it had happened.’

Consider, for example, Don Mullan’s story, composed from memory in 1996. As a fifteen-year-old on his first march, ‘I was at the corner of
Glenfada Park and the rubble barricade on Rossville Street' when the shooting started: ‘I distinctly remember a youth clutching his stomach a short distance away, his cry filling the air with despair and disbelief. For a moment we were stunned. People ran to his aid while others, including myself, sheltered behind the barricade. Suddenly the air was filled with what seemed like a thunderstorm of bullets.’ Here, Mullan’s personal memory of shock, disbelief and fear is precisely located at the rubble barricade between the Rossville Flats and Glenfada Park; but his story then puzzles over an abrupt disjunction between these vivid recollections and an amnesia resulting from his terror at the Paras’ attack:

I escaped through Glenfada Park, but there are several minutes of that afternoon of which I have absolutely no memory. Five young men died at the barricade and four between Glenfada Park and Abbey Park. A further six were wounded in these locations. What I saw is somewhere hidden in my subconscious. All I know is that three-quarters of a mile later, as I ascended the steep steps between Eastway Road and Beechwood Avenue, a woman’s voice brought me back to reality. ‘What’s happening, son?’ she asked. ‘Missus,’ I answered, ‘there must be at least six people dead’.

I don’t know why I said that, but I did.51

Here, Mullan’s narrative struggles to make sense of an impulse to self-preservation that had caused him to register what was happening and act for his own safety within a precisely-known local geography, but had left no trace of this in consciousness or memory.

However, like many other survivor narratives of Bloody Sunday,52 Mullan’s story concerns more than a merely individual experience. In his story, the attack is remembered both personally and collectively, as something that happened to ‘us’, and to which ‘we’ responded: ‘Our nervous systems reacted simultaneously, as though a high-voltage electric shock had been unleashed. Absolute panic ensued as we turned and ran. Doors and alleyways choked as waves of terrified adults and children tried to reach safety. ‘Jesus! They’re going to kill us!’’ Mullan further identifies an explicitly collective dimension to the impact of the attack as he remembers the atmosphere in the city later that day: ‘I had never before experienced collective shock on this scale. The entire west bank of Derry was deeply traumatised by the attack. It must be something akin to the aftermath of an earthquake.’53 The character of collective shock and disturbance alluded to here, and in other personal testimonies of Bloody Sunday, produces what can best be described as a ‘traumatized community’. I use this concept to refer in part to the effect of some thousands of people having undergone, more or less simultaneously, the same or a similar traumatic experience, and of their having been affected by, and responded to, this experience as a social group. It also points to a particular quality of
collective fear, grief and associated emotions, stemming from its concentrated and compounded impact determined by the location of the Bogside and its neighbouring areas; densely-populated nationalist communities of large and intertwined Catholic extended families, where virtually every household had members on the march and knew at least one of the dead, and many people simultaneously experienced multiple bereavements. Collective trauma on this scale affected individuals with a further compounding of their own disturbed emotional states, particularly within families, their primary support network, where the psychological shock, physical injury or death of one family member touched all others simultaneously, in a shared experience of horror or loss which made each of them the witness as well as the subject of traumatic experience. These conflicting emotional cross-currents were concentrated in perhaps their most intense and complex ways within the immediate families of the dead, or ‘the Bloody Sunday families’, as they came to be called.

In the Bogside after Bloody Sunday, the trauma of the atrocity itself was intensified by the judicial ‘whitewash’ instituted by the Widgery Tribunal. The failure of the Inquiry to investigate the truth about the Army operation and its subsequent cover-up, resulting in a blatant denial of justice to its nationalist victims, had paradoxical and contradictory long-term effects upon the traumatized community. It stimulated recruitment to the IRA, escalating and prolonging the war; while for survivors and relatives of the dead, who have had to ‘live with the lie’ in their everyday lives, it compounded the original trauma of violence and loss, prolonging its effects and blocking psychic recovery. By establishing an official narrative that was reproduced in history books and censored TV documentaries, it instituted a damaging ideological misrepresentation of the Bogside/Creggan community and the Bloody Sunday families in particular, and one which functioned to legitimate their harassment by the British Army and loyalist paramilitaries. Yet it also ensured that the atrocity would live on in nationalist popular memory as a potent symbol of the injustice of British rule in Ireland, thereby contributing to a widespread shift towards a separatist national identification as ‘Irish’ among Derry Catholics, many of whom had hitherto regarded the British Army as ‘our army’. The young Civil Rights marcher, Nigel Cooke, speaks for many in recalling his own realization that: ‘It could have been me lying there on my own streets in my own blood, for I fitted the apparent standard profile of the dead’.

Two and three decades after Bloody Sunday, little of this history could be read in the physical appearance of the place where it happened. Visitors to the Bogside have recorded their disorientation at finding the geographical location to be largely unrecognizable as the site of the atrocity. ‘The killing ground is now hard to imagine’, wrote the journalists, Pringle and Jacobson, twenty-eight years after their pioneering investigation of Bloody Sunday as members of the Sunday Times Insight Team. Road-building and
redevelopment programmes of the 1970s and ’80s have transformed the material environment with its remembered landmarks, most notably the Rossville Flats. The pivotal location of Bloody Sunday, the three gloomy, nine-storey blocks that once towered over the area were demolished in stages between 1987 and 1989, to be replaced by ‘cheery, up-market council houses’. These new blocks of modern housing and airy, landscaped spaces do not readily reveal the contours of that ‘confined space’ where the Army’s assault unfolded, and only the squat, ugly and decaying flats and courtyards of Glenfada Park North can be clearly identified from the old photographs: ‘it would be hard, now, to say exactly where ten of the thirteen shot dead that afternoon fell around the rubble barricade’.

The preservation in situ of material remains of a contested past is widely considered to be an important resource supporting commemoration of what has taken place at that particular site; while conversely, the loss or destruction of such traces degrades the historical record and the potential for collective remembrance. ‘It is as if’, suggest Pringle and Jacobson of Derry, ‘some town planner had only one purpose in mind – to destroy the landmarks and wipe out the memories’.

Nevertheless, the living connection between past and present at the site of Bloody Sunday is vigorously attested and maintained by the people of the Bogside in a number of ways. Compellingly for the visitor, as I discovered in March 2000, the area between Glenfada Park and Westland Street – the location where marchers were gathering when the Army attacked, including the ‘killing ground’ where all but two of the fatal and near-fatal shootings occurred – has been turned into a public memorial space with several focal points. At one end of this space stands the Bloody Sunday monument: a simple grey obelisk dedicated to the memory of the fourteen ‘who were murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday 30th January 1972’, that lists their names and ages under the inscription, ‘Their epitaph is in the continuing struggle for democracy’. When first unveiled in January 1974, it stood in the southern forecourt of the Rossville Flats at the spot where Barney McGuigan and Paddy Doherty were shot dead. With the demolition of the Flats its physical situation has been transformed: it now stands in a small grass enclosure with a stone wall and steps leading down into Rossville Street. One hundred metres away, at the symbolic centre of the memorial space, stands Free Derry Wall, most famous of all nationalist monuments of the Troubles. Still bearing its iconic inscription, ‘You Are Now Entering Free Derry’, in 2000 it also incorporated on its reverse side a mural to Bloody Sunday calling for ‘Truth Justice Healing’. The wall stands on the site of Free Derry Corner, the rallying point for Civil Rights and Republican demonstrations both before and after Bloody Sunday, and has sustained the memory of the no-go area long after its physical reoccupation by the British Army in July 1972. The gable-end wall bearing the slogan first painted in 1969, and repainted many times since, was maintained as the symbolic location of popular resistance to the military occupation even after the
housing terrace to which it was originally attached had been demolished during redevelopment, and despite its being regularly mutilated by British soldiers and the police.67 Survivals from the past that have escaped redevelopment, these two memorial sites are markers of the lost environment, providing points of orientation within the now-invisible material geography of Bloody Sunday.

When I visited in 2000, further focal points of public commemoration had been located in the area adjacent to Free Derry Wall, where the gable-ends of new housing facing into Rossville Street hosted several large-scale murals by local painters, the Bogside Artists. These represent key events and themes in the local narrative of shared/common memory about the devastating effects of the war in this area, mediated in visual form and given public expression within the cultural landscape of the Bogside. The first, created in 1994, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Troubles and also the year of the paramilitary cease-fires that galvanized the peace process, commemorates the Battle of the Bogside in 1969. It assembles a montage of black-and-white images, imitating the documentary photographs on which they are modelled, that recall the police assault using CS gas, the now-vanished cobbled streets with burning houses and the Rossville Flats from where the defence of the area was mounted, and the popular resistance in the form of a young petrol-bomber disguised by a gas mask. A second mural is based on ‘the most remembered icon’ of Bloody Sunday: Fulvio Grimaldi’s photograph depicting Father Edward Daly ‘waving a white handkerchief as he leads rescuers carrying Jackie Duddy, a dying victim through the still threatening bullets’.68 Perhaps in response to the accusation by Derry feminist, Nell McCafferty, that the Artists ‘painted women out of history’ (a charge they vigorously refuted),69 two subsequent murals commemorate women: the civil-rights leader, Bernadette McAliskey (née Devlin), Westminster MP and a platform speaker when the shooting started on Bloody Sunday, and Annette McGavigan, a teenager killed in the Bogside by British soldiers four months earlier. A fifth mural portrays the fourteen Bloody Sunday dead. Since 2000, a further five murals have been painted, extending along the entire length of Rossville Street. ‘Talking points for the local population’, this sequence of paintings contributes to a ‘process of reflection on times and events lived through’, thereby assisting Bogside ‘to take back their own story from the milling machine of the British media’.70 Seen from the ground, the murals have a strikingly dramatic impact. They install at the heart of the location vivid images of the events of the past that took place here, creating a kind of living-art installation that weaves memory into the scene of everyday life. Their presence has helped to transform the Bogside from ‘a bleak wasteland … where the pallor of the 1972 atrocity hung over the place like a shroud’.71 Through the selection and presentation of their imagery, the murals are a visible manifestation of the political counter-memory of injustice and resistance, whilst in their location they also
contribute to the cultural and psychic function of the memorial space as a whole, in its symbolic reclaiming and ‘detoxifying’ of the site of the atrocity – a contaminated space of trauma and death – by and for the local community.

Powerful commemorative rituals of repossession are publicly enacted in this memorial space. Every year since 1973, on the weekend closest to 30 January, an annual Bloody Sunday commemorative march has followed the route of the original march from Creggan to a rally at either Free Derry Corner or the Guildhall. The continuity of this long-standing commemorative tradition has been made possible by the peculiar social history and cultural geography of nationalist Derry since 1972. One crucial determining condition has been the continuance in their traditional location, over thirty years and more, of the tight-knit, largely working-class nationalist communities of the Bogside, the Brandywell and the Creggan. These are based still on interlinked networks of extended families, many the same families whose sons, husbands, brothers and uncles were shot dead on Bloody Sunday; not to mention the families of the thousands of other demonstrators and local residents who came under attack that day. A second factor has been these nationalist communities’ creative, mutually-supportive and independent traditions of self-help and community activism ‘from below’, born out of the history of the Catholic ghetto and its culture of resistance against the Unionist and then the British state machines. The third important factor has been the persistence in Northern Ireland during those thirty-odd years, and despite the initiation of the peace process, of conditions of inequality, injustice and anti-Catholic violence endured by the nationalist minority, comparable to (if not identical with) those which the marchers on Bloody Sunday were protesting against. These factors have interacted to keep alive a public commemorative tradition for over three decades since Bloody Sunday.

Sustained for much of this time by Republicans, from 1990 the commemoration was reinvigorated through an extraordinarily subtle, regenerative and potent politics of memory developed by the Bloody Sunday Initiative, a grass-roots organization formed and led by close relatives of dead. ‘Our aim is to commemorate the lives of those who died in Derry on Bloody Sunday’, but the Initiative was not ‘a backward looking group. Our focus is the future; helping to work for British withdrawal and to build an independent, pluralistic [and] democratic Ireland’, based on principles of ‘non-violent action’ and the rejection of bigotry and sectarianism. The Initiative broadened the constituency participating in the commemoration to include other nationalists including those opposed to the IRA’s armed struggle; and transformed it from a relatively narrow, ritualized political memory of past violence into the annual focus of ‘a campaigning or live human rights issue’. After the launch of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign by a number of the families two years later, other relatives were drawn to participate, though differences and tensions
remained between Republicans and those who objected to the event being ‘made political’ by the continuing prominent involvement of Sinn Feín. The annual commemorative march and rally was developed into the ‘Bloody Sunday Weekend’, a festival of film, music and discussion about history, politics and human rights that attracts large numbers of the city’s young people and visitors from all over the world, and since 1995 has provided a forum for debate on matters central to the peace process, including dialogue with Unionist and loyalist speakers. For the activists and other ‘political tourists’ who come to Derry in increasing numbers, the memorial space in the Bogside is a primary attraction; but since the Bloody Sunday Initiative’s Political Guide to Derry, published in 1991, visitors have also been initiated into the contested history of the city, and guided towards key sites in Derry loyalist imaginative geography and cultural memory. The high point of this memory-politics occurred in 1997 when some 40,000 people, ‘the biggest gathering the city has ever seen’, participated in the march to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the atrocity. They marched not only to remember but to demand that, finally, justice be done: for the innocence of the victims to be proclaimed, that the British Government accept full responsibility for their killing, that the Widgery Tribunal’s verdict be overturned, and that the whole incident be thoroughly reinvestigated by a fresh inquiry.

This huge 1997 commemoration was remarkable for the prominent involvement of children and young people, including relatives of the dead aged from five to twenty-five, who walked at the head of the march carrying white crosses or poster-sized portraits of their uncle, great-uncle or grandfather. After the speeches, the rally heard a reading of a poem by two twenty-one year-old Bogside, Killian Mullan and Sharon Meenan. Using the repeated refrain, ‘I remember’, the poem evokes the story of Bloody Sunday in a number of brief images inter-cut with the names of the dead, before ending: ‘I remember the lies./And I wasn’t even born’. In laying claim to a personal memory of events that took place before they were born, the young poets exemplify what Marianne Hirsch has termed ‘postmemory’, characterizing ‘the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth…the stories of the previous generation’. For the generations born in the Bogside and Creggan since 30 January 1972, local ‘shared or common’ memory of the event and its aftermath is being taken on and made their own, in a cross-generational exchange mediated through stories, images and participation in commemorative rituals, both public and private. Unlike the case of the Holocaust families in Hirsch’s account, however, the collective ‘postmemory’ of Bloody Sunday is apparently, for significant numbers of the successor generations, experienced less as a burden than as a largely positive identification with a living, current struggle for peace, truth and justice. For members of the ageing survivor generation, this participation of the post 1972 generations is seen to guarantee that, in the words of
Michael McKinney of the Justice Campaign speaking from the platform in 1997, ‘we will not let them forget their bloody murder on Derry’s streets’.82

TRAUMA, PSYCHIC LANDSCAPES AND PERSONAL LIFE STORIES OF THE BLOODY SUNDAY FAMILIES

For the bereaved relatives and other survivors of Bloody Sunday, however, remembering and forgetting are more complex and ambivalent than McKinney’s public rallying-cry might suggest. The connection between past and present in the Bogside, also operates in a less visible, more private way: in the ‘involuntary commemorations’ of the psyche affected by trauma.83 Reflecting on his work with survivors of the Holocaust, the psychoanalyst Dori Laub has argued that: ‘Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion… and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect’. For Laub the traumatic event, ‘although real, took place outside the parameters of “normal” reality’, and is preserved in a psychic space that is split off from ‘the range of associatively linked experiences’, thus is incompletely integrated within the self.84 Laub identifies the effects of trauma as an ‘entrapment’ in a reality which eludes grasping and assimilation, but is ‘relive[d] as haunting memory’ in ‘ceaseless repetitions and reenactments’, charged with ‘the fear that fate will strike again’.85 If the survivor is ‘[t]o undo the entrapment’ and ‘reclaim both his [sic] life and his past’, a social process of storytelling is necessary: that is, ‘a process of constructing a narrative, reconstructing a history and essentially, of re-externalizing the event’.86 For survivors to speak at all about the experience is to engage in a struggle to shape the traumatic event into narrative form, to integrate it into their world of meaning, to fashion words that are in some way adequate to the dislocation and the horror. But they are also seeking recognition from others of that pain, disturbance, dislocation and horror. The survivor’s narrative thus demands ‘a reciprocal willingness on the part of others to listen, bear witness and… to “share the burden of pain”’.87 This is necessary, Laub says, to enable the survivor ‘to reassert the veracity of the past and to build anew its linkage to, and assimilation into, present-day life’.88

In the case of Bloody Sunday, this necessary social process of storytelling, and the struggle for meaning and recognition to undo the traumatic entrapment, has taken a number of different forms within both public and private arenas. In its most evidently ‘political’, public manifestation, the survivors’ narrative is recognized by, and integrated with, the collective counter-memory of injustice and resistance, as mediated by the murals and monuments of the Bogside memorial space, the annual commemoration and associated representations, and the Justice Campaign itself. Yet these rest on what remains largely a hidden history of individual and familial grief and loss, remembered in the deeply private but also actively privatized
life stories of relatives and survivors. Elements of such stories circulate within the traumatized community and have been fashioned into forms of ‘shared or common’ local memory, as people pool their stories, help each other to fill out the gaps and silences in their own recollections, and endeavour to piece together a more complete and adequate narrative of the truths behind the traumatic events. But as Ashplant, Dawson and Roper make clear, ‘[s]ome] individual memories may never be articulated in any wider arena’, including those recalling experiences that ‘may be (or seem) singular’, and others that are ‘too painful to bear, even when they are consonant with public narratives’. These tend to be ‘withheld from articulation and become isolated’. An isolating process of this kind appears to have affected the Bloody Sunday families during the 1970s and ’80s. The experiences concealed within the privacy of family life only began to be identified and given public voice in the early 1990s, when local interviewers collecting memories of the dead for Eamonn McCann’s book, Bloody Sunday in Derry (1992), discovered the extent and character of long-term psychic damage and ongoing traumatic effects originating in the experience of Bloody Sunday: ‘[T]here was evidently quite a lot of raw emotion there, when people were speaking about their loss. It still was very deep: it hadn’t healed. One could also detect a sense of resignation… that it had gone on unchanged for years that they were always going to carry the burden… so they felt very much on their own.’ The personal life-stories published in McCann’s book gave public representation to the complexity of relatives’ emotional lives and conflicts and the extent of their suffering from PTSD, extending opportunities for social recognition from the local community, the city, and wider national publics.

Personal life stories also revealed an often deeply-troubled and unresolved relation to the specific places where their relatives were shot and died; now also internalized as locations within the inner or psychic landscapes around which memories of trauma revolve. The exploration of this relation between memory, trauma and place is at the centre of a more recent project by the photojournalist, Joanne O’Brien, stemming from her conviction that the Bloody Sunday families ‘had been forgotten, their grief unacknowledged. How had they lived with their loss?... I decided to ask each of them whether they would pose for a portrait, standing on the spot where their loved one had been shot’. On visiting Derry to take these photographs, envisaged as ‘portraits of people bearing witness to a past they could not forget’, O’Brien found it ‘a strange experience to walk around the familiar streets of the Bogside, now suddenly littered with unmarked killing grounds. For them, though, it was infinitely harder’. Listening to their stories, willingly told to a sympathetic outsider, she discovered intense ambivalences:

Some had never been to the place, even though they might have passed it many times over the years. Most knew exactly where to take
me. On each occasion there was a moment of silence. For some, the words came haltingly because they could not bring themselves to remember.\(^9\)

O’Brien photographed one man, Floyd Gilmour, fiercely gripping the railings outside a new housing terrace on Rossville Street, on the spot where his seventeen-year-old brother, Hugh, died. He explains that ‘I remember everything’ about ‘the day twenty-five years ago’:

My brother-in-law came to the door [of the family home in the Rossville Flats] and said that Hugh had been shot dead and was lying at the front of the flats…. I was trying to cope with this news and hold my mother and sisters back from rushing out. We couldn’t get to him because the shooting was still going on. If I hadn’t done that, they could have been shot too. We weren’t able to reach Hugh before the ambulance took him away… My mother, even until she died – which was sixteen years after the event – would still sit and cry. It just broke her heart – the day they shot my brother, they killed her. … [W]ithin herself she just died. We convinced her to move house. For her to get to the shops she would have to keep passing the spot where Hugh lay, you see.\(^4\)

For Gilmour, the new housing terrace erected where the Flats once stood had not erased ‘the spot where Hugh lay’ from the landscape of memory, in which it remained charged with personal grief at losing the brother whom he was unable to reach before his death, and the recognition of the terrible effect this exerted on their mother. In contrast, Mary Donaghey, who suffered intense traumatic symptoms for five years following the shooting of her younger brother in Glenfada Park, mentions directly after being photographed there by O’Brien: ‘That there’s the first time I’ve ever been at the wall where Gerard was killed. In all those years, I never went across that way. I wasn’t too sure where he was shot and I had to get his friend, Denis, to draw me a diagram.’\(^5\) Whether ‘fixated on that particular spot’,\(^6\) or relating to it through vivid memory or a desire for avoidance, the relatives represented by O’Brien bear witness that these places retain powerfully emotive associations. Still connected, despite material erasure and redevelopment in the social world, to survivors’ internal psychic landscapes, the sites of death and trauma in the Bogside are evidently, for some, by no means ‘detoxified’.

**TRAUMA, TRUTH AND JUSTICE: THE WAR OVER MEMORY AND THE SAVILLE INQUIRY**

Since the formation of the Justice Campaign in 1992, for which McCann’s book was the catalyst,\(^7\) its supporters have used the language of trauma to publicize the continuing psychic as well as political impact of Bloody
Sunday. In demanding a public acknowledgement of its responsibility for unlawful killing by the British Government, the Campaign placed the traumas undergone by relatives and survivors at the centre of its narrative: ‘for too long, families shattered by the impact of losing a loved one on Bloody Sunday have not been able to put their lives back together, because of the absence of justice’.98 The Sinn Féin President, Gerry Adams, adding his voice to calls for a new Inquiry during the 1997 commemoration, argued (in terms consistent with the theory of trauma): ‘Widgery was a lie and Bloody Sunday remains pertinent today because it is an open wound. Bloody Sunday is the Sunday which has never ended’. On that same occasion, on behalf of the relatives, Kay Duddy, whose seventeen-year-old brother Jackie was killed that day, stated: ‘Perhaps when we have had their names cleared we can come to terms with it and finally lay them to rest’.99

In January 1998 the Justice Campaign’s skilful alliance-building, linked to independent historical research and critical analysis of the Widgery Report,100 and supported by the annual commemoration attracting tens of thousands of people, bore fruit when Tony Blair’s New Labour Government announced a new Public Inquiry to reinvestigate the shootings, ‘taking into account any new information relevant to events on that day’, to sit in Derry under Lord Saville of Newdigate.101 This unprecedented re-opening of the Inquiry, in itself an acknowledgement of official misgivings about Lord Widgery’s verdict, was an extraordinary victory for the Justice Campaign. Heralded by the Government as an expression of its serious commitment to the Irish peace process, a major contribution towards ‘overcom[ing] the legacy of history and… heal[ing] the divisions which have resulted’, the Saville Inquiry was presented by the Prime Minister as ‘the way forward to the necessary reconciliation… to establish the truth, and close this painful chapter once and for all’.102 Located in the Guildhall, symbolic former civic centre of Derry and the unattained goal of the Bloody Sunday marchers, the new Inquiry was seen by nationalists and Republicans primarily as the means to hold the British state accountable to the people of the city, in the city, for the crimes its Army perpetrated there twenty-six years earlier. For Bogsiders, the desired outcome was not the discovery of the truth about the deaths of their loved ones, since this was known already, but its acknowledgement, and with this, a recognition of the injustice inflicted by the state on the dead, the injured and the bereaved.103

The existence of this hard-won Public Inquiry, however, has brought into focus further important questions. One concerns the relation between the ‘truth’ to be established and narrated in the eventual Saville Report, and the truths articulated in other social arenas where competing versions of Derry’s contested past are represented and recognized. The Bloody Sunday families have had not only to contend with the ‘official amnesia’ of the British state, but also to negotiate the denial of their narrative in Protestant and loyalist culture. This has taken various forms, from simple
lack of acknowledgement in local Protestant schools to the assertion made in some Protestant churches that ‘the victims had all been gunmen’; and from triumphalist sectarian songs sung in playgrounds or on loyalist parades, to the circulation in loyalist areas of urban myths expressing the belief that ‘there was nobody shot in Derry that day. The bodies that were laid out in the morgue that night were taken out of deep freezes. They were IRA men who had been killed in previous gunbattles.’ Recognition of the atrocity by many Unionists has been at best grudging. Their difficulty in ‘sympathising with the relatives of the victims’, stems from a perception that the killings had ‘become so bound up in republican propaganda’. Not until 1997 did a more generous spirit emerge, in an editorial statement in the Unionist newspaper, the *News Letter*, that condemned the shootings as ‘unforgivable’ and an ‘appalling over-reaction’ by the paratroopers, who ‘opened fire indiscriminately with scant regard for the lives of others who were guilty of nothing’; and called for ‘a heartfelt, unambiguous apology from the highest possible source’ to ‘those who lost innocent loved ones’. This statement provoked a flood of readers’ letters, the majority rejecting its sentiment.

Bloody Sunday has continued to be dismissed as Republican propaganda within Protestant and Unionist culture during the peace process. Since the cease-fires of 1994, the battle over the memory of the Troubles has taken the form of a ‘politics of victimhood’, in which grass-roots victims groups have asserted the counter-claims of Protestant victims of so-called ‘ethnic cleansing’ by the IRA in rural border areas and in Derry City. Unionist and loyalist opposition to the Saville Inquiry – as a one-sided sop to buy nationalist and Republican support for the peace process – has been vociferous. Explicit Unionist contestation of nationalist sectional memory of Bloody Sunday occurred during the Saville hearings when, for example, the former deputy-leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, John Taylor (now Lord Kilclooney), told the Inquiry that ‘I believed [at the time]… and still do’ that the thirteen dead were IRA gunmen, and claimed: ‘Nationalists were drinking and celebrating because of what had happened and because they knew it would bring about the fall of the Stormont parliament’. It remains to be seen whether the Saville Report, due in the summer of 2005, furthers acknowledgement among Ulster Protestants about the seriousness of the state violation of fundamental human rights with respect to Bloody Sunday, and the character, extent and depth of nationalist suffering in Derry as a result.

A second set of questions concerns the character of the Saville Inquiry as a public arena constituted in terms of the discourse of the law. How has this shaped the kinds of memories solicited by the Tribunal and the kinds of recognition that it is authorized to bestow – and with what impact on the survivors of Bloody Sunday and the relatives of the dead? The remit of a Tribunal of this kind, under the terms of the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act of 1921, is ‘not to establish the guilt or innocence of the parties allegedly
involved, but to establish the truth, if any, behind the allegations.' To this end, according to the barrister, Dermot Walsh, its function is ‘inquisitorial’ rather than ‘adversarial’. However, the legal arena constituted by the Act provides no mechanism of redress to meet the psychic and emotional needs of the relatives and survivors, nor even a forum where their stories could gain institutional recognition. Rather, it constituted them as witnesses required to provide only ‘factual’ testimony capable of corroboration by other ‘sources’ in establishing an empirical truth about what happened on Bloody Sunday in each of the ‘sectors’, or geographical areas, where deaths and injuries occurred, and about the reasons why they did. Participation in this legal arena made intense emotional demands upon, and posed significant psychic risks for, the Bloody Sunday families and those civilians who testified before the Tribunal. Many of the relatives closely followed proceedings involving detailed reconstruction of the circumstances in which their loved ones died, conducted in the glare of the global media, during protracted public hearings over four years (27 March 2000 to February 2004). Some welcomed the way that ‘people are getting the chance to tell their stories…denied at the Widgery farce’, seen as ‘equally important for the soldiers’ too, and the opportunities for ‘learning something …[I]t’s like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle.’ Yet others, like Regina McKinney, have spoken of the anxiety and psychic conflict generated for their families by the Inquiry: ‘[I]t opens up the wound again …[W]e would want to know what really happened. It’s our place to know about my daddy. But we are scared to hear the truth, how he died.’ The emotional difficulties of sustaining an active involvement in such circumstances, especially given the length of the process and the weight of expectation and need invested in it, has been formidable; witnesses have been ‘under great stress’ and ‘sometimes collapse[d] through reliving the emotion and trauma of seeing people being murdered before their very eyes’; and the new evidence has, at times, been ‘overwhelming’.

Such pressures and conflicts have been intensified by unfamiliarity with legal language and procedures, difficulties encountered by the families and civilian eyewitnesses in securing adequate legal representation, and the approach adopted by lawyers acting for the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Like Widgery, these have treated the Inquiry as adversarial and fought to defend the British Army and its personnel against allegations, rather than participating in a co-operative endeavour to establish the truth. Key evidence in the possession of the MoD was destroyed shortly before the new inquiry was announced, including fourteen of the nineteen rifles fired on Bloody Sunday that had been retained by the Army; two of those remaining were destroyed even after Saville had demanded their preservation. Under pressure from the MoD, the Tribunal granted anonymity to the British soldiers who testified, on grounds of risk to their security should their identities become known; this despite local insistence that accountability required their open testimony, and the fact that the identities
of many of the soldiers had long been public knowledge in Derry.\textsuperscript{123} Public Interest Immunity Certificates were used to prevent the disclosure of information by intelligence agents.\textsuperscript{124} Most damagingly, Army counsel sought to undermine the testimony of civilian eyewitnesses by discrediting their characters\textsuperscript{125} and engaging in hostile cross-examination, during which some were ‘made out to be a liar on the stand’\textsuperscript{126} and found themselves ‘defending their own integrity and their own life. You’d think they were on trial for a murder charge’.\textsuperscript{127} The sense of disempowerment experienced by relatives is best expressed by Liam Wray: ‘It hurt to watch the lawyers for the Army protect the guilty, even though I knew it was their job. I am very tired, quite disillusioned, angry that the inhumanity of what happened has been lost in the legal arguments’.\textsuperscript{128} For many of the relatives and their supporters, these experiences have compromised the integrity of the Saville Inquiry. Instead of the ‘open and transparent Inquiry’ promised by the British Government in January 1998, ‘we’ve seen the Army trying to make it as difficult as possible for the Inquiry to get to the truth’.\textsuperscript{129} Optimism and hope for the vindication of their loved ones have given way to scepticism, and concern that the Defence Ministry has treated the Inquiry as a ‘damage-limitation exercise’.\textsuperscript{130} For many, the Tribunal’s credibility was finally destroyed when Saville moved the Inquiry to Westminster Central Hall in London, from September 2002, to take evidence from some 300 British soldiers as well as senior politicians, again out of a (questionable) concern for their security.\textsuperscript{131} This violated the key principle that the Inquiry would be conducted, and the British Establishment held accountable, before the citizens of Derry City on their own home ground.

It remains to be seen whether the Saville Tribunal will clear the names of the dead and call to account those responsible for their killing. Mary Donaghey is one of those who have made a powerful emotional investment in its so doing: ‘Can the Army not come out and admit that they were wrong? I don’t think it would hurt them. I know [Bloody Sunday] may be in the past, but until justice is done I cannot forgive anybody’.\textsuperscript{132} Yet such statements provoke reflection about the psychic aftermath of abuses of power committed by a state like the United Kingdom, for its living victims many years after the event; and involve questions about the process – indeed the very possibility – of ‘recovering from’, or ‘coming to terms with’, its traumatic consequences. Others have doubted from the beginning that ‘the new Bloody Sunday inquiry will remove …[t]he hurt [that] is still in the community’.\textsuperscript{133} Even were Saville to provide a vindication of the dead, there is no guarantee of beneficial psychic effects for the living survivors. Tony Doherty, a founder-member of the Justice Campaign, and a child when he lost his father on Bloody Sunday, believes that ‘the opportunity for reconciliation has been damaged for the ordinary person’ by the adversarial conduct of the Inquiry. For Doherty, ‘the law is an imperfect vehicle for getting at the truth, particularly when …dealing with historical injustice. When the time comes and we have the final report,
people will have to deal in resolute terms with closing the issue’. After the Saville Inquiry is closed, for the survivors of Bloody Sunday, the emotional as well as the political work of absorbing and moving on from its conclusions, will be carried out primarily where this work has always taken place: in the local cultural landscape of the Bogside and the Creggan, where life goes on in and around those invisible ‘killing grounds’. The question remains open as to whether, for those who have experienced such events and then lived with their aftermath for so long, the places of atrocity and trauma can ever really be exorcized of their ghosts, whatever the success of political campaigning for commemoration, truth and justice.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Graham Dawson is a cultural historian at the University of Brighton and author of Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities, London and New York, 1994, and a co-editor and contributor to Trauma: Life Stories of Survivors, ed. Kim Lacy Rogers, Selma Leydesdorff and Graham Dawson, and Commemorating War: the Politics of Memory, ed. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, both Piscataway, New Jersey, 2004. He is currently completing a book on cultural memory, the Irish Troubles and the peace process for Manchester University Press. This research was supported by the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, and the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

12 Tony Doherty in Rolston, *Unfinished Business*, p. 15; Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign leaflet (1994), ‘Vindicate the victims; repudiate Widgery; prosecute the guilty’.

13 Doherty in Rolston, *Unfinished Business*, p. 15.


22 Read, *Returning to Nothing*, pp. xi, 236.


42 Pringle and Jacobson, *Real Bullets*, p. 35.


47 Pringle and Jacobson, *Real Bullets*, p. 57.

50 McCann, War, p. 101.
56 Mullan, Eyewitness, p. 39; Hayes, ‘Narrative Tradition’.
58 Mullan, Eyewitness, pp. 44–5; O’Brien, Matter of Minutes, p. 36.
60 See, for example, Gerry Ruddy, ‘Peddling propaganda in the classroom’, Andersonstown News, 20 Aug. 1994, p. 28; Curtis, Ireland, pp. 49–51.
61 O’Brien, Matter of Minutes, pp. 34, 72, 80, 94, 142.
63 Pringle and Jacobson, Real Bullets, p. 1.
66 Pringle and Jacobson, Real Bullets, p. 1.
67 Bloody Sunday Initiative, Political Guide.
68 Mullan, Eyewitness, Pictures Section 2.
70 William Kelly with Tom Kelly and Kevin Hasson, Murals: the Bogside Artists, Derry, 2001; extract on the Bogside Artists website <cain.ulst.ac.uk/bosgideartists/>, visited 17 Dec. 2004. Images and details of the entire sequence of murals can be found on this website.
71 Kelly with Kelly and Hasson, Bogside Artists website.
73 Tony Doherty in Rolston, Unfinished Business, p. 15. See pp. 15–18.
75 See, for example, An Phoblacht/Republican News, 2 Feb. 1995, p. 6. The transition can be traced in the design of the posters advertising the annual commemorative parade. See CAIN website <cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/posters/bsunday/>, visited 20 August 2003.
76 Bloody Sunday Initiative, Political Guide.
89 See, for example, Kathleen Kelly in McCann, *Bloody Sunday*, pp. 190–4.
91 Doherty in Rolston, *Unfinished Business*, p. 16; McCann, *Bloody Sunday*.
97 Doherty in Rolston, *Unfinished Business*, p. 16.
100 Mullan, *Eyewitness*; Walsh, *Bloody Sunday*.
113 Walsh, *Bloody Sunday*, p. 56.
123 Rolston, p. 6; *Matter of Minutes*, p. 130.