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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/2116>

DOI: 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.2116

ISSN: 2259-8863

Publisher

Presses universitaires de Rennes

Printed version

Date of publication: 30 June 2011

Number of pages: 11-22

ISBN: 978-2-7535-1348-8

ISSN: 0183-973X

Electronic reference

Anne Goarzin, « Articulating Trauma », *Études irlandaises* [Online], 36-1 | 2011, Online since 30 June 2013, connection on 19 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/2116> ; DOI : 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.2116

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Trauma and Trauma Theory

- 1 Trauma may be defined as an original inner catastrophe, as an experience of excess which overwhelms the subject symbolically and/or physically and is not accessible to him. This “radical and shocking interruption of the universe, but not its total destruction¹” means that the pain experienced by the subject is forcefully relocated into the subconscious. As Geoffrey Hartman puts it: “The knowledge of trauma... is composed of two contradictory elements. One is the traumatic event, registered rather than experienced. It seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psyche. The other is a kind of memory of the event, in the form of a perpetual troping of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche².” This involves the disjunction and the forever belated, incomplete understanding of the event, as Roger Luckhurst argues in his recent comprehensive treatment of *The Trauma Question*³, thus fostering Cathy Caruth’s designation of trauma as a crisis of representation, of history and truth, and of narrative time⁴.
- 2 “What is the relevance of trauma theory for reading, or practical criticism⁵?” Hartman aptly asks. His answer is that, while trauma theory provides no definitive answers, “it stays longer in the negative and allows disturbances of language and mind the quality we give to literature⁶”. Literature is indeed one way to express whatever kind of memory the traumatic event allows: it appears in the form of perpetual troping of it by the psyche, and is best phrased through figurative language⁷. As the subject struggles within his mental cage, the ineffable memories seek a way out and may take the guise of seemingly inexplicable and compulsive behaviours (the compulsion to repeat), as trauma calls for a silence filled with hauntings. The central dialectic of psychological trauma is “the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud⁸” to take up Judith Herman’s phrasing.
- 3 The need to revisit events and “proclaim them aloud” is also exemplified by the writings of social historians. While they might not stand out as victims or witnesses, their

determination to look back on previously ill-defined or deliberately overlooked events or chronically violent conditions in the history of a nation is central to criticism, in that it makes sense of the recurring trauma of past traumatizing violent histories (which in the case of Ireland include colonial invasion, war, terrorism, revolution, etc.). This volume seeks to address some of the narratives that “ghost” Irish history and culture (about the Travellers, the victims of child abuse or previously unquestioned interpretations of 1968 in Northern Ireland, for example). It also provides an insight into how literature perceives, deals with or memorizes inner or collective trauma.

The Modalities of Traumatic Experience

- 4 In the case of a traumatic event, the subject’s defences are radically called into question. There is also an overwhelming side to traumatic experience, in that it questions the usual systems of care and control, or connection and meaning experienced by the individual. Trauma is thus ambivalent on the individual level, as an experience of excess that can only be manifested in the lack of a meaningful structure or form to express this extreme, unbearable moment the self goes through. Trauma is a death of the subject, Gabriele Schwab says, indicating that “trauma kills the pulsing of desire, the embodied self. Trauma attacks and sometimes kills language”. The traumatised subject is bound to live as the living dead, as someone who struggles to “disentangle the self from the dead bodies they are trying to hide¹⁰” – “Atrocities refuse to be buried”, as Judith Herman states in her landmark study *Trauma and Recovery* (1992)¹¹.
- 5 The traumatic experience also affects the ability of its victim to deal with his environment serenely (i.e. linearly), and one may note the following manifestations of mental or physical disruption among potential symptoms¹²: *hyperarousal* (persistent expectation of danger, startled reaction and hyperalertness); *intrusion* (during which the traumatic events are relived “as if they were occurring in the present”); *constriction* (numbing, withdrawal, indifference, acute passivity or surrender). Robinett follows neurobiologist Van der Kolk’s view that people who undergo trauma experience “speechless terror... the experience cannot be organized on a linguistic level’ and thus becomes not only inaccessible but also irrepresentable¹³”. Because by nature, trauma is registered and not experienced, it resurfaces in many different ways. In terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the overwhelming nature of trauma corresponds to the encounter with the Real: “Trauma is caused by the subject’s close encounter with what Lacan calls the ‘Real’ – a situation or an event that exceeds the symbolic order and therefore cannot gain any meaning in the subject’s symbolic framework. Something in this encounter bypasses the cognitive mental apparatus and is experienced by the subject as excess. This [...] excess is doomed to return as a traumatic symptom and to haunt the subject in a compulsory manner¹⁴”.
- 6 In his thorough study of the modalities of traumatic experience, Goldberg also points out its specific, repetitive and belated temporal structure which fails to fit in the more comfortable linear temporality of the narrative: in a way, one may also say that trauma theory thus engages one with the “real” world that is outside the symbolic order of academia and into darker areas of perception and knowledge.

Trauma Studies: A Genealogy

- 7 Roger Luckhurst vividly shows that the concept of trauma emerged with modernity and matched its “intrinsic ambivalences: progress and ruin, liberation and constraint, individualisation and massification... perhaps best concretized by technology¹⁵”. These “ambivalences” can be traced “as an effect of the rise, in the nineteenth century, of the technological and statistical society that can generate, multiply and quantify the ‘shocks’ of modern life¹⁶”. In the wake of these shocks¹⁷ a series of specialised approaches including law, psychiatry and industrialized warfare” emerged, all of which marked the irruption of temporal dislocation and loss of memory in the Western psyche.
- 8 Herman’s insight into trauma is related to her involvement in the women’s movement in the 1970s: she set out “to speak out against the denial of women’s experiences in [her] own profession [as a psychiatric resident] and testify to what I had witnessed¹⁸”. Within two decades, the work initiated with victims of sexual and domestic violence came to take in other traumatic experiences, such as those of the war veterans or those of the victims of political terror. In his thorough chapter which explores “The genealogy of a concept”, Luckhurst follows in the footsteps of Judith Herman, stressing that the history of trauma itself is marked by “periodic amnesia¹⁹” that is, by a tendency to obliterate and then rediscover lines of inquiry into trauma. This is markedly true of Ireland, where centenary commemorations (of the Famine, of Easter 1916, of the Great War) have led to a renewed interest in events that had become anathema. David Lloyd’s statement that “Irish memory is at once the memory of modernity and its catastrophes and that of living otherwise” is aptly illustrated in his chapter that questions “Colonial Trauma/ Postcolonial Recovery? Mourning the Irish Famine²⁰”.
- 9 From the 1960s onwards, interest in trauma shifted to “survivor syndromes” following nuclear war and Nazi persecution and trauma studies began to be theorized in the 1980s, which was demonstrated by the shift in terms from the vague “nervous shock” to that of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). Central to this theorizing is the Holocaust: the unthinkable inhumanity of the Shoah, its apocalyptic barbarity, constitutes an aporia, and is the crux of trauma theory as elaborated by Cathy Caruth or Dominick LaCapra, while also the premise of further applications of trauma theory. A good illustration of how the Shoah can be read using the tools of trauma theory is provided in Amos Goldberg’s article regarding the Jewish subject at the heart of the trauma of the 20th century – the Shoah, often translated as “the catastrophe²¹”.

Narrating Trauma: Speaking the Unspeakable?

- 10 The Holocaust can therefore be understood as an aporetic event, “traumatic enough to shatter the frame of historiography or representation itself²²”, one that escapes the narrative possibilities of “*mémoire ordinaire*²³” an event which import and massiveness precludes resolution or registration. “To write after Auschwitz is barbaric”, Theodor Adorno wrote in *Prisms* (1981)²⁴ – all of Western conscience is “at once contaminated by and complicit with Auschwitz, yet the denial of culture is also barbaric²⁵”. Auschwitz thus constitutes a moment of rupture, one which challenges our approach to history and the rules of knowledge.

- 11 The first instance of excessive control of the subject consists in the physical marking of the victim and the imposition of the annihilator's symbols on them. Marking the victim, from the Jewish Star of David to the tattoos in the death camps, makes it impossible to disconnect the pure identity of the individual as self and the concept of "Jewishness" – there is no distinction between the sign and the real body, and there is a sense that their fate is thus imposed on the victims. The difficulty for the self is thus to retain some subjectivity, and to "move beyond fate", beyond the Nazi assertion that "a Jew as signifier is a Jew as concept is a Jew as a real material body [...] there are no gaps between the subject and the signifier and between one signifier and another since the Jew has only one signifier. Central in this is the idea that total identity is reached²⁶". Such identity precludes any possibility to differ and denies the ability for the subject to diverge from the artificial identity that he has been ascribed by the Nazis: "in other words, the subject's constant and everlasting search for his or her signifier, or identity, is blocked²⁷." Or, to put it slightly differently, what is lacking is lack itself: that is, the very possibility to lack something or someone – to search for or construct one's subjective identity – is denied to the individual. Utter objectification is the end of the individual and his or her dehumanization.
- 12 This is undeniably where a Lacanian reading of trauma is convincing. Indeed, narrating trauma allows for the initial trauma to be "framed so that it will not collapse into two very much more radical forms of death – the death of the victim subject by the annihilator's signifier and the victim's 'symbolic death'²⁸". However this framing, more often than not, is imperfect, and failures or gaps testify to the difficulty for the traumatised subject to recall and create knowledge of the past in the present.

Expressing Trauma: Making the Most The Lack

- 13 How then may trauma be expressed and find a way out of this suffocated voice/self? What are the different ways to grasp the elusive traumatic event and thus move beyond the irrepresentable?
- 14 The language of literature, be it figurative or not, offers the opportunity to tackle those issues, as Geoffrey Hartman points out:
- [I]n literature, as much as in life, the simplest event can resonate mysteriously, be invested with aura, and tend toward the symbolic. The symbolic, in this sense, is not a denial of literal or referential but its uncanny intensification [...] In short we get a clearer view of the relation of literature to mental functioning in several key areas, including reference, subjectivity, and narration²⁹.
- 15 Hartman goes on to say that this need for the symbolic also makes for a very human and compulsive questioning "that grapples, again and again, with issues of *reality*, *bodily integrity*, and *identity*³⁰". Most importantly, he adds, trauma theory does not provide premature answers to these questions but allows the "quality of time" necessary to reflect on the disturbances of language and mind. Trauma theory allows us to "read the wound" with the aid of literature. This does not mean that trauma theory offers an infallible, all-encompassing framework for the interpretation of all atrocities whatever their scale, individual or historical. Gabriele Schwab phrases this reservation most adequately: "How then do we write what resists representation³¹?" For the critical theorist, this involves examining how telling and witnessing are steps in the healing of trauma. Namely, one may wonder how writing a life narrative can compensate for that

lack and come to terms with the event. Trauma theory therefore entails examining what it takes for a subject to overcome PTSD and return to language, to question or phrase (even in a fragmentary fashion) the violent trauma he/she has undergone. One way to come to terms with this lack of form is to reflect the gaping hole of knowledge or memory caused by traumatic experience in similarly lacking narrative structures that are “fractured, erratic structures and disintegration of self and society, culture or world³²” and constitute prominent features of trauma, says Jane Robinett.

- 16 To a certain extent, this is also the paradoxical imperative assigned to the artist in her/his attempt to phrase the unspeakable event, as well as to the critic – as someone who narrates what has been obliterated³³. Both must make choices as they grapple with the possibilities of making sense of trauma. All these standpoints provide the self with more than a mere re-living of the trauma, whether they stand as subject and first-hand witness who experienced trauma in their body and mind, conveying the intricate sense of fragmented representation and commemoration, or as a dissociated (distanciated) I/eye (that of the fiction writer or of the poet, that of the historian or anthropologist), since they propose ideological choices to the approach of the events.
- 17 Thus while trauma is never a chosen experience and durably disseminates the sense of the self, it appears that there might be a possibility for healing in the choices operated in the narratives of trauma. One of the ways of working through trauma implies narrating it, whatever form this takes. This corresponds to an intermediary stage on the path to recovery, which is usually described clinically as follows: first, the establishment of safety, next remembrance and mourning, which then leads to reconnection with ordinary life. While the failure to contemplate the past in narrative form results in trauma, with memories remaining outside the subject altogether and enacted as drama, at best – as opposed to synthesised and narrated by a subject who masters them – the narrative appears as one way to recover, and more precisely, to remember and mourn. It might sometimes achieve the liberating feat of enacting the original traumatic event.
- 18 The greatest challenge may even be to take remembering and mourning one step further. David Lloyd’s writing about the Irish Famine (1845-52) and its consequences (the disappearance of one quarter of the population of Ireland due to starvation) seems an apt summary of what is at stake in catastrophic events. Whether the focus is on the Holocaust or the Famine and even though they are contextually very distinct, both events are confronted with a crisis of witnessing, that is, with the aporetic difficulty of representing an event whose witnesses have been eradicated: “the necessity of testimony derives from the impossibility of testimony³⁴.” Indeed, Lloyd argues that the post-traumatic discourse involves a degree of risk-taking in confronting the victims’ ghosts: “Mourning is no redress [...] Commemoration too is unavailing in so far as it fixes the dead in the past, where what the dead require is a place in the future that were denied to them³⁵”. The attempt at healing and redressing events is undeniably a perilous venture, for “the paradox of redress is that the catastrophic violence of history can be righted only in relinquishing the desire to set it right, in order instead to make room for the spectres in whose restlessness the rhythms of another mode of living is speaking to us³⁶”. These ghosts keep reappearing in unexpected ways in cultural practices and pointing at the memories of futures not lived and of “paths not taken”.

The Blind Spots of Trauma Theory

- 19 One may wonder however about the power issues reflected by the scale of the trauma that is narrated. Trauma theory is sometimes said to locate itself in the rather exclusive field of major-scale traumatic events from which “smaller” traumas are excluded and collective traumas dominate over “individual” narratives. In other words, what does it take to interpret violent history? More often than not, it means reading through the cryptographic dimension of stories, as is the case for instance with a secret covered up defensively which requires reading against the grain.
- 20 While most critics acknowledge the pioneering and much-needed nature of Cathy Caruth’s or Dominick LaCapra’s studies on trauma³⁷, some have stressed what trauma theory fails to address. Because it works on a specific causal framework (for example, child abuse, or the Holocaust, or any relevant historical traumatic events), one may argue that what trauma theory does *not* take into account should also be considered. One might indeed contend, along with Greg Forster, that it obliterates the “mundanely catastrophic”:
- I am speaking here of the trauma induced by patriarchal identity formation rather, say, than the trauma of rape, the violence not of lynching but of everyday racism. These phenomena are indeed traumas in the sense of having decisive and deforming effects on the psyche that give rise to compulsively repeated and highly rigidified social relations. But such traumas are also chronic and cumulative, so woven into the fabric of our societies, that they cannot count as “shocks” in the way that Nazi persecution and genocide do in the accounts of Caruth and others³⁸.
- 21 Victoria Burrows for instance stresses that there is a notable tendency in these seminal works to not to address the issue of trauma as represented in colonialism and postcolonialism. The “ability to listen” to the other does not encompass the otherness of the non-White, non-Western subject, with Eurocentrism one of the most notable blind spots of trauma theory, Burrows argues, in contradiction with Cathy Caruth’s approach. For Burrows, Caruth “manifestly ignores power structures³⁹” and there is a blatant need to reassess the idea of trauma as “temporal disruption of belatedness⁴⁰” to address postcolonial trauma as well as ongoing traumas which are, for many people, related to the changes in power structures: neocolonialism, cultural imperialism and global capital⁴¹.

Trauma, Memory and Ireland

- 22 Memory Studies, which may be said to be an offspring of trauma theory, make for an interdisciplinary field in their own right, comprising the politics of memory, individual and social memory, embodiment and representation. Individual and social memory are two different approaches: individual memory is often theorized as located within the mind of one person, and social memory as located externally in sites such as archives, objects, narratives, or cultural practices⁴².
- 23 The first chapter of this volume offers insights into the modalities of cultural memory in Ireland. While John O’Callaghan’s approach to the way history was taught in Irish secondary schools between 1922-70 focuses on the ideological functions of an institutionalized, national(ist) memory, it also lays the basis for a much-needed reappraisal of non-conformist (or one might say heterotopic) discourses. Mícheál Ó

hAodha's essay on Travellers' narratives and memory provides additional insight into the elaboration of a narrative counter-memory that resists hegemonic discourses and asserts the existence of the Travellers as a liminal group. Much of the vibrant literary and cultural autobiographical contributions quoted in the essay unearth their long-forgotten existence as a community that is both "other" and engages with the questions of Irishness. Peter Guy looks into how the "values" associated with the Irish State throughout the construction of the nation (i.e. caring for the poor or dispensing goodness) were distorted to a point where Christian care came to mean horrendous institutionalized violence in gulag-like "industrial schools". Guy shows how through the years of silent abuse, the voices of some victims managed to find a way, if fragmentarily, into memoirs or novels which indicted the system long before the 2009 Ryan Report exposed the scale of the abuse⁴³.

- 24 One might claim, as often do the perpetrators of abuse or of terror, that forgetting has also a central role in social memory – or that remembering the forgotten may have a role to play in the elaboration of a common history that attempts to do justice not only, in the case of Ireland for example, to a dreamed collective nation-building but also to the place of the individual in that process. But forgetting is not on the agenda for those victims, nor is it for the Bloody Sunday survivors, as Charlotte Barcat shows. In both cases, collective trauma has been passed on through the generations, taking the shape of what Schwab calls, quoting Freud, "*Schicksalneurose*, that is a 'fate neurosis' [...] hidden and intangible, relegated to secrecy and silence⁴⁴" which consists in living under a bad spell or curse that often preceded one's life. The effects of transgenerational memory or the lack of it, and the transmission of body memories through somatic manifestations are but variations on this "curse". It is also quite palatable in the physical and psychological traumatic aftermath of Bloody Sunday: the traumatic experience seems to burst at the seams, questioning the conclusions of two successive inquiries and memorizing obsessively the story of the events. While showing a concern with the European scale of the Northern Irish events, Chris Reynolds challenges the customary obliteration of the 1968 Troubles from the historiographic map by locating Northern Ireland's pivotal year in the wider body of European (and specifically, French) revolts, thus redefining the significance of 1968 for Northern Ireland and offering a much-needed transnational appraisal of the upheaval.
- 25 The second chapter in this collection entitled "Approaches to violence and warfare in Irish Literature" addresses the possibility of writing about "an atrocity one did not really know", beginning with Shane Alcobia-Murphy's reading of Medbh McGuckian's "Holocaust poems", which examines poetic strategies to reveal trauma through the distortions of language. The section also allows the writer to focus on the consequences of the crucial moment in the traumatic history of Ireland that is colonisation⁴⁵. Both Sylvie Mikowski and Edwina Keown's articles centre on the colonial condition of Ireland. Sebastian Barry's *A Long Long Way* and Bowen's novel *The Last September* account for the characters' encounters with violence in the Irish colonial context. Sebastian Barry's character, a young Irish soldier fighting on the British side in the Somme goes through the throes of terror and meets an untimely death in the trenches, while Bowen's Anglo-Irish character Lois in *The Last September* has only a somewhat hazy perception of the after-effects of colonisation on the Irish people's yearning for independence. These novels provide a lens through which the loss of innocence is represented. They also stress the necessity for a transgressive discourse that suggests how the differing natures and

scales of trauma are acknowledged. For even while these moments in Irish history are indeed central, they are definitely not ideologically clear-cut and both authors suggest that they foster a critical discourse on ambivalent moments which do not fit in the convenient progressive mould defined by the historical revisionist, as says Lloyd, to “embrace the idea of Ireland’s modernization” in order to contradict the usual “statements on our backwardness”: in that context, the Great Famine, the advent of independence, or the programmatic modernization of Ireland since the Whitaker report in 1959 to the present stand as emblematic moments associated with the upbeat (yet Whiggish) notion that Ireland has “moved on” and “left behind [...] all the symptoms of an uncured backwardness⁴⁶” – thus obliterating, for example, the contemporary social consequences of Ireland’s accelerated growth and ongoing economic recession.

- 26 Hélène Lecossois’s essay on Marina Carr’s drama and Sandrine Brisset’s reading of Brendan Kennelly’s “inspired” poetry offer an apposite conclusion to the volume by affirming the spectral dimension looming above the entire collection. Carr’s *The Mai* and *The Bog of Cats* are peopled by ghosts. Omnipresent memories of the dead hover as the characters struggle with the impossibility to mourn, and while the stage makes intimate trauma palatable, it remains unresolved: the modern subject can only die of an excess of self-knowledge and language fails to liberate him. Brisset, on the other hand, argues that Kennelly’s poetry converts traumatic disruption into controlled poetic language by reverting to ancient bardic tradition, thus allowing psychic trauma to filter through the mind in its visionary violent moments, and into the material/body of the poem.
- 27 All the contributions in this collection attempt to isolate the intricacies of trauma in a specifically Irish context and to examine how the wound, which cannot be apprehended directly by the victims of historical or institutionalized violence in the contemporary era, sometimes finds its expression in poetry, drama or fiction. The volume also offers renewed critical approaches of founding moments in the definition of the nation, all of which confirm the necessity to go beyond the protective attempt at forgetting in order to memorize and possibly heal.

NOTES

1. See A. Goldberg, “Trauma, Narrative, and Two Forms of Death”, *Literature and Medicine*, 25:1, Spring 2006, p. 122-141 (p. 137).
2. Geoffrey H. Hartman, “On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies”, *New Literary History*, 26:3, 1995, p. 537-563 (p. 537).
3. Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, London and New York, Routledge, 2008.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
5. Geoffrey H. Hartman, *op.cit.*, p. 547.
6. *Ibid.*

7. This is what Geoffrey Hartman argues Romantic poetry also does – it is in a “perpetual troping”, a compulsive repetition of a tale, as for instance in Samuel Coleridge’s “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner”, *ibid.*, p. 542.
8. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), London, BasicBooks, 2001, p. 1.
9. Gabriele Schwab, “Writing Against Memory and Forgetting”, *Literature and Medicine*, 25:1, Spring 2006, p. 92-121 (p. 95).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 95-96.
11. Judith Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
12. See Judith Herman, p. 35-43, quoted in Jane Robinett, “The Narrative Shape of Traumatic Experience”, *Literature and Medicine*, 26: 2, Fall 2007, p. 290-311 (p. 296).
13. Jane Robinett, “The Narrative Shape...”, p. 290.
14. A. Goldberg, “Trauma, Narrative, and Two Forms of Death”, p. 133.
15. Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, p. 20.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
17. The term *shell-shock* was first coined in *The Lancet* in 1915. But most strikingly, Luckhurst devotes a section of his essay to the way in which trauma initially came to be associated with the expansion of the railways in the 1860s (see Luckhurst, p. 20-26). In the case of Ireland, those “shocks” include: the Famine of 1845-52; the tragedy of the Belfast-launched Titanic in 1912, or “shell-shock” as exemplified by the casualties of the Battle of the Somme in 1916.
18. Judith Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 2
19. *Ibidem*, p. 7.
20. David Lloyd, *Irish Times, Temporalities of Modernity*, Field Day Files 4, University of Notre Dame/ Field Day, Dublin, 2008, p. 6.
21. See A. Goldberg, *op. cit.*
22. R. Luckhurst, *op.cit.*, p. 65.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. S. and S. Weber, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1981.
25. R. Luckhurst, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
26. A. Goldberg, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
29. Geoffrey H. Hartman, *op. cit.*, p. 547.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Gabriele Schwab, “Writing Against Memory and Forgetting”, p. 102.
32. Jane Robinett, *op. cit.*, p. 297.
33. For example, David Lloyd stresses the need, “[i]n the very cusp of catastrophe [...] [to bespeak] the memory of alternative possibilities that live on athwart the mournful logic of historicize events”(Irish Times..., p. 38). In that sense, the Famine has peculiar significance because it does not serve only to evince the spectre of Irish misery and contains a paradoxical and obliterated possibility. One of the paradoxes of the Famine, Lloyd argues, “is the cultural recalcitrance of the Irish miserable as their conditions of life

were, they clung to them with often vehement resistance, to the despair of English 'improvers' [...] the Irish poor resisted tenaciously and persisted in practices that British political economists regarded as profoundly irrational and immoral." Namely, "their lack of interest in material progress, their idleness, but also their vivacity and pleasure, qualities that grate on the Protestant sensibility of the English capitalist and administrator." (See *Irish Times...*, p. 45).

34. Feldmann and Laub in Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, p. 7.

35. David Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

36. *Ibidem*, p. 44.

37. See Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* for a summary of Cathy Caruth's main lines of thought, i.e.: Adorno; Derrida and aporia; and psychoanalysis (p. 4-10).

38. Greg Forter, "Freud, Faulkner, Caruth: Trauma and the Politics of Literary Form", *Narrative*, 15:3, October 2007, p. 259-285 (p. 260).

39. Victoria Burrows, "The Heterotopic Spaces of Postcolonial Trauma in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*", *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 40, nos. 1 & 2, Spring and Summer 2008, p. 161-177 (p. 163).

40. *Ibid.*

41. See also Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, "Introduction : Postcolonial Trauma Novels", *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 40, no. 1 & 2, Spring and Summer 2008, p. 1-12. They emphasize the fact that "trauma studies [...] are almost exclusively concerned with traumatic experiences of white Westerners and solely employ critical methodologies emanating from a Euro-American context" (p. 2).

42. On the topic of commemoration, see Jay Winter's analyses. Winter describes three phases in the process of commemoration for sites as follows: "the creative phase, defined by a trigger or impetus to remember, implies a debate about the appropriate forms memory should take: a monument, the production of a memorial site / public unveiling of sites. The institutional phase: solidifies and routinizes a commemorative calendar through repetitive rituals and texts. The third phase is that of the transformation of memory, in which second and subsequent generations inherit sites. It is a phase of symbolic accretion during which new interpretations are added by new generations. While this threefold process seems attractive, it may also fall prey to a biased reading, for example such as one might encounter in a Nationalist agenda" (qtd in Karen T. Hill's thorough review on "Memory Studies", *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 62, Autumn 2006, p. 325-341, p. 327).

43. Again, in the case of Ireland, recent reports on child abuse, in particular those in the care of the so-called "Industrial schools" priests and nuns or of Magdalen laundries, have substantiated the plight of sexual abuse survivors, whose symptoms may include "symptoms of dissociation, self-harm, multiple and borderline personality disorders or 'somatization'", all of which "could be confidently traced back to 97 per cent of cases to incidents of sexual abuse of childhood" (J. Herman qtd by Roger Luckhurst, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

44. Gabriele Schwab, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

45. Central for making this point is David Lloyd's analysis: "Trauma entails violent intrusion and a sense of utter objectification that annihilates the person as subject or agent. This is no less apt a description of the effects and mechanisms of colonization : the overwhelming technological, military and economic power of the colonizer; the violence

and programmatically excessive atrocities committed in the course of putting down resistance and intrusion, the deliberate destruction of the symbolic and practical resources of whole populations. It would seem that we can map the psychological effects of trauma onto the cultures that undergo colonization.” (*op. cit.*, p. 24)

46. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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