

Tom Herron and John Lynch

Like 'Ghosts who'd Walked Abroad': Faces of the Bloody Sunday Dead

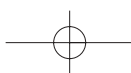
The face is not a force. It is an authority.¹ ... [It] is what resists me by its opposition and not what is opposed to me by its resistance ... The absolute nakedness of a face, the absolutely defenseless face, without covering, clothing or mask, is what opposes my power over it, my violence, and opposes it in an absolute way, with an opposition which is opposition itself.²

The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of the human face.³

From Derry to Downing Street

As the Saville Inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday moves towards its conclusion there is the promise of a resolution to one of the most traumatic and contentious events in recent Northern Irish history. The weight of expectation on Mark Saville and his colleagues is considerable; the challenges they face in creating an adequate version of events out of the multitude of submissions, photographic evidence, written and oral statements and cross-examinations are colossal. Held over a period of seven years (1998–2005) and costing an estimated £155 million, the Inquiry heard oral evidence from 921 witnesses and considered 1,555 pieces of written evidence.⁴ Originally scheduled to produce his final report in 2004, Lord Saville is now expected to deliver his findings to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in spring or summer of 2006. When those findings are eventually published, it is highly unlikely that any single truth or version of events will emerge. But if a single truth cannot be arrived at, then a version of events that, in Michael Ignatieff's phrase, 'reduce[s] the numbers of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse'⁵ may well provide, at the very least, some redress to the injustice perpetrated over 34 years ago on a cold but bright Sunday afternoon in Derry.

This article deals with a strand of the Bloody Sunday story that links the present Inquiry and that day in Derry on 30 January 1972 when thirteen men and boys were shot and killed during a civil rights march. We are concerned with the 'portrait' photographs of the dead men: specifically how the portraits were used by newspaper media in the days following the killings, and how they became a central element in the victims' families' long campaign for justice and truth (see Figure 1). Since the days following the killings the portraits have been deployed in a number of ways, each time reflecting changing concerns among the families and the groups campaigning on their behalf, and each time producing quite distinct rhetorical effects and ethical



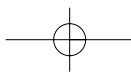
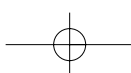
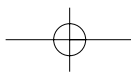


Figure 1. Bloody Sunday commemoration 1997, Creggan, Derry. Copyright: Joanne O'Brien.

demands. The notion of rhetoric will be central to our argument that the displaying and parading of the photographs are not just acts of commemoration or of mourning, but are in fact critical interventions – acts of persuasion – in the campaign to persuade the British Government to establish a full and proper Inquiry into the circumstances of the killings. This goal was partially achieved on 29 January 1998 when British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced to the House of Commons that an Inquiry chaired by Lord Saville of Newdigate and two other Commonwealth judges would be established to consider new evidence relating to the killings.⁶

The rhetorical deployment of the portrait images did not, in fact, come to an end with the setting up of the Inquiry. Carried by victims' relatives on the annual Bloody Sunday marches, situated at key points in the city of Derry and beyond it, and transformed into the minor-monumental form of the street mural, the photographs continue to influence the debate concerning Bloody Sunday. They continue to function as a form of *apostrophe*, as an instance of *epideictic* speech, as a demonstrative utterance that carries suggestions of blame.⁷ And because they are instances of direct address to the living by the dead, they are also powerful instances of *prosopopeia*, in which the absent or the dead implore the living into action. It is the process through which essentially private photographs became transformed into such powerful ethical and, indeed, political signifiers that is the concern of this article.



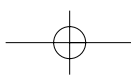


Strange meeting

We begin with the first moment of collective representation of those killed on Bloody Sunday. On that day thirteen unarmed men from the Creggan, Brandywell, Waterside and Bogside districts of Derry were shot and killed by the British Army during a march against the internment without trial of members of the nationalist community organized by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). Although it seems that soldiers of the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment were responsible for most of the deaths, it appears likely that fatal shots were also fired by snipers of the Royal Anglian Regiment from their positions in observation posts on the city walls.⁸ Sixteen other people were seriously injured, one man dying later of his wounds. The day itself, and the subsequently discredited inquiry under Lord Chief Justice Widgery, are widely regarded as being decisive moments in the legitimization of the Provisional IRA as the most effective means of defending the nationalist communities of Northern Ireland against the civil and military authorities whose duty it was, *de jure* if not *de facto*, to protect them.

Reports of the killings (including large-format photographs of the Paratroopers entering the Bogside, of brutally executed arrests, of victims being attended to by Knights of Malta paramedics and by their fellow marchers) appeared in most of the British and Irish Monday-morning newspapers. But it was not until the following day, Tuesday 1 February 1972, that the portrait photographs of the dead were featured. Indeed, not every British and Irish national newspaper carried the images. Many, including the regional daily evening newspaper *The Belfast Telegraph*, featured dramatic photographs of the events but not the 'portraits' themselves. The newspapers that did carry the portraits of the dead men arranged the images in a cellular structure composing a grid, although with differences in arrangement. For example, under the headline 'The Thirteen who died on Bloody Sunday', *The Derry Journal* featured photographs of twelve victims, whilst reserving a larger-format image of Willie McKinney to illustrate a brief feature on his work as a printer on the paper. Entitled 'Our Colleague is Dead', the feature told its readers, 'Willie was not a stone-thrower, a bomber or a gunman. He had gone to the Civil Rights march in the role of amateur photographer. He was a printer to trade, an outstanding craftsman; the lay-out of some of the reports and advertisements in this very issue, which also records his untimely death, bear testimony to his professional ability.'⁹

The Irish News (Belfast), meanwhile, presented the photographs in two rows between the masthead and the headline 'Nation to Honour Derry 13' (see Figure 2). Under each image, arranged in a different order to the *Journal*, appeared the name, age, street and neighbourhood of each victim. Some of the men's occupations were given: 'Gerald Donaghey (17), labourer, Meehan Square; Gerald McKinney (35), traveller, Knockdarragh Flats, Waterside.' There was a mix-up between the captions under the photographs of William Nash and James Wray. Giving prominence in their leading article to the reaction of the Irish Government, the paper's coverage was uniformly critical of the British Army's actions and sceptical towards official British



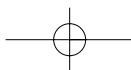
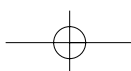


Figure 2. *The Irish News* (Belfast), 1 February 1972. Reproduced by permission of *The Irish News*.

explanations of those actions: the testimony of seven priests, all of whom were eyewitnesses to the events, was a crucial part of the paper's front-page coverage. The *News'* approach was markedly similar to that of Tuesday's edition of *The Irish Times* (Dublin) that, again, featured the photographs in two rows under the headline 'The 13 Shot Dead at Bogside Rally'.

The treatment given the images by *The Times* (London) was the most impressive of all the newspapers on that day (see Figure 3). A double-page spread was devoted to a range of eyewitness accounts, journalists' reports, transcripts of television news programmes and press-conference proceedings. The dead were represented on two rows under the headline 'We were holding white hankies in the air but the Army opened up on us, witness says.' The witness in question was Anthony Martin, a former member of the Royal Navy and the Ulster Defence Regiment: his testimony featured prominently alongside other eyewitnesses' accounts of the shootings. The following day the paper featured eyewitness accounts of five of the wounded, all of them photographed in various states of distress in their Altnagelvin hospital beds.

Other means of representing the trauma of the day included a cartoon on the front page of *The Guardian* (Manchester and London) with the caption 'Giant's Causeway'. In the illustration the famous rock formation on the northern coastline of County Antrim is constructed of thirteen upturned



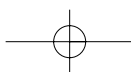
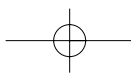
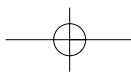


Figure 3. *The Times* (London), 1 February 1972. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.



coffins with a negotiating table perched atop the highest coffin. *The Daily Telegraph* (London) did not use the portrait images, but its 2 February edition carried, like several other British newspapers, a photograph of thirteen crosses being placed on the steps of the RUC barracks in the small town of Dungiven in County Derry alongside a photograph of a British soldier bowing his head in observance of a minute's silence: this was an image that was carried (no doubt for ameliorative purposes) by several British newspapers. As for the British tabloids, *The Daily Record* (Glasgow) devoted most of a page to the portraits, with the dual headline, 'They fell on Bloody Sunday' and 'Was there a Blunder?' And while not featuring the images, *The Sun's* (London) front page on Monday 31 January carried the headline 'The Bloody Sunday "Massacre"'. It is no great surprise that the dead were represented by photographs of their faces, nor that those images were arranged in the form of a grid. As John Tagg argues, the use of a portrait by newspapers is an attempt to anchor an account of a dramatic event by illustrating it with a representation of its 'human face' on the assumption that the head is expressive of the truth of the

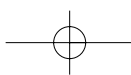


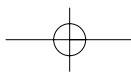


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subject.¹⁰ The configuration of the individual photographs in the grid formation allows the distinct elements of the event to be presented in a singular, immediately graspable, context. Looking across the various newspapers' arrangements of the images-within-grids a number of similarities and differences can be identified. Although there is an attempt to impose uniformity, the variations in size, quality and ordering within the grid insist on an irreducible difference. The grid may suggest, or impose, a certain uniformity but the material that constitutes it, the thirteen individual photographs, insist upon a somewhat different register: these images of variable quality derive not from manifestly official sources, such as criminal mug shots, surveillance, ID, or even post-mortem photography, but rather from the personal and family contexts of each victim. These are images taken from larger photographs that in the hours following the killings were no doubt hastily gathered by relatives from mantelpieces, presses, purses and family albums. In almost every case the individual has clearly been cropped out of a larger picture that captured, in addition to the individual victim, families and friends. Although it is unlikely that this effect was apparent, let alone of particular concern, to readers of newspapers in those early days of February 1972, the severe cropping of the images serves to reinforce the effect of an abrupt separation from an original and pleasurable prior context. The original photograph of Jackie Duddy, for example, showed him posing with a group of young boxers at the Long Tower Boy's Club: he wears a string vest and dons a pair of huge boxing gloves with which he half-protects his face. The photographs of Hugh Gilmour, John Young and Kevin McElhinney were taken in photobooths (probably in Woolworth's on Ferryquay Street or Wellworth's in Waterloo Place). The images of Gerald McKinney and William McKinney could also have been taken in a photobooth, but both have a particular quality that suggests they may have been taken in a professional photographer's studio. William Nash is playing a guitar outside his house in Dunree Gardens in the Creggan. Jim Wray is standing arm-in-arm with a young woman. Michael Kelly wears a long white jacket in a photograph taken by a colleague during their lunchbreak. Michael McDaid squints into the sun as he crouches down to hold a baby. Bernard McGuigan sits with his wife in a nightclub, both of them smiling broadly at the photographer. And, perhaps most poignantly, Gerald Donaghy, as a child of eight or nine years of age, seems to stare into space in a photograph taken to mark his First Holy Communion.¹¹

So there is a tension at work here. From the moment these individual images appear in the newspaper grid, they take on a new kind of existence. Transformed through the 'accident' of death and through the media's need to show them in relation to an event, they are forced to coexist. Thirteen men and boys – most of whom did not know each other – now dwell together in death in a sort of spectral convocation.¹² These animated, mostly smiling faces become *the* Bloody Sunday dead, fated always, at least as far as the print media are concerned, to be placed in a rigid arrangement of images alongside, above and below their fellow victims. But this formal visual uniformity is rendered unstable by the fact that the images insist upon a quite different register of



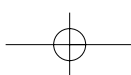


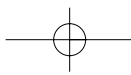
meaning. As we look at the grid-locked faces of the Bloody Sunday dead we realize that we are actually in the presence of separate and entirely unique faces as they look out at us and address us with the gaze that they once held for a fraction of a second during a summer afternoon on a beach in Donegal, or a lunchbreak from work, or an evening out on the town: times and places that have nothing whatever to do with Bloody Sunday itself.

Following the publication of Lord Widgery's report on 19 April 1972, the photographic grid reappeared in some newspapers or appeared for the first time in others. *The Belfast Telegraph* (the North-West edition of which sold thousands of copies every evening in Derry) did not use the portraits in its coverage of the shootings themselves, but it did feature them to accompany its generally favourable reporting of Widgery's findings. The dead appeared on page 12 of the 20 April edition, under the headline 'Sniper Fired First, No Breakdown in Army Discipline but some Soldiers Fired Recklessly. What happened on Bloody Sunday'. So here the portraits were anchored by the interpretative framework of Widgery: not 'What Happened on Bloody Sunday?' but 'What Happened on Bloody Sunday'. Accompanying each photograph there were one or two eyewitness accounts to the Tribunal but each entry concluded with Widgery's brief rulings on the circumstances of each man's death. Most other British newspapers followed the same pattern. For those newspapers that carried the portrait photographs the grid now suggested not so much the men's guilt (not even those most sympathetic to the British case could conjure conclusive guilt out of Widgery's findings) but certainly their complicity in their own deaths.¹³ This was not quite a collection of mug shots, but it was to all intents and purposes an assemblage of the criminally complicit. In official terms the event was closed and the brief media life of the portraits all but disappeared as, in the wider context, the coverage of the region settled into a regular pattern of violent act followed by moral denunciation, 'the politics of the last atrocity', as Gerry Adams once put it. But in Derry – beginning with the first anniversary – the portraits of the dead men (now with the addition of John Johnston who died in July 1972 from medical complications following the injuries he received on the day of the march) began to take on a new function. Now they appeared as the ghost reappears, as a troubling presence, as a reminder of times out of joint, as a demand for redress.

Mobilizing the dead

In the wake of the theorizations of the photographic image undertaken by Roland Barthes, Philippe Dubois, Susan Sontag and others, it has become something of a truism to say that photography and death share certain affinities. Dubois deploys the term 'thanatography' to describe the photograph's deathly silence,¹⁴ while Barthes describes the experience of viewing the photograph as a form of 'flat death'.¹⁵ However, what we want to stress in the following analysis is not so much the absoluteness associated with death, nor the perhaps comforting realization that the photographic image may well retain elements of what Sontag startlingly described as the 'real'.¹⁶

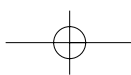




Instead, we want to discuss the photographs as having something to do with the unfinishedness of spectrality. It is photography and spectrality, photography as spectrality, that is key to understanding the function of the images of the dead in the campaigns that have led from Bloody Sunday to the Saville Inquiry.

From the first anniversary of the killings the images of the fourteen dead men began a more public life as they were carried by families in the 'Ceremony of the Innocents', a procession of some 15,000 people who, after attending an interdenominational requiem mass at St Mary's Chapel in the Creggan, followed the route of the original protest but this time aiming not for the Guildhall in the city's centre but for Rossville Street, where most of the killings took place. Just outside the Rossville Flats Lord Fenner Brockway (who was present at the march the previous year) cut the first sod at the site of the proposed Bloody Sunday memorial, a rather conventional obelisk that would be unveiled the following year. What is striking about this and other early commemorative parades is the way in which the photographic images of the dead men were held aloft at the head of the procession in much the same way as icons of saints are held in Catholic pilgrimages. In fact, the other commemorative marches in the 1970s followed rather rigidly the protocols of Catholic funeral processions, in which it is the male relatives and friends who lead the way, with the women and children following. On the first anniversary march, those carrying the small placards featuring black-and-white reproductions of the portraits were predominantly adult males. Eamon Melaugh's memorable images of the placards held by relatives of the dead show a somewhat makeshift arrangement: an unadorned platform featuring people bearing blown-up versions of the photographs that had appeared so widely the previous year. And perhaps through an accident of design, the faces of the dead obscure the heads and faces of the people holding the placards (see Figure 4). Situated in the very place in which the killings took place, the photographs produce an effect of 'homogeneous empty time'.¹⁷ Here, in the very heart of the killing ground, is an uncanny reminder of what had happened a year earlier. But this is far more than simple commemoration because the photographs, juxtaposed with civil rights banners and the speeches made from the platform, were also an enjoinder to justice: justice for those who were *still* interned. This was exactly the same demand made by the men and by the assembled crowd a year earlier.

No longer constrained to mass cards or to the pages of newspapers, these images of the dead men now began to move in and around the public sphere. They formed a continuation of the protest of the previous year, while adding a supplement that strengthened the protest itself. The shift from private to public brought about by the displaying of the photographs (or manipulations of them) changed the emphasis from one of emotional *reminder* to that of ethical and political *demand*. The images were carried not as part of a firmly established ceremony but as part of a dynamic campaign that was initially a continuation of the anti-internment protests but then, from 1992, became much more concerned with the need for a new and independent inquiry into the killings themselves. It is outside the scope of this article to deal with the



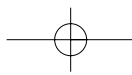
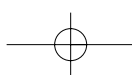
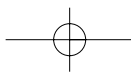


Figure 4. 'Ceremony of the Innocents' platform party. First Bloody Sunday commemoration, 1973. Copyright: Eamon Melaugh/CAIN <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/melaugh/>>.

long history of Bloody Sunday commemoration, but throughout each moment of commemoration the photographic images have been actively deployed. Carried at the head of the march, held aloft at the very spot in which the killings occurred, they function as an enjoinder to look, to contemplate, to act. They are a forceful return of the repressed in a fleeting and uncanny moment of spectrality.¹⁸ This is a phenomenon both powerful and banal: every photograph, Barthes asserts, is spectral in that we look at an image of someone who is always caught for a moment in the past and, to that extent, is dead and gone, and yet here they are in front of us, in our hands, looking out to us. The gaze of those who have gone, of the dead, cannot fail to produce effects in the here and now. Although the image cannot literally speak, 'it does not', as Jacques Derrida said about the ghost, 'do nothing.'¹⁹ All photographs produce these effects, but when those photographs are made part of an ethical/political campaign that attempts to draw attention to the injustice of the deaths to which those images bear witness, then the aura of spectrality is made more potent.

The photographs of the dead men serve as a memorial, a memory trace of loved ones now distant and gone. But they also function in the public sphere as an apostrophic demand: 'Do not forget what happened to us cruelly, unjustly on that day.' Key to the ways in which these images have been translated and mobilized by the groups campaigning on the families' behalf is





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a refusal to allow silence to settle on the individual pictures, which also serve metonymically for the community of Derry and beyond that for the nationalists of Northern Ireland. Bloody Sunday was an attempt by the British State to silence a recently politicized population and in the short term it worked. Scores of contemporary accounts reflect the state of stunned silence that fell on the city of Derry in the days after the killings and leading up to the funerals of the dead men, the day which Seamus Heaney describes in his poem 'Casualty':

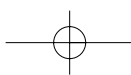
That Wednesday
Everybody held
His breath and trembled.

It was a day of cold
Raw silence; wind blown.²⁰

Lord Widgery's Inquiry sought to impose another form of official silence on the event and took only fourteen witness statements into account, leaving over 450 outside the parameters of the Inquiry, whilst almost all military accounts were included.²¹ Visiting Derry in the week Lord Widgery's findings were published, the Dublin-based poet Thomas Kinsella sensed the deepening silence in the wake of this 'official forgetting':

The gentle rainfall drifting down
Over Colmcille's town
Could not refresh, only distil
In silent grief from hill to hill.²²

But over the course of the next thirty years and more there was a refusal by the families and their supporters to allow the official forgetting in the wake of Widgery to go uncontested. Taking their place at the centre of this process the portraits now became the manifestation of the wound, the open cut that disturbed the surface of official discourse. In ways similar to the tactics of the Mothers of the Disappeared in Rio de Janeiro's Plaza de Mayo, the Derry families' displaying of the portraits was a demand for wider recognition and governmental response. These mobilizations of the portrait images worked with, and in some ways against, more official markers of Bloody Sunday, such as the limestone memorial on Rossville Street, or even the minor-monumental mural of the dead produced by the Bogside Artists (see Figure 5). The photographs of the faces of the dead are far more resistant to the monument's singularization of the experience of the event: as Barthes has argued, photography has 'renounced the monument'.²³ For the reasons we set out earlier regarding the differences insisted upon by the various settings and *mises en scène* of each photographic image, the portraits of the fourteen dead men refuse to allow the event to become settled or abstracted in the ways suggested by monuments, plaques or murals.



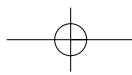
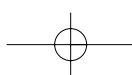


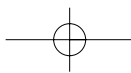
Figure 5. Bloody Sunday mural, Bogside, Derry. Reproduced by permission of the Bogside Artists. Copyright: Martin Melaugh/CAIN <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/melaugh/>>.



Faces in the crowd

We have referred several times to the extreme faciality of these images. We do this quite deliberately: it is in the presentation of the faces of the dead men that resides the power of the collective layout as a direct response to the effacing of identity undertaken by the British Army and subsequent British administrations. On the day of the march the British authorities set out to confront, in their terms, a faceless crowd, an indiscriminate mass of





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Derry young hooligans/yobbos/Bogsidiers/terrorists/organizers of, and participants in, a march that challenged the authority of the State to intern members of the nationalist community without trial. On that day all of those marching, regardless of their political affiliations, motivations and reservations, were simply a 'crowd', an assemblage that Zygmunt Bauman defines as having to do precisely with the 'loss of face':

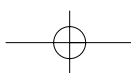
The urban crowd is not a collection of individuals. It is rather an indiscriminate, formless aggregate in which individuality dissolves. The crowd is faceless, but so are its units. Units are replaceable and disposable. Neither their entry nor their disappearance makes a difference. It is through their facelessness that the mobile units of urban congestion are defused as the possible sources of social engagement.²⁴

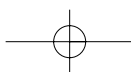
When we realize that the NICRA march from the Creggan to the Guildhall was, in fact, an 'illegal' protest, then the crowd itself becomes criminalized: all those who participated in it were, by definition, criminals. Witness the response to the massacre in the *Daily Mail* editorial of Monday 31 January. Under the headline 'Who are the real killers?' the leader writer opined,

British bullets will be found in most of their bodies ... but the blood is on the consciences of irresponsible political leaders and the fanatical IRA ... Those who died were not martyrs to Civil Rights (though already last night they were being promoted as such). They were terrorists, or fodder for terrorists. They died that anti-British propagandera [sic] might flourish.

It is not at all surprising therefore that the concentration upon the faces of the victims of Bloody Sunday has been so key to all subsequent commemorations and campaigns. Indeed, the presentation of faces as synecdoche for, and representative of, entire communities' fears, successes and aspirations is a striking element of Northern Irish political imagology. At the unveiling of a mural to commemorate the death of his son and a fellow Republican at the hands of the British Army in August 1973, Patrick Mulvenna, a member of the Ballymurphy Mural Project Committee, articulated the need to present the faces of those killed: 'We wanted this tribute to portray our dead in a human way. For too long the British and our political enemies portrayed republicans as "faceless gunmen" in their attempts to criminalise the struggle, so we decided that we would present our dead as real human beings.'²⁵ We find echoes of Bloody Sunday commemorations in this father's desire to present a human face to a combatant who in official discourse will never be anything other than 'terrorist', 'man-of-violence' or 'gun-man'.

There is a historical dimension to this desire to insist that the protesting crowd is never simply a faceless mass, but is in fact constituted of many human subjects with various degrees of commitment and various types of reservation concerning the issues that have mobilized the crowd of which they find themselves a part. For example, confronting Edmund Burke's description of the insurrectionary crowds in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) as the 'swinish multitude' and Hippolyte Taine's later depiction of the same crowds as made up of the 'dregs of society', 'bandits', 'thieves', 'savages', 'beggars', 'prostitutes', the social historian George Rudé sought to identify, in

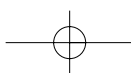


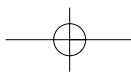


Asa Briggs' phrase, 'the faces in the crowd'.²⁶ By attending to the multiple nature of these faces and their associated identities Rudé strove to distinguish the complexity of 'social and political interests, grievances, ideas, and aspirations' at work in any given protest.²⁷ The implications of Rudé's groundbreaking work on crowds in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European political protest for Bloody Sunday commemorations are clear. For over thirty years there has been a refusal by the families and their supporters to allow the language of the British State to define both the terms of the event and those who 'experienced' it. From the first anniversary through to the most recent, the photographic portraits of the dead have been at the centre (that is, near the front) of the march from the Creggan to the Bloody Sunday Memorial in the Bogside. Accompanying the Irish Tricolour, anti-internment banners and crosses bearing the names of the dead, there have always been placards or banners displaying their faces.

Over the years of commemoration the images of the dead men's faces varied in size and colouration, but they retained their essential characteristics: small-scale images, carried by individuals either at the head of the march or behind the crosses bearing the names of the dead. But for the twenty-fifth anniversary in 1997 they appeared dramatically enlarged in a series of hand-painted large-scale images produced over a three-night period in a community hall in the Creggan by Tom Kelly, Willie Kelly and Kevin Hasson of the Bogside Artists. These images, each one now held aloft by two people, took their part in an increasingly professional visualization of commemoration (see Figures 1 and 6).

Figure 6. *The Belfast Telegraph* (Belfast), 3 February 1997. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.





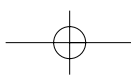
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By displaying these banners and guiding them through the commemorating crowd, and then moving them to strategic points around the Bogside and the walls overlooking the area, those wielding them carried out a manoeuvre with several distinct effects. Most immediately and most simply, the banners provided a focus for the commemoration (thereby strengthening the cohesion of the crowd) while at the same time (by placing so much emphasis on the faces of the dead) they disaggregated the notion of the crowd as a faceless mass, as a horde, as a pack. The banners also linked the present-day commemoration not only to the Civil Rights March on 30 January 1972 but also to each subsequent commemoration: this is a version of Elias Canetti's 'double crowd' – the sense of two (or many) crowds composed of both the living and the dead operating synchronically.²⁸

Of all the anniversaries, this would prove to be the most decisive in the campaign to establish a proper inquiry into the killings. In addition to the requiem mass at St Mary's, the march from the Creggan to the Bogside and the observances at the Rossville Memorial, the commemorative events included the launch of Don Mullan's groundbreaking book *Eyewitness Bloody Sunday*, as well as addresses at public meetings by leading academic and political figures in the campaign for an independent inquiry including Tim Pat Coogan, Seamus Deane, Eamonn McCann and Martin McGuinness (see Figure 7). To coincide with the weekend, the Government of Ireland announced that it had commissioned its own report into the new evidence that had emerged in the preceding months: this report would appear in June of 1997. The Pat Finucane Centre, under whose auspices the commemorative events were now organized, galvanized a huge public response for these events. Their efforts were aided by a *Derry Journal* special twenty-fifth anniversary supplement and by the cultural events in the Bogside organized by *Feile '97*.²⁹ By far the most important development of the weekend was the launch on the morning of Thursday 30 January of the Bloody Sunday Trust, the families' campaigning group that would steer all subsequent commemoration and campaigns.

One of the most notable features of these particular commemorations was a poem written by two young women from Derry. Killian Mullan and Sharon Meenan's 'I Wasn't Even Born' was featured both in the *Derry Journal* supplement and in the Pat Finucane Centre's publicity leaflet for the weekend's events. Deployed alongside the banners, the poem provided one of the most dramatic moments of all Bloody Sunday commemoration (see Figure 8). Gathered around Free Derry Wall at the conclusion of the march, the crowd fell silent as the poem was read out. 'I Wasn't Even Born' is an act of 'remembrance', a performance of, in Graham Dawson's useful phrase, 'successor memory',³⁰ voiced by a speaker born several years after the killings:

I remember people happy and the confidence of that morning.
 The Creggan Shops.
 The banner that was carried. The gathered message.
 I remember live fire.
 The pool of blood on the pavement.
 I remember Hugh Gilmour and Patrick Docherty.



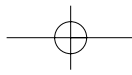
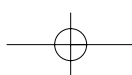


Figure 7. Bloody Sunday
25th anniversary poster.
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of the Bloody Sunday
Trust.



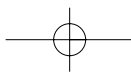
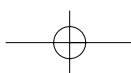


Figure 8. Bloody Sunday commemoration 1997, Free Derry Corner, Bogside, 1997. Copyright: Empics.

I remember running. The flats.
I remember Jim Wray and Michael McDaid.

As the dead men were named in the poem the Bogside Artists' banners of shimmering images of their faces were raised on the hill overlooking Free Derry Corner. Will Kelly of the Bogside Artists relates how 'the idea of hoisting the banners in sequence in sync with the poem was *our* idea. Whose exactly? Nobody knows; but we all recollect it ensued from a prior discussion we had about infusing some "performance art" into the proceedings. Our hope was to give the genre some appropriate gravitas and maybe add something to the art form.'³¹ The undeniable drama of this moment is a product of intersecting strands of commemoration (the appearance of the fresh images, the mnemonic and evocative power of the poem itself, the innovative and ironic use of the spaces of the Bogside itself), brilliantly orchestrated to produce a moment of commemorative intensity.

Following the twenty-fifth anniversary, the faces of the dead were no longer confined to the route of the march from the Creggan to the Bogside. Increasingly they appeared elsewhere: on the walls of Derry, for example, to highlight the contribution made to the carnage of Bloody Sunday by snipers of the Royal Anglian Regiment and, in January 2003, in Whitehall, opposite the gates of Downing Street as part of the families' campaign to have official British Army photographic evidence released to the Inquiry (see Figure 9).



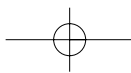
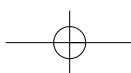


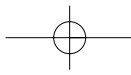
Figure 9. Whitehall,
London, January 2003.
Copyright: Empics.

The use of the portraits of the Bloody Sunday victims by campaigners for a new Inquiry represented a dramatic innovation in the poetics of Northern Irish parades and commemorations – ‘performances of memory’, as Neil Jarman described them. Most parades function as attempts to sustain, through strictly regulated acts of repetition, a particular version of history. They are, especially in the loyalist tradition, assertions of the sameness of past, present and future. Their success depends on obsessively choreographed acts of mimesis. Jarman’s memorable description of the Orange Order’s annual Glorious Twelfth parades explains:

For that day the Orangemen constitute themselves as a replica army, and their parade mimics the departure to, and return from, war ... As the contemporary community relives the events of the past they become contemporary events: the performance is no longer restricted to a symbolic meaning, the enactment has real effects in real time ... For the performance to be disrupted or cancelled would be to transform history, to rupture the simultaneity of past and present and make the future uncertain.³¹

The similarities between this type of performance and the Bloody Sunday commemorations are outweighed by their differences. The Orange parades are backward-looking and brazen celebrations of victory, all the more brazen because they promote the preservation and continuation of an increasingly threatened supremacy. The annual processions in Derry do indeed refer to a





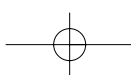
76 LIKE 'GHOSTS WHO'D WALKED ABROAD'

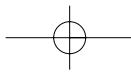
past event, but only in order to move forward to a future moment when that event will be recognized for what it was. The flow of the crowd in and around the changed spaces of the Creggan and the Bogside is not a march along a 'traditional' route. The procession begins at the decidedly unglamorous Creggan shops and makes its way via Rathlin Drive, Southway, the Lone Moor Road, Brandywell Road, the Lecky Road, Westland Street, Marlborough Terrace, William Street and Rossville Street to the Bloody Sunday memorial at Joseph Place. The marches – in which the banner-portraits play a key part – describe the pathways and the fissures of a continuously changing political and geographic landscape. The monumentality of the Bloody Sunday commemorations is a minor monumentality that is never a repetition of a mythical point of origin for an imaginary identity, but is constitutive of a demand for a future distinguished by justice and truth. On the annual processions the portraits of the fourteen dead men function not as an attempt to halt the flow of time but rather to draw attention to the untimeliness of their deaths, and to draw the commemorations' participants and observers towards the future, towards tangible and definable outcomes.

From Derry to Downing Street and beyond: the images have come a long way since they were gathered by staff of the *Derry Journal* in the hours following the naming of the dead on the evening of 30 January 1972. Since then they have been reproduced on mass cards, obituary notices, commemorative posters, newspaper front pages, gable-end murals, small placards and then large-scale banners carried on the annual commemorations. They have appeared in books and in television documentaries.³³ In the past few years they have formed a key part of the 'Hidden Truths' exhibition.³⁴ They occur regularly on websites relating to the Northern Irish conflict.³⁵ At press conferences hosted by and on behalf of the families, images of the dead are always present. And when Lord Saville finally produces his report they will, no doubt, reappear in the newspaper and television media to be subjected to yet more manipulations and interpretations. Perhaps then they will be able to cease their annual journeys through the streets of Derry and, as with all ghosts, when the wrongdoing to which they bear testimony is finally recognized, find peace.

Notes

- 1 Emmanuel Levinas quoted in Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes and Alison Ainley, 'The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas', in Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, eds., *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.169. The quotation in our title (with which we've taken a certain liberty) is taken from Seamus Heaney's 1994 ceasefire poem 'Tollund' in *The Spirit Level*, London: Faber, 1996, p.69.
- 2 Levinas quoted in Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, p.73.
- 3 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Benjamin's *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, p.226.
- 4 See Eamonn McCann, ed., *The Bloody Sunday Inquiry: the Families Speak Out*, London: Pluto Press, 2005, p.vii.
- 5 Michael Ignatieff, 'Articles of Faith', *Index on Censorship*, vol.25, no.5, September–October 1996, p.113.
- 6 The groups campaigning on the families' behalf had been calling for a fully independent tribunal made up of a panel of international judges: what they were finally offered was a Commonwealth tribunal, comprising a British Law Lord and two High Court judges, from Canada and Australia.
- 7 Jostein Gripsrud, *Understanding Media Culture*, London: Arnold, 2002, pp.154–90.





- 8 See Don Mullan, *Eyewitness Bloody Sunday: the Truth*, London: Merlin Press, 2002. See also Lena Ferguson and Alex Thomson's reports for Channel 4 News (17 and 29 January 1997) on the involvement of the Royal Anglian Regiment.
- 9 *Derry Journal*, 1 February 1972, p.12.
- 10 John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, p.56.
- 11 The original contexts of many of the photographs are on display at The Bloody Sunday Trust, Foyle Street, Derry: www.bloodysundaytrust.org.
- 12 The close-knit nature of Derry would, however, have made it likely that most of the men would have known of each other.
- 13 These are Lord Widgery's concluding remarks on the men's deaths: 'None of the deceased or wounded is proved to have been shot whilst handling a firearm or bomb. Some are wholly acquitted of complicity in such action; but there is a strong suspicion that some others had been firing weapons or handling bombs in the course of the afternoon and that yet others had been closely supporting them'; *Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into the events on Sunday, 30 January 1972, which led to loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day by The Rt. Hon. Lord Widgery, O.B.E., T.D.*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972.
- 14 Philippe Dubois, *L'Acte photographique*, Paris and Brussels: Nathan/Labor, 1983.
- 15 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, London: Vintage, 1993, p.92.
- 16 Susan Sontag saw the photograph as something more than a mere certificate: 'a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. While a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects) – a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be'; *On Photography*, London: Penguin, 1977, p.154.
- 17 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, p.252.
- 18 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp.31–2.
- 19 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, New York and London: Routledge, 1994, p.97.
- 20 Seamus Heaney, *Field Work*, London: Faber, 1979, p.22.
- 21 For details of the multiple ways in which Lord Widgery's tribunal discriminated against the testimony of eyewitnesses to the killings, see Dermot P. J. Walsh, *Bloody Sunday and the Rule of Law in Northern Ireland*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, pp.76–80.
- 22 Thomas Kinsella, *Butcher's Dozen*, Dublin: Peppercannister Press, 26 April 1972.
- 23 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p.47.
- 24 Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, p.155.
- 25 *An Phoblacht / Republican News*, 30 May 2002.
- 26 George Rudé, *The Face of the Crowd: Studies in Revolution, Ideology and Popular Protest*, New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988, p.6.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, London: Phoenix Press, 2000, p.63.
- 29 The *feile* is an annual week-long festival of arts, cultural and community activity organized by the Gasyard Development Trust in Derry.
- 30 Graham Dawson, 'Father Daly's White Hanky: Survivor Memories, Collective Memory, and the Postmemory of Bloody Sunday', paper given at the 'Hanky Day: Recent Visual Representations of Conflict in Northern Ireland' symposium, Manchester Metropolitan University, 26 November 2005.
- 31 Will Kelly, email correspondence with the authors.
- 32 Neil Jarman, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*, Oxford: Berg, 1997, pp.106–7.
- 33 See, in particular, Eamonn McCann, *Bloody Sunday in Derry: What Really Happened*, Dingle: Brandon Books, 2000.
- 34 See Trisha Ziff, *Hidden Truths, Bloody Sunday, 1972*, Los Angeles: Smart Art Press, 1997. Curated by Trisha Ziff, 'Hidden Truths' featured work by eighteen photographers including Fulvio Grimaldi, William L. Rukeyser, Colman Doyle, Gilles Feress, Robert White and Fred Hoare, as well as personal photographs from the families of those who were killed on Bloody Sunday. The exhibit was organized by the Centro de la Imagen, Mexico City, in collaboration with the Bloody Sunday Trust. Following its opening on 29 January 2000 at the UCR/California Museum of Photography, it toured major cities in the USA.
- 35 Notably the Bloody Sunday Trust website; see note 11, above.

