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Political violence and re-victimization in *The Ferryman*

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Abstract:
Jez Butterworth's The Ferryman (2017) is a play about the Carney family living in 1980s Ireland during the period of insurgency of the Irish Republican Army (IRA – also known as the Provisional IRA) and its efforts to end British rule in Northern Ireland, a period known as "the Troubles". This paper focuses on Jez Butterworth, one of the most distinctive voices of the contemporary British theatre scene and a typical representative of the 1990s cultural trend, and his tragedy The Ferryman*, which portrays the struggle and conflicts between Catholic nationalists and Protestant loyalists in Northern Ireland in the last decades of the 20th century. The second major point of the study is that the power of the Irish Republican Party has a heavy impact on the play. The paper also discovers how Sean Carney and other members of his family both embody and apply the story of Eugene Simons and other members of "the Disappeared". Like other young men, Seamus Carney became a victim during the Troubles and the campaign of political violence. The discovery of his body symbolizes how political violence created the Disappeared and shows that re-victimization and re-traumatisation continue in the aftermath of the Troubles.*

Introduction

The conflict that broke out in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s dominated Irish history in the late 20th century. It is obvious that the issues of the Troubles have had a huge effect. The estimated number of households and families that have been upturned owing to grief,

incarceration, or involuntary relocation as a result of war are tough to come by. “The population of the region is 1.6 million, 40% of whom are under 25 years age. More than 3000 have been killed and more than 30,000 have been injured as a result of the Troubles” (Cairns and Darby, 1998). The Troubles have directly impacted a large minority of residents in Northern Ireland. “Further, almost half of the population had no experience of peace in Northern Ireland, until the onset of the recent ceasefires” (Muldoon, 2004, p. 457). The significant majority of people in Northern Ireland witnessed the Troubles, caused by the tensions between Catholic nationalists and Protestant loyalists in Northern Ireland, for more than three decades and “the Troubles in Ireland – which spilled over into England – marked decades of violence fuelled by political affiliations and nationalism” (Fierberg, 2019). The problems, which began in 1969 and continued until 1998, cast a long and gloomy shadow over both the Nationalists and the Unionists: “Northern Ireland was born in violence. Between 1920 and 1922, or the years immediately surrounding the Anglo-Irish Treaty, an estimated 428 people were killed – two-thirds of whom were Catholic. Although the level of violence significantly decreased over the following four decades as Northern Ireland settled down to a period of relative calm, sporadic outbreaks of political violence continued” (O’Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 21). With regard to tension between nationalists and loyalists, Robert W. White analyses the communities during the 1970s and 80s:

> Republican paramilitaries are recruited primarily from the Northern Irish Catholic community. Their goals are to force the British out of Northern Ireland and to reunite the province with the Irish Republic, which won independence from Britain following a guerrilla war from 1919 to 1921. Loyalist paramilitaries are recruited almost exclusively from the Northern Irish Protestant community. They oppose the Republican paramilitaries and seek to maintain Northern Ireland’s position within the United Kingdom, i.e., they are “loyal” to the Crown. (1993, p. 576)

Political violence contributes to the negotiation of the normative boundaries of political identity, including the nation state, since they configure perceptions of belonging and identity in relation to this entity by shaping the relationship between the individual and the collective, between ingroups and outgroups (Graef et al., 2018, p. 1). Factors such as religion, language, race, social and political views and economic interests force people together to form groups and societies; they are also the source of acts of violence between these groups. Most people in different regions participate in political violence because of their association with some group.

Northern Ireland has attracted the attention of national and international researchers and writers, unlike much of the world’s less industrialized countries. In the second half of the

20th century Northern Irish theatre was first dominated by the "Troubles plays" such as those by Sam Thompson and later by John Boyd and Graham Reid. These playwrights explore family relations affected by religious and political differences, political violence and political problems in Northern Ireland, the situation of Irish men who lived in the North, human rights abuses, and victimization of family members. In conjunction with political violence and victimization, this article examines the work of a distinctive English playwright and in particular the work for which he won his second Tony Award for Best Play, namely Jez Butterworth's tragedy *The Ferryman*. Butterworth's interrogation of resistance and state violence, traumatization, re-traumatization and the re-victimization of family and society will be analysed in this study.

Traumatization in Jez Butterworth's *The Ferryman*

Butterworth's oeuvre stands as an elaborate study of a society in crisis. For instance, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* represents an angry young man, and Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* reflects angry nation/rebellious masculinity in Britain. Jez Butterwoth portrays angry young men in 1950s Soho in *Mojo* and the Troubles in *The Ferryman*. Jez Butterworth's plays break new theatrical ground and depict social crises, anxieties and trauma. Caruth (1996) defines the term trauma in *Unclaimed Experience* as:

> an event that […] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and therefore is not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor […] Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on. (p. 4)

Thus, Caruth formulates trauma as a violently sudden action, and trauma is not simply a violent event in a family's past. Butterworth's play *The Ferryman* grapples with the issues of the Troubles in Ireland and traumatic experience. Within the context of Caruth's definition, Butterworth's play portrays trauma in the community and the awakening sensation of trauma. A tendency in Butterworth's work is to show social issues tackled by characters during the Troubles, the potential damage and traumatized experience. People have to live with traumatic reminiscences: "80% of the population knew someone killed or injured during this time" (Peak and Lynch, 2016, pp. 452-53). Trauma occurs with an unbearable amount of information in a short period of time so an individual cannot accept unbearable news with a calm attitude in such a short time. The characters (Caitlin, Oisin, Quinn and the Carney family) in *The Ferryman* have to deal with unbearable news; however, their souls cannot process such an

unfamiliar experience. Caitlin and Oisin are incapable of assimilating the news of Seamus Carney's victimization during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. As a result of the Troubles, the family's attitude, especially the children's reactions, show that they are likely to display symptoms of anxiety when their relatives are killed.

Caruth gets to the point when stating that a traumatic event "takes place too soon, too suddenly, too unexpectedly, to be fully grasped by consciousness" (1996, p. 101). The events experienced by the characters and unexpected news has a traumatic impact on the Carney family. Traumatization is repeated with the arrival of news about the victim. The Carney family is incapable of bearing the conditions because they have witnessed violence, the Troubles and trauma.

Political violence in drama

Political violence, "a pattern of aggression and counter aggression that has a history and which stretches back deep into time" (Evans & Critchley, 2016), wars and terrorism have been effectual issues for many playwrights for many centuries: "Plays like *Prometheus Bound*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone*, and *The Bacchae* have depicted violence that could be, in a sense, regarded as political. During the Renaissance, terror was used as a 'weapon of state power', and this is reflected in some of the Elizabethan dramas where Renaissance tragedy has its origins in Tudor terror and in the embryonic British state as much as in the Italian city-state of Machiavelli" (Orr & Klaic, 1991, pp. 3-4; Al Azraki, 2017). The English Renaissance produced many plays which satirized the concept of political violence and created heroes/villains. From the Renaissance period, British theatre made a logical leap and turned towards political figures. In the second half of the 20th century, Howard Brenton and Edward Bond scrutinized such related and controversial topics as politics and violence, violence and land, and independence and politics in a detailed manner. Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* (1980) examined politics, violence and independence, and Bond's *Saved* (1965) examined violence and cruelty in the British state. On the other hand, political violence is a repetitious clear spectacle in the presentation of political corruption and victimization in Iraq; David Hare's work *Stuff Happens* (2004) represented policy statements regarding evidence, invasion, forcefulness, injuries, suffering and an outrageous number of deaths by portraying the troubles in Iraq.

After the 1990s, the new plays on violence and conflict clearly became a new wave of theatre in Britain and Ireland. This new wave came to birth with Sarah Kane's debut *Blasted* (1995), Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996) and Jez Butterworth's *Mojo* (1995);

Martin McDonough's *The Lieutenant of Inishmore (*2001) made a significant contribution to its progress. McDonough also contributed to politicization in British theatre. In her study *Political Violence in Drama*, Mary Karen Dahl (1987, p. 10) stated that new wave playwrights "variously recognize, manipulate, and focus the conventions" applying to the "directed use of violence" and that in this way playwrights could "create diverse images of power" and portray political violence.

Focusing on political corruption, the playwrights interrogated "whether directed violence can resolve the crises (the polemical legitimacy of using violence) or at least revive the health of the body politic" (Dahl, 1987, p. 9) and "whether directed violence or even a spontaneous event could generate the belief systems and social institutions that might re-establish the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence" (ibid.). Political violence was a key feature in the revival of British playwriting in the mid-1990s and, as stated above, the first shot to be fired was Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995). Kane justified her work by explaining that "if you are saying you can't represent something, you are saying you can't talk about it, you are denying its existence" (Bayley, 1995). Picking up Kane's comment, Jez Butterworth chooses to represent what he has witnessed and the existence of victimization and traumatization. He interrogated the causes and consequences of invasion and political violence on society, culture and family in *The Ferryman*.

Political violence and re-victimization in *The Ferryman*

One of the angriest young playwrights since the 1990s, Jez Butterworth has contributed significantly to contemporary British drama especially after his play *Jerusalem*, which caused a stir around the world in 2009. After *Jerusalem*, Jez Butterworth published his latest work, *The Ferryman* (2017), which portrays the long and bloody conflict between Irish Republican Catholics and UK-loyal Protestants in Northern Ireland during the last decades of the 20th century.

As an English playwright, Butterworth did not set out to create a work related to the Troubles: "if anything, he told me, it felt like 'a terrible idea, a really really bad one'" (Gilbert, 2017). Actually, he had been thinking about writing fragments of the play for a long time; "a work based in part on the experiences of his partner at the time, the actress Laura Donnelly, who plays Caitlin Carney in *The Ferryman* and whose uncle was vanished seven months before she was born. 'I didn't want to begin,' Butterworth said, 'but once the voices start coming to you, and the plot starts coming to you, you haven't really got a choice'" (ibid.) Sophie Gilbert (2017) described how the idea for the play emerged:

> The idea for *The Ferryman* coagulated in 2015, when Butterworth was in New York for *The River*, heading to a cabin owned by Neil Pepe, the artistic director of the Atlantic Theatre Company. Butterworth had previously written a significant portion of his play *Parlour Song* there, after being snowed in while alone. In the car with Donnelly, he suddenly had the idea to write something about Northern Ireland, and when he ran it by her, she replied that it sounded like a story. When he got to the cabin, Butterworth wrote out a skeleton plan for the play, in a shift from his typical process. "Usually, when I'm writing a play, I just follow my nose," he said. Then he left the concept alone for two years, until, in early 2017, he sat down and started writing.

Like Butterworth's other distinctive play *Jerusalem* (2009), which portrays the state of the nation, *The Ferryman* deeply probes the heritage of hate: "*The Ferryman*, which tells the tale of a former IRA man in rural Co Armagh during The Troubles, followed in the footsteps of *Jerusalem*, Butterworth's modern fable of a dying England" (*Infantes*, 2019)

The Ferryman is about the Carney family living and farming in 1980s Ireland during the IRA struggle to end British sovereignty over Northern Ireland and "the mystical idea of an Ireland of fairies and banshees. It is a play about youthful idealism crushed by brutal adult pragmatism. And as an Irish play, it is funny, with much of the humor coming from its child cast members who swear like sailors" (Kuritz, 2018). While the Irish Republican Army and deadly hunger strikes threaten the stability of Northern Irish society, the Carney family is preparing for another harvest time.

Butterworth's masterpiece actually narrates a centuries-old enmity. The play is based on the story of Eugene Simons and other members of The Disappeared, a group of sixteen individuals who were murdered and secretly buried by the IRA (Peake & Lynch, 2016, p. 453) and the story begins with the discovery of a body. It was late August 1981 when the Troubles in Northern Ireland reached their peak and hunger strikers drew praise and sympathy for the Irish Republican movement.

Sixteen men and women were killed by the IRA and their bodies were buried in unknown places and "by definition people didn't know what happened to them" (MacIntyre, 2018). For that reason in Northern Ireland "'The Disappeared' is commonly used to refer to sixteen individuals who were murdered and secretly buried since the start of The Troubles in 1969" (Peake & Lynch, 2016, p. 455). In the play, Seamus Carney, whose body has been found strangely preserved, is one of those sixteen. The families of these murdered people were waiting impatiently to learn whether they were dead or alive. Like other young men, Seamus Carney became a victim during the Troubles and the campaign of political violence which "inherently involves multiple incidences of victimization concentrated around particular

segments of society, a high likelihood of multiple occurrences within the same family, and a very high likelihood of continued re-victimization and re-traumatisation in the aftermath of the violence" (Lynch & Argomaniz, 2015). Within the same family, multiple victimization is witnessed. In the *Daily Beast*, Tim Teeman (2018) adduces incidences of victimization: "It was the disappearance and murder of Donnelly's own uncle during the Troubles that informs one of the play's central storylines" and "Quinn was once a Republican foot soldier, jailed alongside Muldoon. He is done with the violence, but Muldoon/the IRA won't let him or his family be, particularly with the discovery of Seamus' body and what Quinn will and won't say publicly about that". The discovery of Seamus's body indicates that the re-victimization and re-traumatisation continue in the aftereffects of the Troubles.

In the prologue to the play, three IRA hitmen appear and a priest, Father Horrigan, is sent for by the IRA leader Muldoon and told to keep the Carney family quiet for the burial of Seamus Carney's body: "You see, Father," Magennis, one of the IRA men says, "there's no oxygen down there. The peat is acidic. It pickles you. The years roll by and nothing changes." (Butterworth 2017, p. 8). However, what makes *The Ferryman* important is not how to cope with buried bodies but buried events and troubles. "In the same bog where Seamus was found, Magennis notes, prehistoric men have resurfaced, sometimes with their hands and feet bound, victims of crimes that predate the history books" (Gilbert, 2017). Apart from being asked about Seamus Carney, Father Horrigan is interrogated by the three IRA men about Seamus's older brother Quinn Carney:

Muldoon. What's his name now?

Horrigan. His name is Quinn Carney.

Muldoon. What can you tell me about him?

Horrigan. Quinn Carney is a farmer.

Muldoon. Was he always a farmer? (Butterworth, 2017, p. 10).

The IRA men become suspicious about Quinn Carney's past because they persistently ask questions about him. Father Horrigan does not want to answer Muldoon's questions because "throughout The Troubles […] silence and related notions of loyalty permeated all levels of society" (Peake & Lynch, 2016, p. 452). Quinn Carney has probably been a victim of national politics and has kept away from political violence, but at the same time, he was the leader and fighter of the Carney family, which is why Butterworth chose the song *Street Fighting Man* by the Rolling Stones for Quinn.

Following this distinctive prologue, the setting of the play changes; Butterworth takes us to the Carney home, a farmhouse, during harvest time, and the dramatic tension starts to build. Quinn Carney and his sister-in-law Caitlin play Connect Four [a board game] and later in the morning, a crowd of family members join them. During the time of the Troubles, the harvest meant protecting and supporting values within families: "The harvest is an act of defiant bounty at the time of the hunger strikes in August 1981" (Bew a& Gillespie, 1999, p. 154). The harvest is linked by Uncle Pat with ancient gods and goddesses: "*Uncle Pat*. Hestia, the goddess of bread, Cyametes, she of the bean, Dionysus, him of the grape, and the mighty Demeter, Queen of all the Harvest" (2017, p. 18). The harvest time has a rebellious significance in the context of the hunger strikes and the British political pressure. In the first act, Aunt Pat turns up the volume of the radio to emphasize British political violence when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher rejects any agreement with the hunger-strikers' political status:

> *Margaret Thatcher* (on the radio). There can be no question of political status for someone who is serving a sentence for crime. Crime is crime is crime. (…). I just hope that anyone who is on hunger strike for his own sake will see fit to come off hunger strike, but that is a matter for him.
> (…).
> *Quinn*. I don't care. This is my house. I'll ask you to respect that.
> *Aunt Pat*. Did you not hear what she's calling us? Our very own Prime Minister. Her from over there. And she's calling us criminals! (Butterworth, 2017, pp.36-7)

Some people in Northern Ireland went on hunger strike because they were hungry only for justice, but the political pressure and violence create incomprehension, a kind of wilful ignorance, and apolitical viewpoints within the family. Because of her own uncle's disappearance, Laura Donnelly spoke of the silence within her own family: "We just got a sense that it wasn't something we talked about. I think, either consciously or not, my parents made a decision to really neutralise the politics in our family" (Armitstead, 2017). In the first act of the play, Butterworth portrays the same ignorance in the Carney family in the relationship between Caitlin and her son Oisin: Caitlin tries to protect Oisin from rumours about his father Seamus but Oisin shows his awareness of the IRA by saying "My ears aren't innocent. Sure, I've heard ten times worse at school" (Butterworth, 2017, p. 24). At the end of the first act, Quinn gets the news of Seamus's body being found and reveals it to Caitlin:

> *Caitlin*. What's wrong?
>
> *Quinn*. They've found Seamus.
>
> *Caitlin*. Where?

Quinn. In a bog across the border (p. 46)

The finding of Seamus's body causes Caitlin to suffer severe re-victimization and re-traumatization. After the shock of the news, she is unwilling to tell Oisin and wants to keep silent because "speaking out becomes a dangerous act in *The Ferryman*, as silence acts as social control to manipulate young minds filled with radical voices" (Wood, 2018, p. 75). But while Quinn is speaking privately to Caitlin about the news of her husband's body being found after ten years, Oisin spies upon them and overhears everything about his father: "we see Oisin has been listening" (Butterworth, 2017, p. 51). So as well as Caitlin, the news about Seamus creates a new victim in Oisin, "whose tragic trajectory sees his anger, stemming from the absence of his father, Seamus, transform into radical action" (Wood, 2018, p.72). On the other hand, Aunt Maggie also disallows the silence within the family by announcing that "Seamus is in the ground, girls. Seamus is in the ground" (Butterworth, 2017, p. 60) in the second act.

In Act 2, while the Carney family is enjoying the harvest and talking about the hunger strikers, "Michael Devine has starved himself to death. Michael Devine, Thomas McElwee, Kieran Doherty. Kevin Lynch. (…)" (Butterworth, 2017, p. 74), the IRA men arrive at the house to give their condolences to the family:

Muldoon. Well, firstly, I've come to bring condolences.

Uncle Pat. Condolences? For what?

Caitlin. Oisin. I need to speak to you, please.

Mary. Is everything all right?

Uncle Pat. Has something happened?

Caitlin. Oisin, let's go outside. (p. 78)

Muldoon delivers his condolences and Quinn and Caitlin try to hide the news from the boy: Caitlin tries to persuade Oisin to go outside thinking he is unaware of everything, but Oisin tells her "I know what's happened. They found my da. In a bog down by the border. He's got a bullet in his head. He's dead. He's been dead for years" (ibid.); the boy points out that he has already learned everything and that the news of Seamus Carney's body being found is common knowledge. The fate of the victimized Seamus agonizes the Carney family because the information about his finding has not yet reached the family and the news which Oisin and Caitlin have to deal with confirms that they are experiencing the trauma again and again. As well as Oisin and Caitlin, Quinn has also suffered because of his brother's disappearance and accuses Muldoon of covering up a multitude of sins:

> *Quinn*. (…). But take a man out to a bog in the middle of nowhere. Put a bullet in his head. Then send friends to the widow to tell her they've seen him. On a ferry to Liverpool. The horses in Wicklow. Give that woman hope. Keep the wound open. It is genius, sure it is. (p. 79)

Quinn's outburst shows that Caitlin has suffered a lot and that giving hope to the widow has involved Caitlin in a vicious cycle of trauma. At the same time Quinn, reminding Muldoon about his own past, looks for revenge:

> *Quinn*. That man you took that beating for, suffered for, for a fucking pen. That man walked away. That's hard to bear now. A man might want revenge for something like that. He might still want revenge. (p. 81)

Muldoon is not drawn back into his past but reminds Quinn of something which he (Quinn) had said in the past about his intended self-victimization in order to achieve freedom:

> *Muldoon*. I remember when you heard your first child was born. You showed me a photograph of him, when he was only a few weeks old. You looked me in the eye and said you'd watch that baby burn in a fire, if it meant a free Ireland. (p. 82)

For both Quinn and Muldoon, the past cannot stay in the past and Butterworth particularly depicts a mixture of domesticity and violence in Quinn (Wood, 2018, p. 80). Muldoon and his men remind Quinn of his traumatic past. A former IRA member, Quinn is portrayed as a versatile character; he is a husband, father of seven children and man of the house, but at the same time he is interested in his sister-in-law. Quinn's past experiences serve as a mirror for understanding the struggle for survival, the extent of the violence and the traumatic past in Northern Ireland. Quinn's traumatic past and Muldoon's psychological violence victimize Oisin:

> *Caitlin*. Come here, Oisin.
>
> *Oisin* Let go of me. I heard you talking this morning. You knew Dad was dead and you never told me.
>
> *Caitlin*. Oisin
>
> *Oisin*. Fuck off. You're a liar. You're both of youse liars. (Butterworth, 2017, pp.82-3)

Act 3 starts in the Carney kitchen where Corcoran and the Carney boys are discussing the situation of the hunger strikers. Shane quotes Bobby Sands, one of the strikers (who died in 1981 while still on hunger strike) as he comments on political power: "*Shane*. They have nothing in their whole imperial arsenal that can break the spirit of one Irishman who doesn't want to be broken. I'm hungry only for justice" (p. 92).

Shane then starts to talk about how he is involved in meeting with Muldoon and is asked what the link between a Catholic boy and Seamus Carney is:

> *JJ*. So they were just beating on a Catholic boy?
>
> *Diarmaid*. They was punishing him.
>
> *JJ*. What for?
>
> *Shane*. Because he fucked up.
>
> *Michael*. Like Uncle Seamus.
>
> *Diarmaid*. Come off it, man. That was all long time ago.
>
> *Michael*. Was it, Shane? Because they found his body last Tuesday. (Butterworth, 2017, p. 98)

The four of them, Corcoran[1] and the Carney boys, discuss the disappearance of Uncle Seamus and his death and Shane insists that his uncle was found with a bullet in the brain because he had "fucked up" everything. Shane implies that his uncle had been an informer so he was found in a bog. To Shane, the victimization of Seamus is necessary for Irish independence and for justice. Michael's sense of justice, however, is totally different from Shane's:

> *Shane*. Do you or do you not want justice.
>
> *Michael*. (…). I don't want to get shot in the back of the head for something I probably never did, and spend ten years face-down in a bog in the middle of nowhere while my wife and child sit waiting, hoping, praying for me to come home. If that's the road to justice you can fucking bangle it. (p. 103)

Michael points out that Seamus was the victim of political violence and that his wife and child Caitlin and Oisin are experiencing re-traumatization. It is also very clear that Oisin "has absorbed the rhetoric of martyrdom" (Wood, 2018, p. 76) because he is thinking about stealing Aunt Pat's pistol for Shane and tries to incite him to kill Tom Kettle, an Englishman:

> *Shane*. (…). I came through here late this evening, and you know what I saw. Tom Kettle down on one knee in front of your ma.
> *Oisin*. On his knee.
> *Shane*. Do you know if he locks his door at night?
> (…).
> *Oisin*. Aunt Pat keeps a pistol. (Butterworth, 2017, p. 110)

Father Horrigan, who has been put under pressure by the IRA, now arrives at the house: "I just heard the news about Seamus. I felt I should come. In case there were any in the household who needed their priest" (p. 113). Horrigan, a traitor to his friend, betrays the Carney family

just like the wooden horse in the Trojan War. One of the victimized members of the family (the Trojans), Uncle Pat starts to read from *The Aeneid* to Father Horrigan:

> *Uncle Pat.* Here all the crowd streams, hurrying to the shores, women and men, pleading to make the crossing, stretching out their hands in longing for the far shore. But the boatman rows on. Aeneas, stirred and astonished at the tumult, said 'O virgin, tell me, what does this crowding to the river mean? What do the souls want?' The ancient priestess replied … (p. 114)

When Uncle Pat starts his recitation, Quinn, the leader of the family, comes in and shouts "Who's there?" (ibid.). Quinn represents Aeneas who fought against betrayal and defeat. Betrayal and victimization are revealed by Uncle Pat in the following comment: "Our friend Virgil has it that there's only two types of souls forbidden passage to the beyond. The unburied. And liars. Those that lie to the innocent. Goodnight, Father" (p. 115). By quoting from *The Aeneid*, Pat accuses Father Horrigan of telling lies. On the other hand, as modern-day Trojans, victimized Irish Catholics experience trauma because of betrayal and defeat. Because of his betrayal of them, Quinn questions Father Horrigan's existence: "No you may fucking not sit. I told you to leave this family alone. If you're here in the middle of the night, you're here for one reason. Now say what he told you to say and leave" (p. 115). Quinn thinks that Father Horrigan, by behaving like a snake, is responsible for the family's defeat.

While Quinn is talking with Caitlin, Muldoon returns to the house and Quinn, speaking on behalf of the family, says that that they accept Muldoon's deal to abstain from political violence:

> *Quinn.* I accept that neither you, nor anyone you know, was involved in the disappearance of Seamus Carney. (Beat). That no-one from this family will speak on the subject. No-one will breathe a word to anyone. It's in the past and it will stay in the past. That when you leave this house, you will allow us to bury Seamus in peace. To grieve in peace. If you can give me this assurance, then you have my word. (Butterworth, 2017, p. 123)

This deal between Quinn and Muldoon shows again the victimization of the Carney family and their acceptance of political pressure. Instead of re-traumatization, Quinn chooses to accept keeping silent and burying Seamus in peace. However, Muldoon is not content with this deal. He tells Quinn to take Caitlin and Oisin away from their home: "I'm informing you. I will be taking care of Caitlin Carney. And you will capitulate. You will do exactly what I require of you or you will give me no option but to reverse my policy of goodwill towards this family" (p. 124). Muldoon is seeking to re-traumatize the Carney family by keeping the

political violence at the front of their minds. Muldoon's threat is interrupted by the entrance of Shane:

> *Shane*. Well, I'm glad you're here because I have a question. That boy. The one in the Palace Road. Your man tied to the chair now.
> *Mary*. Shane –
> *Shane*. I've been thinking about him. That boy. And I need to know. Where is he now? Where is that boy? (p. 125)

Shane is asking about the disappearance of another victim. A further victim is Oisin, who is experiencing re-victimization, and is brought by Tom Kettle to the house and this starts the act of revenge in the play. The victimized family head Quinn takes a razor from Caitlin and slashes Muldoon's throat, he then hits Magennis in the forehead with a pistol and "blood spurts all over the wall of family pictures" (p. 128). The re-victimization cannot be resolved by escaping from the traumatization; on the contrary, the re-victimization turns Quinn into a modern-day Aeneas to get his revenge:

> *Quinn*. Go back to town. Tell whoever you need to tell that this day, Quinn Carney has exacted revenge for the murder of Seamus Carney. Husband to Caitlin. Father to Oisin. Tell whoever comes here to come ready. Now go (p. 128)

The death of Seamus Carney and the ever-present political violence led to the revenge of those who have been victimized, although, as Adrian Poole points out there is "no logical escape from the nightmare" (Poole, 2005, p. 36) and the trauma.

The Ferryman interrogates the idea that "who holds power to end lives and bury souls in peace or without" (Wood, 2018, p. 79). In the play, political violence resides inscrutably at the Carneys' home, viciously infecting the whole family. Butterworth reveals a pattern of thinking that is life-threatening because of the secret relationships in society. He presents the members of the family as caught between disjointed psychological forces which lay bare their desires, and the social forces which restrain their behaviour.

Conclusion

Butterworth has said that "the play's themes are both timely and timeless, illuminating the thorny topics of Confederate history in the United States and ISIS attacks in Europe, and the appeal of extremist causes to disaffected young men". He added that there is a sense of "delving deep into the past for reasons to still be angry, and to feel that there's still a fight" (Gilbert 2017). The process of fighting inevitably creates victimized individuals. Political violence causes deaths, injuries and suffering although it rarely ends in an extreme number of

deaths. These deaths, injuries and sufferings are very real as the victims' grieving families can attest (Sageman, 2017, p. 16).

Some leaders and some groups have seen themselves as protectors of their government and their political community. *The Ferryman* reverberates with how the IRA sought to win independence for Northern Ireland and how it perpetuated uncountable sacrifices in the process and forced families to feel political violence. In the play, the IRA leader threatens Quinn, who left the organization ten years earlier, by reminding him of his oath: "You looked me in the eye and said you'd watch that baby burn in a fire, if it meant a free Ireland. And I thought, 'That is what it takes. *That* is the cost of freedom. The price is unimaginable. And here is a man who knows that. And is willing to pay it'" (Butterworth, 2017, p. 82).

Sean Carney argues that modern tragedies unearth "aspects of humanity that have been repressed or disavowed, 'buried', so to speak, within the public discourse; in a sense they are public acts of mourning, with an understanding that public mourning is a political act" (2013, p. 16). Butterworth's tragedy reflects buried bodies and traumas, and it provides a discourse on political violence and how political groups are used to shape people's thoughts, beliefs, interest, sentiments and social identity, as well as victimized persons.

Endnotes:

[1] "The Corcorans, in black leather boots and leather jackets, echo the dress of Muldoon's men, signalling their influence" (Wood, 2018, p. 74).

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