

Disturbing bodies

History and trauma, in *Bog Child* and
The Ferryman.

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Abstract:

Trauma theory is a growing field that continues to be researched by many and the use of literature as a medium for trauma theory is a field that continues to expand. The image of bodies is prominent in both the novel *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd and the play *The Ferryman* by Jez Butterworth. It is fascinating to look at how the image of bodies is used in these two literary works and how it can be connected to both history and trauma theory. The body used as a symbol is one of the most important aspects of the thesis: the body as in a corpse, but also the way in which one can use a living body in a symbolic way as they have done in the hunger strikes. Trauma theory can be connected to many aspects of both *Bog Child and The Ferryman*, and both the bog bodies and the hunger strikers play very important roles in the lives of the main characters. The closely connected role of historic events in the novel and in the play does so that the trauma theory has a prominent role in the analysis of both.

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Introduction and theory

Jacqui Banaszynski has pointed out that “[w]e all live for stories [...] because without stories the stuff that happens would float around in some glob and none of it would mean anything (14). By reading novels and watching plays about historical events one may gain understanding of what people go through when living amid war and uncertainty every day. By looking into the image of bodies used in both the novel *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd and the play *The Ferryman* by Jez Butterworth, and the trauma that has been depicted in them, one can learn much about what it must have been like to live under the circumstances many lived with during the height of the Troubles. The novel and the play are both composed of mostly fictional characters, but refer to historical figures by name, such as Bobby Sands and Margaret Thatcher. They also incorporate a few of the historical events such as the Long Kesh prison hunger strikes and the discovery of bog bodies, which can be found both in Northern Ireland and other Northern European countries. On the other hand, both the bog bodies and the characters on hunger strike depicted in these literary works are purely fictional, but also here there is reference to historical figures.

Both the play and the novel are based in Northern Ireland in the year of 1981 when there were hunger strikes taking place in the Long Kesh prisons. This event has become a significant part of the history of the Troubles and is therefore depicted in many literary texts, but the reason why I have chosen to look at these two in particular is because they also have bog bodies as a prominent part of both their storylines. The image of bodies is in many ways prominent throughout both literary works and is therefore an interesting aspect to examine further, especially in connection to trauma theory and how that is depicted in the stories as well. More specifically, the overarching aim of this thesis will be to address this research question: What role does the image of bodies play in *Bog Child* and *The Ferryman* and how does this affect the representation of trauma in the texts? This question will be approached via more specific analysis of what function the bog body of the character Mel serves for Fergus, the protagonist of

Bog Child, in terms of working through trauma and I will also look at how traumatic experiences in *The Ferryman* involve images of bodies.

The thesis will start with historical context, going through what lead up to the Hunger strikes of 1981 and why they occurred in the first place. Here one will also read about the roles both Margaret Thatcher and Bobby Sands played in the hunger strikes. I will also clarify what bog bodies are, why they are historically significant and take a closer look at one of the bog bodies found in Denmark. In the last section of the historical context, I will explain what trauma is and have an overview of different types of trauma theory that are significant for this thesis.

The first chapter of the thesis regards the image of bog bodies in both *Bog Child* and *The Ferryman*. The chapter starts by looking at *The Ferryman* and how the bog body is represented in the play. There will be a description of where the bog body is found, what is found on the body, who the person is and how this body affects the family of the person that is found and also the community. There will be references to a bog body found in Denmark in 1950 and a discussion regarding the differences and similarities between that bog body and the fictional one in the play. Towards the end of the chapter there will be a discussion around the image of bog bodies in *Bog Child* as well, looking at where the body is found and how this also effects the community. However, the main focus will be on the person that finds the body and the function the bog body has in his life. Lastly, there will also be a connection made to a few of the poems written by Seamus Heaney.

The second chapter looks at how the hunger strikes are depicted in both texts. Looking at how the body is used as a symbol in many ways throughout both the novel and the play. I will in this chapter be looking at how it is used as a symbolic weapon during the hunger strikes. The hunger strikers use their bodies to make a political statement while trying to make changes for the better. The body is then used as a means to an end and symbolizes the pain that one has to endure in order to make

changes for the better. The chapter starts by looking at what role the hunger strikes play in *The Ferryman* and then it goes on to look at how it is depicted in *Bog Child* as well.

The third, and last chapter digs deeper into the connections between the two texts, the image of bodies in both works and how they are connected to both history and trauma theory. In this chapter one also looks at the meaning behind the words at the beginning and the end of both *The Ferryman* and *Bog Child*. Prominent themes that are looked upon in this chapter are starvation, self-sacrifice and the use of music. There is also a section on clichés and how the different political views of the conflict are shown in both texts.

Historical context

Hunger strikes

In *Making Sense of the Troubles* by David McKittrick and David McVea one can read about the years leading up to the hunger strikes and what led the prisoners to take such drastic measures. In 1972, the prisoners in the H-blocks of Long Kesh prison in Northern Ireland were granted the status of political prisoners, also known as the special category status. By using this categorization of prisoners, the British Government sought to distinguish between regular prisoners and the inmates that were sentenced to serve time in prison because of their actions directly linked to the political situation in the country. However, this changed in early 1976 when it was decided that all convicted prisoners would from then on not receive special category status anymore, meaning that they would now have to wear prison uniforms, carry out prison work and have limited access to fellow prisoners. This was argued to be a part of a larger political agenda called *Ulsterisation*, with the aim to reduce the presence of the British army and to give the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) a larger role in regard to security. The agenda was designed to change the terrorist violence into a 'law and order' problem, instead of a political one (McEvoy 227-249). The prisoners who already had the special category status would keep it, as an attempt at keeping the situation from escalating. In the autumn of 1976, the prisoners tried different tactics to win back their status, and this began with them refusing to wear prison uniforms. This protest left them naked with only blankets to cover themselves and it resulted in the prisoners being denied visitation rights and losing remission, meaning that they could end up doubling their time in imprisonment if they continued with the protest (McKittrick, David McVea 138-145).

In 1978, after about 18 months of refusing to wear their uniforms, the prisoners saw no sign of success and they started the 'no wash' protest, where they did not clean themselves in any way. The new tactic gave them more energy and hope, but it did not last very long, as the protest soon escalated to what was called the 'dirty protest'. In this protest the prisoners smeared feces on the walls and urinated under the doors, so that there were pools of urine in the hallway. The prisoners were now forcefully taken out of

their cells in order for the prison officers to clean the cells and the prisoners. The situation escalated quickly after this, with the relationship between the prisoners and the prison officers getting much worse. The prisoners claimed that there were multiple beatings of prisoners and that these beatings were executed by the officers. While this was happening inside the prison, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) killed as many as nineteen officers outside the prison between 1976 and 1980. Senior IRA members both inside and outside the prison stated in 1977 that the protest had run its course, but most of the republican prisoners did not listen and continued with the protest. This created a separate republican community within the prison that did not take orders from the IRA anymore. In 1980, there were said to probably be more IRA members in prison than outside, seeing that there were over 800 republicans in prison at the time, but it was difficult to determine how many of these were IRA members or not. In time, the prisoners started losing their motivation when it appeared that nothing was changing and the support from the outside was lacking (McKittrick, McVea 138-140).

After realizing that their various strategies had not yet had the desired effect, the prisoners decided to engage in a protest that could not be as easily stopped by the prison officers, namely the hunger strikes. The hunger strikes were looked upon as being the prisoners' ultimate weapon, having a celebrated place in republican history and potentially leading to self-sacrifice and possible martyrdom. Hunger strikes had been used before giving the desired effect, a famous example of this being the case of Terence McSwiney. On October 25th, 1920, McSwiney died after 74 days on hunger strike. It was later stated that "[a]lthough the strike failed at achieving its stated aim of Terence McSwiney's release, his death was a major blow to the British Government and marked a turning point in the Irish War of Independence " (Perlman 307). Much more recently, in 1972 during the ongoing conflict, the special category status had been won for republican prisoners through the use of a hunger strike. Now they wanted to try again, even though there had been other cases where it had not worked. The prisoners decided to go through with a hunger strike even though the overall republican leadership was against the use of this tactic. As Gerry Adams, who became the president of Sinn

Fein¹ a few years later, wrote to the prisoners: “We are tactically, strategically, physically and morally opposed to a hungerstrike” (McKittrick, McVea 164).

Seven prisoners went on hunger strike in October 1980 with five demands, listing that they wanted the right to wear their own clothes again, they did not want prison directed work, they wanted to be able to talk to their fellow prisoners as they pleased, they wanted weekly letters, visits and parcels and last but not least, the restoration of all remission that had been lost during the past protests. In response to this, Margaret Thatcher, the UK prime minister at the time, stated that “I want this to be utterly clear - the government will never concede political status to the hungerstrikers or to any others convicted of criminal offenses” (McKittrick, McVea 164). However, the prisoners were told that some of their demands could be met if the hunger strike stopped. In December 1980 one of the prisoners on strike lost their sight and ended up being sent to hospital. This ended the strike, but the demands were still not met, and the prisoners soon began planning a second hunger strike.

The second wave started 1st March 1981 and this time ten prisoners ended up dying. The first to die was to be known all over the world and his name was Bobby Sands, followed by Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Thomas McElwee and Michael Devine. They were all between the age of 23 and 29 when they died. Bobby Sands was the first to start up the strike again, followed by one more after two weeks and then one more every week after that. This staggered approach was used as a tactic to gradually add more pressure on the government and Sands became a figurehead for the hunger strikes. He had been imprisoned for possession of a gun, rather than murder which was the offense for which most of the other prisoners were imprisoned, and this had a positive effect on his image in the media (Melaugh).

Sands quickly became well-known, and pictures of him rapidly spread throughout the media, creating a general image of “(...)a good looking young man with long hair,

¹ This will be explained further down in the thesis.

sporting a fetching grin” (McKittrick, McVea 166). Many thought he looked like a rock band drummer. All in all, he acquired an aura of innocence, victimhood and self-sacrifice. Shortly after Sands began the hunger strike, Frank McGuire suddenly died. McGuire was a member of Government and when he died, a by-election was established, resulting in Bobby Sands being elected as the new member of government. This did not cause much immediate change, since Sands never ended up being able to appear in Government himself. However, it has been looked upon as a steppingstone in the direction of the peace process that was to be a decade later. One of the main reasons why it has been viewed this way is because it was a huge victory in terms of propaganda for the IRA since Thatcher's stance on the hunger strikes was seen as too rigid. It was also one of the most significant events leading up to Sinn Féin's development as an electoral force (McKittrick, McVea 165-167).

Bobby Sands died at 01.17 a.m. on May 5th, 1981. Following his death, he became one of republicanism's most renowned martyrs. Approximately 100,000 people attended his funeral and the event of his death received huge media coverage, both nationally and internationally. Gerry Adams stated at a later time that Bobby Sands' death “had a greater international impact than any other event in Ireland in my lifetime” (McKittrick, McVea, 167). His death also led to more violence and death outside of the prisons, raising the total death toll from eighty-six (during the previous year) to a total of 117 that year. Furthermore, in five out of seven cases the victims of the violence happening outside of the prisons were later proved to be innocent people, even though the security forces usually maintained that those who were killed had been active rioters. Both Protestants and Catholics were killed in the aftermath of Sands' death (McKittrick, McVea 167-168).

The following months were particularly grim, and it later became clear that both Thatcher and the hunger strikers deeply misunderstood each other. Thatcher never got close to understanding the psychology of the IRA and the republicans were certain that Thatcher would eventually give in to their demands, which she never did. The hunger strikes ended when the families of the strikers decided to intervene, seeing no other end

to the deadlock. With the encouragement of the prison chaplain, Father Dennis Faul, the prisoners were force-fed after they went into a coma. After the hunger strikes were ended, the prisoners were allowed to wear their own clothes, but few of their other demands were met. Both parties in the hunger strikes had small victories, but they did not gain all that they strived to accomplish. In hindsight, the 1981 hunger strikes are viewed as one of the most significant moments in the history of the Troubles. They paved the way for the political standing of the IRAs political wing, Sinn Féin, making them today's largest political party on the Island of Ireland, dedicated to the reunification of Ireland and an end to British jurisdiction in the north of Ireland. The event also changed some people's view on the prime minister, casting her in the role of a murderer while elevating Bobby Sands to the status of a martyr (McKittrick, McVea, 167-168).

Bog bodies

The so-called 'bog bodies' are corpses that have been found in raised bogs in Northern Europe. In the water and peat of the bogs one can find unique properties that preserve bodies so that they turn into "leather-like envelopes of preserved skin and hair" and the result of this are perfectly preserved fingerprints, hair, nails and other distinctive traits (Sanders 2). The chemicals found in the bogs ensure that the decomposition of the bodies is significantly slowed. When discovered, the bodies subsequently, in the words of Karin Sanders, "function... as a gateway to a past in which we can imagine ourselves [being] because [they bring] us to it - *face-to face*" (1). Most bog bodies are said to be Iron Age sacrifices or victims of punishment, but some of them also seem to have ended up in their respective locations by accident.

Seamus Heaney is famous for his literary treatment of the bog bodies. In his speech in the opening of the exhibition of Bog Bodies in Silkeborg museum in Denmark in 1996, he claimed that when a corpse becomes a bog body it changes from "I am I" to "I am it" or "I am you". Like a work of art, the bog bodies ask to be contemplated: the biographical view of the body disappears, and one is transferred into the realm of the aesthetic. Moreover, a corpse is commonly viewed as something gruesome and ugly,

while the bog bodies on the other hand tend to be viewed as both beautiful and atrocious at the same time (Heaney 4). Heaney's poems "Bog Queen", "Punishment" and "The Grauballe Man" are examples of how bog bodies may be viewed by people (See Appendix 1). In "Punishment" one can read a description of a bog body described as follows: "you were flaxen-haired, / undernourished, and your / tar-black face was beautiful. / My poor scapegoat" (Heaney). This is an example of how such a body can be described as both beautiful and atrocious at the same time.

Karin Sanders addresses the discussion regarding whether the bog bodies should be viewed as things or as people. Museums try to lessen the distinction between the "object body (the dead body in the present) and the embodied person (the living body of the past)" as the British anthropologists Elisabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey call it (192-193). This is often done by using facial reconstruction, re-suturing of clothes and other forms of re-humanizing with the aim of making the corpses seem more human. As a result of this the bodies are therefore not as easily viewed as things rather than people. At the same time, the bog bodies tend to naturally be viewed as both a thing and a person when placed in a museum. As stated by American literary critic Bill Brown: we "begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us" (Sanders, 193). Dead bodies, such as the bog bodies, have in some way lost their function and can, in Brown's sense, be said to have gained "thingness". On the other hand, by looking at the bog body as an embodied person rather than an object body it may still be viewed as a person rather than a thing (Sanders 192-193).

Karin Sanders also addresses the traumatic aspect of the bog bodies. This not only comprises the trauma that the people must have gone through before their tragic departure from life, but also the trauma that one can experience while viewing a bog body. Sanders is then referring to how a person may imagine both the person willing to be sacrificed and those who were murdered and looking at both the trauma that was inflicted by someone, and also experienced by someone else. On many of the discovered bog bodies there are clear signs that there have been traumatic events surrounding their deaths, with clear cuts and wounds, as well as (in some cases) marks of a rope around some of their necks. One might then ask: "[h]ow can we enjoy looking

at, and buy, postcards of the cropped hands, feet, or faces of dead people?” (Sanders 34). According to Sanders, it is because of the bog bodies' particular place in time that their viewers do not typically feel a sense of guilt. A temporal buffer zone of sorts is created from the approximate two-thousand years between the death of the person and the viewing of its remains (33-37).

Trauma theory

The word trauma stems from the Greek word for ‘wound’. The term was first used in English in the seventeenth century by medical personnel referring to injuries sustained by external agents. The term did not refer to the mental realm until late in the nineteenth century (Luckhurst 2). Trauma remains to this day hard to define, but most critics agree on Richard Crownshaw’s definition: “trauma is that which defies witnessing, cognition, conscious recall and representation” (Bond, Craps 4). Something that is very important to keep in mind while working with trauma theory is that one can be traumatized without having lived through a traumatic event, and one can also live through a traumatizing event without being traumatized by it. One can find an example of this in the field of transgenerational trauma, where Marianne Hirsch has claimed that “the imprint of trauma can be passed down through generations as the children of survivors inherit memories of catastrophic events, they did not themselves live through” (Bond, Craps 57).

Literature is viewed to grant a unique mode of access to trauma. For example, literature can do justice to trauma in ways that law cannot. In the courtroom one may use literature in the form of storytelling, which may help in a case that entails traumatic experiences. By using storytelling, one may develop a deeper understanding of what the victim or defendant has gone through. Literature may help in this regard by “communicate[ing] the truth of trauma that eludes legal discourse, whose efforts to establish closure condemn it to repeat the trauma it tries to resolve” (Bond, Craps 71). Bond and Craps state that literature and trauma are intimately bound together because

of the provocative and controversial claims both trauma and literature may entail. This is because for years it was established that literature and trauma (especially historical trauma) should not have anything to do with each other and they should therefore be kept separate (45-46). Examples of trauma novels started to emerge in the late 1980s and 1990s after Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became established as a clinical diagnosis. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) is according to Roger Luckhurst the beginning of what we today know as trauma novels and had a large cultural influence at the time (87). During the 1990s, shortly after *Beloved* was published, there was a change in perspective when it came to trauma: the phenomenon was slowly changing from being strictly an object of clinical inquiry to becoming a preoccupation amongst literary and cultural scholars as well (Bond, Craps 45).

Individual and Collective trauma

Sigmund Freud wrote in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) about the first theories in regard to the distinguishment between individual and collective trauma. Freud wrote about memory-traces as an impression of the past that the masses retain unconsciously and by working with this, he started building a bridge between individual and mass psychology. His ideas were further developed by Cathy Caruth. Through working on passages from *Moses and Monotheism*, she concluded that, "[i]n a catastrophic age...trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures" (11). Caruth's conclusion was praised by some and criticized by others, but most importantly it was used as a steppingstone for further work on the subject (Bond, Craps 94-98).

Kai Erikson, draws a slightly different conclusion than Caruth, based on his own experiences in disasters both in the US and Canada. Erikson does agree with both Freud and Caruth in saying that, "when the community is profoundly affected, one can speak of a damaged social organism in almost the same way that one would speak of a damaged body" (460). But in contrast to Freud and Caruth's work, Erikson also believes that one can think of a traumatized community as something distinctive from a traumatized individual. Erikson states that communal trauma is the creation of social moods that change the dynamic in the communal moods and group spirit. The sense of

“I” is not as prominent as it once was, and maybe changed forever, “you” continues to exist, but it is harder to relate to and more distant. “We” on the other hand has completely disappeared. Traumatized communities can however develop a common feeling of belonging and a sense that their group is set apart from everyone else so that they feel special (460).

Erikson has made a clear distinction between individual and collective trauma. By *individual trauma* he means, “a blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively” (459) and by *collective trauma* Erikson refers to “a blow to the basic tissue of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community” (460). In contrast to other types of trauma, collective trauma works slowly and subtly into one's awareness and does not have the characteristic of suddenness that is usually associated with trauma. That is to say that Erikson distinguishes between the psychological nature of individual trauma and the social nature of collective trauma (460-461).

National and Cultural trauma

One can make further distinctions with regard to how trauma affects groups of people. While collective trauma refers to a community, national trauma regards a whole nation. Examples of this can be the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 and 09/11 (the terrorist attack on New York City on September 11th, 2001) which were events that changed the United States of America (US) as a nation, to a large part thanks to media coverage of the events. Ron Eyerman states that “a national trauma must be understood, explained, and made coherent through public reflection and discourse” (Bond, Craps 100). Eyerman also argues that mass media plays a decisive role as well, as shown after 09/11 when most television stations and newspapers called the event a national trauma without hesitation or doubt. After 09/11, even people who never previously engaged in public debate or discussion felt compelled to do so after the mass media exposure of the tragic event. Footage of the 09/11 attacks was shown on national and international TV, making people who were not in proximity to the event feel

like they were a part of the tragedy themselves. This is what Jeffery C. Alexander refers to as the “process of trauma creation” (Bond, Craps 101), whereby journalists, politicians, artists, etc., have a great social impact on the creation of public narratives surrounding an event and naturally making it into a traumatic event (Bond, Craps 99-101).

National trauma can also be used as a political means, for instance as a way of justifying measures such as the actions the US took after 09/11 when they declared a war on terror. Richard Clarke, the national coordinator for security and counterterrorism under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush stated that the US government tried to absolve their actions after 09/11 by declaring it to be a traumatic event (Bond, Craps 99-100). One can also discuss whether it is appropriate to call an event traumatic or not, rather than saying that an event had a traumatic effect, especially considering the fact that identifying an experience as traumatic requires interpretation. Alexander concludes that events are not naturally traumatic in themselves, and that trauma is an attribution that is created socially (Bond, Craps 99-101). Furthermore, Alexander and Eyerman prefer the term cultural trauma over national or collective trauma. Alexander states that cultural trauma occurs “when members of a collectivity feel they have been subject to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness”, explaining that trauma “...is a matter of intense cultural and political work” (Bond, Craps 101).

Transgenerational trauma

As mentioned above, Marianne Hirsch introduced the concept of transgenerational trauma, looking at how one can feel as though a powerful and even traumatic experience that predates one's birth still can feel as though it is one's own memory. History is then experienced in the present through deep personal connections and the distance from the event does not seem as vast because of the generational link making it feel much closer (Bond, Craps 46). An example of transgenerational trauma can be a father telling his son about his experience during the Holocaust as represented in Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*:

Their story is told, drawn, by their son who was born after the war but whose life was decisively determined by this familial and cultural memory. Art Spiegelman's memory is delayed, indirect, secondary, it is a postmemory of the Holocaust mediated by the father-survivor but determinative for the son (Bond, Craps 85).

Here one can see how memories of past events may live on through generations, drawing a picture of what these events were like by listening to stories and looking at how the memories seem to affect the storyteller as the story is told. Furthermore, Bond and Craps argue that one can inherit traces of the trauma of not only parents, but also grandparents, traces which can again affect one's own health and welfare and maybe even one's own children as well (85-87).

Trauma and music

Sandra L. Bloom, a psychiatrist and associate professor at Drexel University states that “[f]rom ancient times to the present, artistic performance in all its variety has been connected to healing of self and community” (198) and music has had a specifically important role in this. According to Moshe Bensimon, there are three different ways to integrate trauma in the context of music therapy. The first is *Body integration*, which entails the active use of musical instruments to serve as a sensorial stimulus that is to bypass the linguistic and logical mediation so that the body feels at peace and whole again. The second is *Event integration*, where the music that is listened to leads to repressed traumatic experiences being reintroduced into consciousness, resulting in emotional and cognitive reactions. Third and last is *Life story integration*, referring to the ability to perceive a life story through music, helping you achieve emotional and cognitive integration (Bensimon 370-372). And by integration one refers to the process of mental integration which entails:

taking disowned, unaware, or unresolved aspects of the self and making them part of a cohesive personality, reducing the use of defense mechanisms that inhibit spontaneity and limit flexibility in problem solving, health maintenance, and

relating to people, and re-engaging the world with full contact. It is the process of making whole (Brooklyn Integrative Psychological Services, PLLC).

Music is a tool that helps individuals and groups to heal after they have been exposed to traumatic situations. An example of this is when music has been used with children that are in the process of being reintroduced to school after they have experienced first-hand the powerful destruction a tornado can cause. Music has then been used in the process of making one whole again, so that the children may be once more engaged in what is happening around them and be able to relate to others as they had before they were exposed to the horrific event (Brooklyn Integrative Psychological Services, PLLC).

Chapter 1: “The bog water turns a body black, but it preserves it”: The image of bog bodies in *The Ferryman* and *Bog Child*

A naked body. Cold, wet and lonely, lying all alone in the dirty and dark depths of the bog. His day-old beard stubble, fingernails and skin look as they would have if he had been dead for a short amount of time, but he has been lying there for thousands of years, caught in a temporal void between places and languages. He is a human being frozen in time, a connection between present and past. A gruesome sight to behold, but even with a rope tied around his neck and just a hat on his head he looks peaceful. He has a solemn expression on his face, but is it an expression of sadness, of exhaustion, or maybe even pure devastation? The questions that may arise while looking at a bog body and trying to understand its past has become very popular in literature. In this chapter I will first look at how Jez Butterworth has used the image of a bog body in his play *The Ferryman*, and then I will examine the way Siobhan Dowd has used a different bog body in her novel, *Bog Child*.

1.1 *The Ferryman*

The Ferryman, which is a play by Jez Butterworth, starts with a conversation about a man that has been found in a bog on the North-South border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The characters talk about how the police have found possessions on the body that indicate him having been there for approximately 10 years. One of the men, called Magennis, connects this to The Tollund man, which is a bog body found in Denmark in 1950. He describes the similarities between the two, but also the differences. One of the other men in the first scene is a priest, and he is the one to recognize who the person found in the bog is. His name is Seamus Carney, and it has long been believed that he left his wife and son about 10 years ago. His wife and son have been sure that he is still alive as they have received word throughout the years that he has been spotted at different locations. This turns out to be a scheme orchestrated by

the people that had killed him. In the play, key role is played by the rather large Carney family, with Quinn Carney as the head of the house. He and his wife Mary have 7 children between the age of 16 and 9 months. Living in the same house is the wife of the late Seamus Carney, Caitlin Carney and her son Oisin, in addition to Uncle Pat, Aunt Pat and Aunt Maggie. And in a little cabin close to the house lives Tom Kettle, an English factotum that has been working for them since he was a little boy. The family is in the middle of the Harvest and they need some help to get everything harvested in time, so their cousins, Shane, Diarmaid and Declan Corcoran arrive at the farm to help them.

The body described above is commonly called the Tollund Man, named after the place, where he was found in Denmark. Soon after he was found, the Tollund Man became one of the most famous of the bog people, because of the combination of his peaceful expression and the disturbing rope tied around his neck. Tollund Man's body has inspired many artists to use their imaginations, creating works of art that use the image of a bog body. The Tollund man is mentioned more than once by name in *The Ferryman*. A character in the play called Magennis talks about how the body found in the bog in the play has similarities to the bog body found in Denmark. The character specifically refers to the fact that their hands and feet were both tied up in a similar way. He also talks about how the people that find the bog bodies become famous and that there is going to be a huge reaction when people find out that the body recently discovered in the bog, in the fictional story of the play, only has been there for 10 years. Moreover, what indicates that this body is not thousands of years old is the fact that it belongs to a male who was wearing a pair of Gola trainers and a Timex wristwatch. In addition, they have found, amongst other things, his car keys, his last pay packet from December 1971 and a picture of his son, all perfectly intact.

When a bog body is found usually the questions of “when did this person die?” “how did it happen?” and “why?” are asked. The mystery of a bog body evokes creativity and curiosity amongst people. Wild theories are thrown around about who the person was and what that said person could have done to end up dead in a bog. This also

happened when the Tollund Man was found, especially since the cord around his neck suggests that he was either hanged or garroted (Sanders 2). Even though the bog body in *The Ferryman* does not end up being an embodiment of the past in the same capacity as The Tollund Man or Mel (The bog body in *Bog Child*) since he has not been preserved in the bog for as long as they have, there are still many mysteries surrounding the former's found body. There are speculations and arguments about how Seamus Carney ended up dead in the bog, with his young nephews being among the most curious people. They discuss vigorously about how he could have ended up in the bog, not knowing anything about what he was involved in, but having their suspicions. For the young boys, his disappearance is something that happened when they were little and a product of the past. For them the discovery of his body is in a way similar to the unearthing of an unknown bog body that dated centuries in the past. There is still mystery surrounding this bog body, even if it does not reach as far back in time as many other bog bodies. The mystery of a body found after only 10 years is closer in proximity and for the Carney family, also something very personal since he was a member of their family. The discovery of his body leads to grief but also relief, as the family had thought he had left them willingly all those years ago. At least now they know that he did not choose to leave them behind, since the evidence clearly points to murder.

Caitlin Carney and her son Oisín lives for ten years thinking that their husband and father is alive somewhere, but that he does not want anything to do with them. They grow angrier and angrier as time goes by, not understanding why he does not want to be a part of their lives anymore. There are false reports telling Caitlin that Seamus has been spotted here and there throughout the years, so the family keeps thinking that he is choosing to be away from them. This misplaced anger and resentment follows the family for years, so when the news is brought to them that Seamus is found dead and that he has been dead for 10 years they both have very emotional reactions to the news. When Caitlin hears the news about Seamus being found in the bog, at first, she does not believe it, saying that she has heard talk of him only a few years ago. Only after Quinn explains that the police have checked his dental records and that he has a picture of their son in his pocket does she believe what he is telling her. Oisín overhears the news

and misunderstands parts of the conversation, leading him to think that his mom knew about it and had not told him. His immediate reaction is anger, saying that “[y]ou knew Dad was dead and you never told me. Fuck off. You`re a liar...” (Butterworth 83). After the shock wears off Caitlin first reacts by saying that she can now finally stop paying off his wedding ring and it seems like she does this as an attempt to lift her own spirits by joking it away. Later she reacts with anger saying, “I am going to fuckin´ explode, so I am” (Butterworth 50), opening up to the anger she has been keeping to herself for a very long time.

Not having the knowledge and understanding that is required to grasp the situation fully, can lead to traumatic experiences for those involved. As Crownshaw’s definition of trauma states that “trauma is that which defies witnessing, cognition, conscious recall and representation” (Bond, Craps 4). The darkness, sadness and distress in the family increases as Seamus Carney’s body is found in the bog and Oisín is confused, angry and sad because he wants someone to blame for his father’s death. While he first blames his mother for what happened to his dad, later in the play he ends up blaming someone else. Shane, the eldest of the Corcoran brothers nudges him in the direction of the forty-year-old factotum that originally comes from England, by saying that Tom Kettle, “[a]n Englishman. On one knee to your mam. The same day she finds she’s a widow. The same fucking day” (Butterworth 110). He then asks if he knows if he keeps the door locked at night. Shane is luring him, trying to make him do something that he otherwise would not have thought of doing. Oisín wants someone to blame for his father’s murder and Shane wants everyone that is English to suffer for what the British Government has been doing during the Troubles. The experience Oisín has when he figures out that his dad is dead may be described as “a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively”, leading him to do irrational things (Erikson 460).

The discovery of bog bodies seems to be a regular occurrence for the characters depicted in the play. The bog body being found is not at first looked upon as being very strange: strangeness only enters the picture when it becomes clear that the body has

not been laying there for a very long time. This indicates that the characters are used to finding people lying dead in the bog. As Sanders writes, most bog bodies are said to be Iron Age sacrifices or victims of punishment, dating far back in time, while only a few seem to have ended up there by accident (2). Seamus Carney seems to be a victim of punishment, but he is not from the Iron Age. The character called Magennis talks about how the press has been writing about bog bodies and that they are something that everyone should know about. He also talks about The Tollund Man and about how such bog bodies are usually viewed as very important historic finds. The person that finds the bog body is interviewed and they sometimes receive awards for the find. In the play it is therefore looked upon as a disappointment when the body turns out to be only ten years old. In the words of Sanders, the object body is looked upon as less of a fascination for people than what an embodied person can be (192-193).

1.2 *Bog Child*

The novel *Bog Child* starts with the main character Fergus McCann and his uncle, Thedious McCann (Tally) driving over the North-South border in Ireland at five in the morning to fill up bags of peat, a dark brown substance like soil that is formed by plants that are dying and buried. While digging for peat, Fergus hits something hard with his shovel, which he at first thinks is a coin of some sort, but he soon comes to realize that it is something far from a coin. What Fergus finds is a bangle that belongs to a dead body, lying on the ground with a leg clearly chopped off by the JCB (large machines used for digging). This creates a gruesome image for the reader, and it develops an intriguing mystery. The bog body in the novel has many features that are similar to the actual bog bodies found around the world and this makes the description of how she looked when she was found even more captivating. In order to show the similarities between how the bog bodies are presented in *Bog Child* and *Bodies in the Bog*, here is a description of the bog body in the novel: Her lower leg is chopped off as she is found in a bog, all alone. Her leg has been cut off by modern machinery, but the pain of her past is still evident as the little girl has clear signs of past brutalities showing on her body. Questions arise quickly regarding whether she has been murdered or sacrificed. Her left

arm is exposed in a position where it lays twisted up around her head, as if she were protecting herself. Her other arm is lying flat along her side with a distinctive bracelet on her hand, called a bangle. The lines showing on her finger-pads indicate that she could have been alive only yesterday, but she lies there peacefully, reminding us of the brutalities people face. The bangle displays both her gender and her connection to the past and to her mother. Throughout the novel Fergus has many dreams where he learns about her life, her family, friends and why she was killed. His dreams are connected to the information he gets from the archaeologist named Felicity. The more he learns, the more he dreams of her.

Although there is no clear evidence of Siobhan Dowd being inspired by Seamus Heaney's poems about bog bodies when writing her novel, there are many obvious similarities. The poems that have the clearest connections are "Bog Queen", "Punishment" and "The Grauballe Man". In "Bog Queen" the poem is written from the perspective of the Bog Queen herself, who states that "I was barbered and stripped by a turf-cutter's spade", and here one can see the similarities to how Mel's legs were cut off by the JCB in the novel. The bog body that had laid underground in the peat undisturbed for such a long time, preserving the past, has now been disturbed. Also, in "Punishment" one can see a connection to how Mel's past is described in the novel. As in Dowd's novel, the poem describes someone undernourished, showing signs of starvation. and there is also a connection to Mel becoming a scapegoat for her brother. In "The Grauballe man" however the poem is not written from the perspective of the bog body, rather it is described through the lens of someone watching the body asking: / Who will say 'corpse' to his vivid cast? / Who will say 'body' to his opaque repose? /. Here one can see a likeness to the descriptions of Fergus viewing a bog body as more than just a corpse. On page 45 in the novel Fergus daydreams of the bog body when "[t]he little voice was in his head again, the child time forgot" (Dowd 45). Furthermore, this also connects to Sanders' description of the difference between the object body and the embodied person. Fergus makes up a story in his head about what he believes happened to the bog body, so that the life of the embodied person comes to life in his mind.

The soil and moss surrounding the body ends up being the key to unlocking the past, showing that the body dates all the way back to 80CE. When it is revealed that the body is thousands of years old the narrative changes into one in part concerning myth and mysteries from another lifetime, rather than a story concerning a murder investigation. It becomes a story about a body preserved in time, showing us a piece of the past, connecting us to those who lived before us. For a long time, Fergus believes that Mel walked the earth at the same time as Jesus did. This makes her into an even stronger symbol for him, bringing to mind similarities connecting the present to the time when Christ walked among us. There were murders and human sacrifices even back in the time of Christ, showing that what is now happening around him had happened before. As Sanders has described, the bog bodies often become humanity's conscience, letting them know that what they are going through has happened before and that they are not alone in what they are feeling (187). When living in a community that has had one or more "...blow[s] to the basic tissue of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community" (Erikson 459) it is even more important to have something to believe in. The people living in such communities need something that makes what they are going through feel more normal, in turn making them feel more whole.

The archeologist that is examining the bog body has a large role in the novel. She encourages Fergus to choose a name for the body and in so doing, opening him up to the idea that Mel was once a person, just like him but from a time long forgotten. Felicity, as the archeologist is called, also ends up being the one discovering how old the body is. This discovery makes Mel even more interesting to Fergus, and he becomes more and more curious as to what her life was like when she was alive. He starts dreaming about her day and night and connecting what she went through to what he is going through in his own life. This process may be viewed as a sort of coping mechanism for him. Fixating on Mel's past life helps him control what is going on in his own life. The thought of going through something that someone else has already suffered makes it seem less scary. In having a connection to a person that lived long ago, one may create

a strong bond. This bond may help ease the tension of everyday life because of the temporal void that separates their lives. While you can still have a strong bond with someone living in your own time period, as Fergus starts having with the border guard, that is a relationship that is uncertain, and fleeting compared to the timeless essence that lives on in the embodied person of a bog body.

Mel, which is what the bog body ends up being called by Fergus, quickly becomes a subject of fascination, allowing Fergus to daydream about something other than his personal life. As his mother puts it in the novel: "I'm glad they think she's been there all this time. Why? It makes it further away. Less to do with us. With now... We've enough troubles on our doorstep" (Dowd 25). This shows how the bog body is used as a way of coping with everyday life in the novel: being able to focus on something that is distant and far away seems to help Fergus with the hardships he must deal with in his everyday life. Every time he seems to have an important decision to make in his life, he has a dream where he sees Mel going through something similar. This seems to help him in his own decision-making. An example of this is when Fergus and his family are struggling with the idea of having to say goodbye to his brother on hunger strike. Fergus has a dream about Mel saying her last goodbyes to her family and closest friend. The similarities between the goodbye that Fergus must go through, and Mel's goodbye, works as a comfort for Fergus in his own decision-making. The situation is similar in other ways as well, because while Joey², Fergus's brother, starves for his country and his people, Mel and her father also starve so that her siblings and his children can get enough food to last through the winter. Both stories have people sacrificing themselves so that others can have a better life in the future, even though it is a future without them in it. The suffering that themselves and their families go through is worth it for them if the end-result is that the people around them have better lives in the future.

While the concept of an Iron Age body that has been perfectly preserved for thousands of years seems familiar in the world of *The Ferryman*, it is less so in *Bog Child*. The discovery of a body that dates to 80CE seems to be something new for both

² There will be more information about Joey in chapter 2.2.

Fergus and his family. However, Fergus overhears a few of the workers that are up at the border talk about how they once heard about a body that had been found in a bog. They said that the bog body turned out to be centuries old. They also talk about how it is the quality of the bog that preserves the body and that it can be connected to how the mummies were mummified in ancient Egypt. Furthermore, they talk about how it is possible that the person that they have discovered could have lived at the same time as Jesus. Another indication as to the bog bodies being well known in the novel is shown when the authorities in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland start fighting over what side of the border the body is found. Before they know that the body is ancient, they do not want it to be on their side of the border, but as soon as it is discovered that the body is ancient, they suddenly want it to be on their side of the border after all. This obviously alludes to what is said in *The Ferryman* about how the people that discover the bog body get interviewed and receive awards for the discovery.

Chapter 2: “Hunger strike is a weapon which is designed to turn weakness into strength”: Hunger strikes in *The Ferryman* and *Bog Child*

Historically significant events are usually told repeatedly and written by many people, creating variations of the presentation of the past. Astrid Erll states that “[w]hat is culturally remembered about an ancient myth, a revolution, a hero (or any other story or image) usually refers not so much to [...] the “original” or the “actual” events, but instead to a palimpsestic structure of existent media representations” (140). The hunger strikes of 1981 have been represented in many books, plays, movies etc. throughout the years, creating collective cultural memories through these representations of the past. In this chapter I will be looking at the representation of the 1981 hunger strike in *The Ferryman* by Jez Butterworth and *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd.

2.1 *The Ferryman*

The play is set in the year 1981, which is the year that the Long Kesh prison hunger strikes took place. The hunger strikes are mentioned throughout the play and are therefore a large part of the story. The first mention of hunger strikers in Butterworth’s play is when a character called Aunt Pat mentions Kevin Lynch and that his body is buried only fifteen miles from their house. She talks about how the wind that blows over his grave is soon to blow under their door as well, presenting a visualization of how close they are. Aunt Pat also describes how a hunger striker in the H-blocks is now barely able to lift a fork, while Tom Kettle, who is an Englishman, has a full belly. The increasingly unfair nature of the conflict has led to strained and unsettling conditions in the household as well as the country as a whole. In this section one can almost feel the hatred towards all who are English because of the conflict. Tom Kettle, being a young man that has lived in Northern Ireland almost his entire life, gets the blame for something of which he himself has not been a part. This unfairness towards Tom Kettle continues throughout the play, resulting in something horrible at the end. He is being

painted as a villain, a person you do not want near your loved ones, especially not your own mother.

The second mention of the hunger strikes is when Aunt Pat asks everyone to be quiet and gather around the radio where one can hear Margaret Thatcher herself say that

[t]here can be no question of political status for someone who is serving a sentence for crime. Crime is crime is crime. It is not political. It is crime and there can be no question of granting political status. 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 (Butterworth 36).

This quotation is a part of Margaret Thatcher's speech from an actual press conference that was held on 21 April 1981 in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia and it was covered by BBC radio (Thatcher). This is a direct connection to the actual historical event, and it makes the play feel even more real. By quoting the actual radio coverage of the time the writer makes the narrative more authentic, giving the audience a deeper connection to the story that is being told. This also connects to what Jeffery C. Alexander describes as the "process of trauma creation", where people may get a traumatic experience out of viewing a product made by journalists, politicians, artists, etc. When people of much influence convey a message, it has a greater social impact on the creation of public narratives surrounding an event and may naturally make it into a traumatic event (Bond, Craps 99-101).

In the middle of the second act aunt Pat suddenly turns off the cassette player on which the younger characters are playing loud music. There is silence and a few complaints, but then she announces that another hunger striker, Michael Devine, has died. She subsequently lists their names one by one: Michael Devine, Thomas McElwee, Kieran Doherty, Kevin Lynch, Martin Hurson, Joe McDonnell, Patsy O'Hara, Raymond McCreesh, Francis Hughes and Bobby Sands (Butterworth 74). Afterwards,

they all raise their glasses to them. Then there is silence, followed by some of the characters singing together a song called *Erin Go Bragh*. This means 'Ireland forever', and it is an old Irish rebel song that tells the story of an Irish uprising and the courage displayed by the Irishmen (Kearney). This shows the impact the deaths of the hunger strikers had on the people with families gathering; mourning and praising the dead while at the same time being hopeful that the hunger strikes will bring about change. This hope is also shown later in the second act when a character by the name of Muldoon talks of how it is a critical time because the hunger strikers have created an unprecedented international focus and that the IRA now are standing a chance at becoming a real political force in the country (Butterworth 80).

The play visualizes the effect of cultural trauma, as defined above as being adamant "when members of a collectivity feel they have been subject to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness" (Bond, Craps 101). The hunger strikes are an example of an event that caused communities to change and adapt because of the traumatic experiences that were talked about everywhere. The hunger strikes can also definitely be described as "... a matter of intense cultural and political work" (Bond, Craps 101). This is shown at a point in the play, after Thatcher's speech on the radio, when Uncle Pat says that "Mrs Thatcher called us a bunch of criminals" (Butterworth 40). This shows how the hunger strikes affected the people living in the area so much that they felt as if the prime minister was talking directly to them when addressing the hunger strikers as criminals.

The third act starts with the younger boys in the family drinking, smoking and telling stories about when they went to Bobby Sands' funeral. The two eldest boys, Diarmaid and Shane, were the only ones that went to the funeral, so they are the ones telling the younger boys about what it was like. They describe the crowds of people crammed on a bus, how they wrote "Bobby Sands. RIP" on their hands and an old lady, around 70 years old, sprayed the word "Justice" on the back of people's jackets. There were thousands of people gathered for the funeral and the boys squeezed through the crowds to get a good view of the ceremony. People were chanting "Bobby Sands! Bobby

Sands!", and then there was silence. The boys describe in detail how the coffin was brought out and the Long Kesh anthem³ was playing while gunshots were being fired over the coffin. They could hear the speech clearly over the sound of choppers circling above because they used a bullhorn. They were shocked to hear that the man quoted Sands himself by saying that "[t]hey have nothing in their whole imperial arsenal that can break the spirit of one Irishman who doesn't want to be broken. I am hungry only for justice" (Butterworth 92). This was a shock because Sands was not allowed to write while imprisoned but he managed to smuggle in paper so that he could write a diary. The diary entries were smuggled back out and eventually made into a published book. Here too, *The Ferryman* integrates authentic historical material. The play also shows how one statement made with pure intentions can easily be twisted into something dangerous. Bobby Sand's famous statement which is quoted above can easily be misunderstood and misused and that is what Shane does. He uses the statement as an incentive to enact revenge in the name of justice, leading to the brutal end of the play when the small boy called Oisin is killed.

Patsy O'Hara is again mentioned on page 104, when Shane describes how O'Hara had fourteen fits the morning he died, biting his tongue right through. He also talks about how O'Hara knew he was going to die, leaving his family and friends behind, but that he was doing it for them. Shane also states that "he did it for me, for Declan, for Diarmaid, for JJ and for you. This is not history. This is happening now" (Butterworth 104). And in doing so Shane describes the strong connection between what is happening in the H blocks of Long Kesh prison and the people that live in Northern Ireland. This illustrates how the event had such a great impact on the history of the Troubles and why it is spoken of in such high regard to this day. In this case, one can speak of a damaged social organism where everyone is being affected by a traumatic event even though they have not been in direct contact with the people that are traditionally looked upon as the actual victims. This also connects to Erikson's description of communal trauma: the creation of social moods that change the dynamic in the communal moods and group spirit. The hunger strikers are sacrificing their lives

³ The Long Kesh anthem will be discussed later in the thesis.

for their community, their people and not anyone else. And in their sacrifice the community has created a common feeling of belonging and a sense that their group is set apart from everyone else, making them feel special.

2.2 *Bog Child*

The hunger strike is also represented in the novel *Bog Child*, with the fictive character called Joey McCann as one of the prisoners who joined Bobby Sands to add more pressure on the Government. The following quote from the novel shows the connection between the demands listed by the inmates at Long Kesh and the reasons Joey McCann's character had for joining the hunger strike:

It's about freedom and dignity. Clothes, visits, the right not to muck in with the common prisoners. The right to keep ourselves apart, doing what we want to do. It's the right to hold our heads up and not be ashamed of what we have done. And me and the boys here - we're in this together (Dowd 79).

Joey McCann argues that they live in strange times, so they must do strange things to get out of those strange times. He believes that what he must do in order to achieve this is join the hunger strike. Fergus tries to persuade his brother to opt out of the strike by saying that Margaret Thatcher will never give in. What Fergus wanted to make clear by saying this is that Thatcher did not seem to regret turning down the hunger strikers' demands even though it led to them dying. This was because Thatcher had earlier commented that Bobby Sands had a choice in the matter when he died, while the victims of the bombings did not. This connects to when Margaret Thatcher said that "I want this to be utterly clear - the government will never concede political status to the hunger strikers or to any others convicted of criminal offenses" (McKittrick, McVea 164). As in Butterworth's play, this is a direct link to an actual statement made by the prime minister during the hunger strikes. The reason why this is an important link is because of the impact it had on the hunger strike.

Joey clearly does not want Bobby Sands' death to be meaningless, so he continues with the strike. Since Joey is set in his ways, his family is not able to persuade him to start eating again and some of them have a hard time accepting this. His mother is in tears almost every day and the family itself is split because of the different attitudes towards what Joey is doing. The one who seems to struggle the most is his mother, who is constantly both angry and sad saying that “[w]hen Joey's dead...there will be no afters. No trips. No messing. No nothing” (Dowd 217). On the other hand, the father supports what Joey is trying to achieve in the name of the cause and refuses to dissuade him from sacrificing himself, saying that martyrdom trumps the prospects of letting him yield to a tyrant. His father believes that an individual should always put their own principles before anything else. At first Fergus struggles with what he believes, but at the end he sides with his mother, believing that love and familial bonds trumps the uncritical commitment he has to his nation. Furthermore, Fergus seems to cope with the situation by plunging into everything around him. He focuses on doing well in school so that he might be able to go off to school in England one day and get away from the chaos of his everyday life. He has driving lessons with his uncle, he spends time with Cora who he has a romantic relationship with, he is fascinated by the work that Felicity does working with analyzing the bog body, and last but not least, he has dreams both at night and during the day about the bog body. Fergus is desperately trying to break away from what has become a damaged social organism, as described by Kai Erikson. He wants to live a normal life that is not tinted with death and despair, and he is doing what he can to distract himself as he waits for the chance to finally leave Ireland (460)

Discussing the hunger strikes are a part of Fergus and his parents lives even before Joey went on hunger strike: it was a topic discussed while reading the paper, listening to the radio and even around the dinner table. Once, Fergus' dad asks him about it while eating a delicious meal and Fergus answers that he could never do it himself, claiming that he would not last a day without food. His dad then goes on by saying that he is happy that Joey does not have to make such a sacrifice, making Fergus' mom react to the word ‘sacrifice’. How could one call it a sacrifice? It often comes up in conversation because there is a new funeral for someone who has died or

there is a mention of how many days the hunger strikers have been without food. The news stations and newspapers are engulfed in the tragic deaths and the families living in the area has no choice but to listen to the news regarding the prison. Whether they like it or not, the hunger strike is becoming a part of their lives and they have to sit back and watch it unfold. In this case one can speak of a damaged social organism, where everyone is affected by what is happening around them, changing the social interactions between the people living in the area affected by the Troubles. The situation the people of Northern Ireland was facing at the time can therefore be viewed as something that led their communities to be engulfed in a collective trauma and their nation to be immersed in national or cultural trauma.

Throughout *Bog Child*, news reports play an important role in spreading information about the hunger strike. The newspaper *Roscillin Star* is mentioned when Fergus' dad slams it on the table and says that there have been two more deaths after 61 days of starving. He says that Bobby Sands' death was just the beginning and that they, meaning the British Government, are just letting the hunger strikers die. When Joey joins in on the strike, the *Roscillin Star* ends up knocking on his family's door asking about how it is like to have a family member on hunger strike. In addition to news about this event, there are also frequent news reports of bombings in the area. The constant exposure to the gruesome events unfolding around them makes the family used to awful things happening, and at one point Fergus's parents even say the following: "Why would they interrupt the football with a report like that? raved Da. Another bomb? what's new about that?" "Nothing", Mam said, stabbing the button with her needle. Nothing's new about it. Not nowadays" (Dowd 2008). Fergus also lives in constant fear of having done the wrong thing. He fears that the packages he has been carrying over the border are Semtex and that it will be used to make bombs. In his fear and confusion, he thinks "I killed them... [a]s surely as if I planted the bomb myself" (Dowd 227). Fergus is sure that he is carrying Semtex over the border. Shortly after a report on a new bombing he lies on the lawn daydreaming about Mel and how she is doubting herself. Mel is saying that she almost believes that she is guilty herself just by looking at the hostility in other people's eyes when they look at her. Later, when Fergus

is struggling as to whether he should run over the border with the last package or not, Fergus sees small glimpses of Mel's life and how she is feeling stronger and more confident about her situation. This does so that Fergus starts feeling better about his current situation saying "OK, Mel, my girl... If you can do it, so can I" (Dowd 232). By using the bog body to empower himself and the decisions he must make regarding his own life he continues to feel stronger and ready to face his fears.

Chapter 3: Digging deeper: Points and connections

When one looks at the storyline of both the play and the novel one can see clear similarities in the themes and the historical context. Both are set in Northern Ireland in 1981 near the North-South border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. They both have bog bodies, and the Long Kesh prison hunger strikes as important themes, but when looking more closely at both texts one can also find other similarities that go a bit deeper. In this chapter I will be looking a bit closer at the larger connecting factors but also at those other similarities, while looking at some of the differences between them.

The beginning of a novel typically sets the tone for the rest of the story, and the first sentences in *Bog Child* describe the dark and gloom around Fergus and Uncle Tally as they are driving up the mountain at a very early hour of the day. The first two sentences of the novel state that “they’d stolen a march on the day [and that] the sky was like dark glass, reluctant to let the light through” (Dowd 3). The sentence gives associations to the hunger strikes right away, through references to stealing a day, darkness and there being no light. The hunger strikers only have a few days to live when they start the hunger strike and the days that they do have left in the prison are dark and gloomy. The only hope they have for a light at the end of it all is by sacrificing themselves so that the people around them may enjoy the light in the end even if they do not get to enjoy it themselves. The opening of the novel continues with a description of the silence and of the water being colorless and the hills being like silhouettes of snoozing giants. This may on the other hand point us in the direction of the bog body with the association to dark bog water and being all alone in the ground for years with only silence as your companion. The snoozing giants may symbolize the aspect of a bog body being frozen in time, dormant and waiting to be found so that it can finally join the civilization again.

The play also starts with a description of the surroundings, but in a slightly more literal way, since it is describing a scene that is supposed to be on a stage in a theater.

The first sentence of the stage instructions states that the characters are in “[a]n alley in Bogside, Derry [in the] back of a building [and that] [t]he wall is painted with Republican graffiti” (Butterworth 6). This sentence immediately gives an association to bog bodies, since it describes the setting as being at Bogside. On the other hand, the Republican graffiti also arguably creates an association to the hunger strikes, since the prisoners that join the hunger strike are republicans who are fighting for the republican war criminal's rights in the prison. Furthermore, the first sentences that are spoken are written as a rhyme. The rhyme works as an introduction to the next character saying / [c]ease, cease with all your drumming / All your whoring, all your mumming / By my smell I can tell A Priest this way is coming / (Butterworth 6). In addition to introducing the character the rhyme sets the tone for the rest of the play by introducing the role music has throughout the play. Music will have a large part in the play as song lyrics and songs in general are often used throughout the play by different characters and in different settings.

Song lyrics are used in both *Bog Child* and *The Ferryman*. In the play one can often find the characters singing different songs, and we are told that a song was playing when the characters were attending Bobby Sands' funeral in the play. The song that was playing at the funeral has a specifically important role in the play as it is called the ‘Long Kesh’ anthem. Long Kesh is a song about not giving up no matter what: it is about how strong the Irish can be if they set their minds to something and about how they will set everyone free through whatever civil disobedience or other acts that they must endure to get their victory in the end (The Wolfe Tones). There are several times throughout the play where one or more characters sing a song, as for example Aunt Maggie who is getting old and drifts in and out by sometimes being her old self and other times not being able to communicate at all. She is not always aware of what is going on around her, but she remembers song lyrics quite well. Not being present and able to communicate may be a sign of dementia, and many people with dementia have had positive experiences with music, where it has reduced stress and depression, but also helped maintain speech and language. Many state that music helps the overall quality of life for people with dementia (Devere). In the play it is very clear that music is helping

Aunt Maggie to remember, and it is used as a comfort, something familiar and safe for her in times of great confusion and chaos.

Another example of the use of songs in the play is when the Corcoran boys sing the rebel song, *Erin Go Bragh*. This is more of a political statement and is used to enhance the sense of community amongst the people. The way music has been used in the segment above is a way of using music in a more personal manner, which may help your own personal battles. Music may in these situations firstly, with the help of active use of musical instruments serve as a sensorial stimulus that bypasses the linguistic and logical mediation so that the body feels at peace and whole again. This is what Bensimon *calls Body integration*. This could be what Aunt Maggie gains from listening to music. It may also help in the way described as *Event integration* where the music that is listened to leads to repressed traumatic experiences being reintroduced into consciousness, resulting in emotional and cognitive reactions. The music connects the family and helps them express what they cannot show with words. This can be connected to a night in the play when the whole family is gathered listening to music, and they are dancing and laughing together. Some of the family members do not approve of the music choice, but the younger members of the family use the music to express themselves and feel free. *Life story integration* can also be viewed in the play as it refers to the ability to perceive a life story through music. This refers to the political songs that are about the hardships that the previous generations have gone through (Bensimon). When a community suffers from a blow to their social dynamic music may help heal the people that are affected by the traumatic events unfolding around them.

When reading the novel one finds the bog body described as something that has "... gone all brown after being in the bog" (Dowd 11) while, in *The Ferryman* it is said that "[t]he bog water turns a body black, but it preserves it" (Butterworth 8). These are two similar views of what a bog body looks like, but they are used in different ways in these two texts. In *The Ferryman* the bog body has been placed in the bog recently, dating only 10 years back in time. There is a reference to a body found in a similar way in the novel as well when Fergus's dad says that he remembers an old story about a body

being found in the bog. It was about forty years ago, and that body ended up being the wife of a local man who had claimed that his wife left him for another man and had gone to England. On the other hand, the bog body Fergus finds in the novel ends up being dated all the way back to 80CE, giving it a very different meaning than the body found in the play. Seamus Carney is a recent alleged murder victim and there are still people alive that know him and mourn him in a way very different from Mel, who has been dead for centuries and symbolizes a connection to the mysteries of the past, rather than the present.

The descriptions of what the bog bodies look like when they are found and what possessions they have on them clearly shows the difference between them. For instance, when Seamus Carney's body is found he is wearing Gola trainers, a Timex wristwatch, brown corduroys and he had his car keys, his last pay packet, some Polos, a betting slip and a picture of his son in his pocket. On the other hand, the only items described on Mel are a bangle that is bound around her wrist and some cloth around her body. The bangle can be viewed as a symbol of Mel's past life and of how far into the past her history lies, while Seamus Carney's possessions also symbolize what his life was like, and that he was alive not that long ago. Both bog bodies are symbols of the past, but in different ways. Mel symbolizes the past long forgotten, linking present and past and showing the horrors that took place long ago, while Seamus Carney symbolizes the more recent past many seem to want to forget. One of the images brings Fergus comfort and helps him through tough times, whereas the other reminds the characters of the fear and pain they must face every day.

Human nature is presented in a more positive way in *Bog Child* than in *The Ferryman*. Even though you see the Troubles through the eyes of young characters in both, one can see a clear distinction in how the children view the world. In *Bog Child* Fergus constantly looks at things in a positive light, always wanting things to be better and believing that the people around him are good people. This also ends up showing him that the people he has around him not always are who they seem. Fergus did not want to get involved in any IRA business, it seems rather likely that he would want to

focus on himself and follow his mother's wish for him staying out of trouble. The thought of being a part of the IRA operations made "something slither(...) in his belly, cold and subtle (Dowd 50). The reason he ends up joining what he thinks is an IRA operation is because there is a small chance that they could help get Joey off hunger strike. This is because Fergus is told by the one who approaches him, that he will try his best to get Joey off the hunger strike if Fergus decides to help with carrying the packages over the border. This reasoning also shows how Fergus is thinking of others and always wants the best for the ones around him. In *The Ferryman*, on the other hand, you have characters such as Quin and Seamus Carney who seem to have ties to the IRA, while you have Shane who truly wants to join the IRA. After he has had a glimpse of the operations and how people end up being hurt or even die from joining, he still wants to join. Shane and his younger brother Diarmaid both want to make a difference and change what they believe to be unfair and wrong, even though the methods that will be used in order to achieve their goals might get someone hurt or killed in the process. Shane also manages to manipulate Oisin, who is three years younger than him, only fourteen years old, to act on something he might not have acted upon was he not provoked.

The play has many powerful scenes filled with connections to the historical events that unfolded at the time the play is set. There are similar connections in the novel as well, but the visual aspect of the play makes it more direct and can therefore make a larger impact on the viewer. There are clear indications that the novel is aimed at young readers, while the play is directed at an older audience, again referring to the powerful scenes in the play. There is generally a higher age limit to what one watches rather than what one reads because of the visual aspect of the experience. The play incorporates more of underage drinking, mental instability, other health problems and the end scene to that last act is very brutal and emotionally powerful to watch. The novel has powerful aspects as well, with the closeness between the main character and his brother who is on hunger strike and Uncle Tally's suicide at the end of the novel. The awful events that unfold are mentioned in the novel, but not described in full detail. Whereas in the play it does not have to be described in full detail because one can see it all on the stage and

that does so that it is not fitting for a younger audience. The novel is also narrated through the eyes of a teenager, automatically making it more accessible for a younger audience.

Bog Child is narrated from the perspective of a Catholic living in Northern Ireland in 1981. The story is not told through the perspective of someone deep in politics or political warfare, but rather through the perspective of a young boy living his life amid the Troubles. However, one learns much about the political aspects of the conflict through Fergus's experiences with family members that are more directly involved in the conflict than he is himself. Examples of this are his brother on hunger strike and his uncle who seems to be involved in multiple IRA bombings. In *The Ferryman* as well, the perspective is of the Catholic side of the conflict, showing the viewpoints of a Catholic family living in the midst of the Troubles. Quinn Carney, the father in the family, seems to have a history with the IRA. He feels guilty about this history, because he thinks that he dragged his brother into trouble: Quinn is convinced that he is the reason why his brother ends up being killed. A few of the young Corcoran brothers are also connected to the IRA, showing several times that they want to be a part of the action, as they often show signs of wanting justice for their people. And in this case, justice for them means that the English must pay for what they have done to the Catholics living in Northern Ireland. Even though the main characters in both texts have republican backgrounds there are many aspects of the texts that indicate that the works are not complexly pro-republican.

Looking at the background of both authors gives a good indication as to why both the play and the novel tend to paint a picture of the characters on both sides of the conflict as victims, maybe even focusing more on the British victims than the Irish. Both authors are born in England, but they have ties to Northern Ireland. Dowd's parents were both Irish, so even though she was born and raised in England, she visited her family home in County Waterford in Ireland quite often (About Siobhan). Butterworth also had Irish parents and came from a catholic home (Thorpe). The conflict is not depicted as entirely pro-republican, as it may seem at first. Even through the main characters are

Republican and sympathy towards the hunger strikers is a large part of both texts, you have several characters on the other side of the conflict depicted as victims as well. In the novel one has Owain, who is a British soldier that is only doing his duty standing guard at the North-South border. As Fergus gets to know Owain, the reader gains sympathy with him as he did not have much of a choice in the matter of becoming a soldier. He could either stay in his hometown in Wales working underground in a dark and dangerous mine or he could become a soldier in the British army. The sympathy towards Owain is even greater when he ends up being one of the victims of an IRA bombing at the border. In the play, one has Tom Kettle as the innocent British victim. This is because even though he came to Northern Ireland as a child, he is still viewed as the enemy simply because he was born in England.

In *Bog Child*, viewing the Troubles through the eyes of a teenager and seeing how much it affects him and his family does so that we gain sympathy for what they are going through. One may then start thinking about the fact that the hunger strikers did not just put themselves through pain and suffering, but everyone around them suffered as well. The difference being that the people close to them did not have a choice in the matter. They were innocent bystanders in a similar circumstance as Owain, not having the possibility to choose for themselves. This also connects to the novel having more sympathies towards the British side of the conflict rather than the Irish. This is because one reads about how horrible it is for the families of the hunger strikers and one may think that it is awful what the hunger strikers put their families through. In *The Ferryman* as well, one gains sympathy for what the families must go through, with the constant fear they live with, the media coverage being such a large part of their everyday life and the loss they also have to endure because of the ongoing conflict.

What may not be as clear to everyone reading or watching the play is that the play shows many Irish clichés, like the references they have to fairies, the Irish dancing and songs, the relentless drinking, the dodgy priest, the spinster aunts, not to mention the way it shows the ideas of place, loyalty and community. These clichés point to the play having more of an English view of how Northern Ireland is, rather than an authentic

Northern Irish viewpoint. In *Bog Child* however, there are not as many references to Irish clichés, but there are still a few of them throughout the novel. While the drinking and the songs are prominent in the novel as well, the other clichés are not as visible. The play also has a more violent and direct aspect to it which shows more of the negative side of the republican end of the conflict as well as the British. While the novel shows less clichés than the play, it also has less violent aspects to it. It still has some violence and death, as several bombs go off and Uncle Tally ends up taking his own life rather than going to prison when it is discovered that he is the local bombmaker. These acts of violence show the desperation of the situation they are all in. The representation of clichés in both the play and the novel also shows us more of how bodies are viewed in both texts, because most of the clichés are shown through the people: Their appearance, how they move their bodies, what they put their bodies through and specifically how they are viewed by others. The appearance of one's outer shell may tell you much about what kind of person you are or where you are from.

Starvation is a prominent theme in both texts. The hunger strikers are starving themselves while choosing to be on hunger strike, while Mel and her family are suffering from starvation without having a choice in the matter. Through Fergus's dreams one learns of how they are a poor family, having trouble paying what they owe and are therefore starving. Mel's dad is the one that starves the most, because he gives away what little he has to his children instead of feeding himself. When the person they owe a great amount of money ends up being killed, someone must take the blame when everyone in their village accuses their family of the murder. Mel, being the eldest of the siblings, takes the fall for the family, ultimately saving her 12-year-old brother. Moments before her death she realizes that he must have been the one who had committed the murder, doing so in order to save the family from starvation. In the dreams one follows Mel's thoughts and feelings regarding being sentenced to death, but also the thought process around starvation. These are two very different and powerful ways of battling with starvation, one being a choice and one being involuntary. In the story about Mel and her family, both Mel and her father decide to eat less than the rest of their family, sacrificing some of their well-being for that of their family.

Moreover, self-sacrifice is also a theme that is prominent in both the play and the novel. The bog body in the novel, personified in Fergus' fantasy of Mel, is sacrificing herself for her brother in order to save her family from starvation. Mel's story can also be linked to The Tollund Man as it is apparent that their stories have similarities too. It is observed that "[t]he Tollund Man's expression suggests that he most likely went to his death out of free will in an effort to save his community from starvation. He was a willing self-sacrifice" (Sanders 41) just like Mel is. Moreover, in the play it seems that Seamus Carney is killed while working with the IRA and he is then in a way also sacrificing himself in the name of his family but also his country. The same goes with the hunger strikers, who are sacrificing their own lives hoping that they will make a difference for their friends, families, communities and country. Fergus is also planning to sacrifice himself when he tells the truth to the border-guard Owain. When Fergus tells him about the packages he is carrying over the border he believes this will lead to trouble for himself, yet he still does it because he thinks that it can prevent more people from being killed by bombs. Every self-sacrifice mentioned above is noble in its own way because each and every one of the individuals involved believe that what they are doing is for the greater good. In all these aspects of both the novel and the play where someone makes a sacrifice, they sacrifice their own bodies. They believe in something or want to protect something so much that they are willing to sacrifice themselves in order to achieve their goal.

It is also important to look at the endings of the two literary works. The way in which the ending is written usually says much about the story that has been told. The play ends in a very dramatic fashion, with death, screaming and finally, darkness. A few of the last sentences that are uttered before the curtains close are "They're coming", "What will we do, Dad?" and "They're here" (Butterworth 129). These are sentences filled with desperation and fear, and the feeling of always being on guard, never feeling safe and not knowing what to do to get out of the situation. What leads to this brutal ending is first the death of Oisín, who was killed by Tom Kettle after Oisín breaks into his cabin while he was sleeping. The sight of Tom Kettle holding Oisín's body leads to

Quinn Carney enacting revenge on his brother's death by killing both Muldoon and Magennis. The whole family is present when this is taking place, even the young girls who were between the age of seven and fourteen years old. They are at the top of the stairs watching as their dad kills two people, one by cutting his throat and the other by shooting him in the head. There is blood everywhere, even on the family photos on the wall. This is a situation that can easily lead to what Erikson describes as "a blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively" (459). Furthermore, this shows that someone that has been through something as brutal as this may end up with individual trauma in addition to the collective trauma that the community already is suffering from because of the Troubles. In this case, a body may evoke fear, turmoil and even trauma.

The ending in *Bog Child*, on the other hand, has a much lighter and positive tone to it. While there is death and loss there too, there is also hope and anticipation for a better future. The last chapter starts with uncle Tally's funeral, but the focus is soon shifted towards Fergus's departure, since he is now leaving for college in London and is not coming back until Christmas. Fergus is hopeful for the future, looking forward to all the new experiences life has to offer as a college student. Even though he is positive, he still views life "like running, ninety per cent sweat and toil, ten per cent joy" (Dowd 322). In this instance, a body may represent the end of something, but also the beginning of something new because as Tally's body has been lied to rest, Joey is in recovery after being on hunger strike and his family is hopeful for a good recovery and maybe even an early release from prison. The very last sentence of the novel is also very symbolic: Fergus "turned away and walked across the deck to the other side" (Dowd 322). This may symbolize leaving all your troubles behind and starting a new chapter in your life. From the very beginning of the novel Fergus has talked about how he wants to get out of Northern Ireland and how much he wants to become a doctor and help others, and at the end he reaches his goal and manages to leave the darkness and sadness behind. With the hunger strike finally being over, having no more packages to deliver and Joey being on the mend, he can finally leave it all behind. As Drong writes in his essay on the novel and the poem "Punishment" by Seamus Heaney, both of these texts imply that

“unless you escape the Bogland (i.e., Ireland – Heaney 1998: 41), you will never transcend the vicious circle of tribal violence and sectarian divisions” (10). This again connects to the authors background, by the character feeling like he will gain his freedom and finally be a peace by leaving Northern Ireland behind and going to England. This is something not all Irish Republicans would agree with, since their goal is for Northern Ireland to be free of British influence, again showing how the texts are less pro-republican than one might think.

Conclusion

At their core, both *Bog Child* and *The Ferryman* are about historic repetition and the representation of cultural trauma. They both represent the lives of families living in the middle of an ongoing conflict: how they cope with this and how much of what they are going through has also happened in the past. As mentioned in the historical context, hunger strikes have been used in Ireland before 1981 and there are also other types of hunger and starvation that has a prominent part in the history of Ireland. Another example of this is the bog bodies which represent a direct link to the past: not only the past as in thousands of years back in time, but also the recent past as it is shown with the bog body in *The Ferryman*. My thesis has also shown how there are many connections between the play and the novel in how they address trauma. This is shown through the impact the hunger strikes of 1981 had on the community and how much the event meant not only to the people that were involved in the conflict at the time, but also the next generation. And by including the next generation in this, one refers to those who are or have been exposed to the media coverage of the events and the literary works that have been made throughout the troubled times. In addition to this, there are the people that have experienced trauma through the memories and traumatic experiences of their parents or grandparents, which is especially prominent in the Carney family.

A clear connection between the two texts is the images of bodies. The most obvious connection between them being the bog bodies that are found, but also the hunger strike that is taking place in the time period in which both works are set. In this thesis I have worked with the image of bodies portrayed in literature. The focus when it comes to a body in present times is usually body image, rather than on what a body may represent. So instead of looking at what one thinks of one's own body and what that does to your confidence and how others view you, I have been looking at what powerful messages one can receive from the image of bodies in literature. The bog body in *Bog Child* represents a link to the past and helps the main character through a rough time in his life. By imagining how the bog body lived and what she went through in her own life,

Fergus has an easier time going through similar obstacles in his own life. The bog body in *The Ferryman*, on the other hand, does not connect people to the past in the same way as ancient bog bodies seem to do. Even though the bog body in the play still creates a sense of relief for the family as they finally find out what has happened to Seamus Carney who they believed to have left them of his own free will. In this situation the connection to the past represents the truth finally being set free. The main difference between the hunger strikers in *Bog Child* and the ones in *The Ferryman* is that in the novel one gets to know the family of a fictive hunger striker and how it is for them to live with a family member on strike. In the *Ferryman* on the other hand, one gets to know a fictive family and how they respond to the hunger strike through media coverage and political involvement rather than personal ties to the strikers.

The image of bodies used in both *The Ferryman* and *Bog Child* has been shown to have a great impact on the representation of trauma in both texts. This is because the traumatic events that unfold in both works have the image of bodies as prominent factors. One of them being the comfort Mel gives Fergus through the hard times he is facing with his brother on hunger strike, the bombings and other personal crises he is going through. Another is the hunger strikes in themselves being a traumatic experience for the people on hunger strike, families of the strikers, the community and the whole nation. The bog body in *The Ferryman* does also have a role in traumatic situations as the discovery of the body causes the family much distress and heartache. The distinguishment between an object body and an embodied person is very important here, as the traumatic experience of viewing a bog body is highly dependent on whether they are regarded as things or people. The placement in time is also important here, as it may be more traumatic to view a bog body that has recently died, than one that has been dead for thousands of years. At the end of the novel Uncle Tally's body is being buried and Fergus is leaving the Troubles, here the body symbolizes the end of something and the start of something new. Even the tragic end of the play has bodies as the main focus, ending with Oisín being killed and his body being carried inside so that everyone can see the gruesome sight. Also the murder of both Muldoon and Magennis.

I have also looked at prominent themes in both works, such as starvation and self-sacrifice. Looking into how there are similarities between the two texts, but also between the time period the texts are set in and the time period in which the bog bodies are said to have lived in. The hunger strikers are clear examples of both starvation and self-sacrifice, but also the bog bodies have made self-sacrifices, which eventually lead to their deaths. Mel also suffered from starvation, which was also a part of the self-sacrifice as she gave her food to the rest of her family so they would not starve to death. One also reads about how the characters in both the play and the novel make self-sacrificing decisions on other matters than the hunger strikes, sacrifices that they believe is best for the people closest to them, but also the community in which they live in. Starvation and self-sacrifice are themes that also connect to the image of bodies as starvation directly affects one's body and self-sacrifice entails sacrificing one's own body.

Another important aspect of the thesis is the discussion regarding whether the texts are pro-Irish or pro-British. While looking at the texts one may at first think that they are pro-Irish, but while viewing them both a little closer you learn that there are clear signs that show pro-British tendencies. Some of these are the focus on British victims such as Owain, the Welsh border guard in the novel, who is an innocent bystander caught in the middle of the conflict because he had no choice in the matter. There is also Tom Kettle, the English factotum in the play, who came to Ireland as a boy but is still looked upon at as the enemy because of where he was born. The way Irish clichés are used in both works also show us how the viewpoint of the novel is from someone looking in, rather than someone that has grown up surrounded by the culture and people. I have also investigated the meaning of both the ending and the beginning of both *Bog Child* and *The Ferryman*, to see how what is written there corresponds with the major themes of the texts. The beginning of a piece of literature sets the tone for the rest of the text, introducing the most important aspects of the works and the endings are important because that is the last impression that one is left with after viewing the works. Both works does this very well, with the beginnings and endings showing important aspects of the texts.

A damaged social organism has been an important feature in this thesis, looking at the implications the Troubles have had on the fictive families depicted in both works. Examining how both having a family member on hunger strike and only hearing about it on the news and through others may impact a family immensely. The hunger strikes had an emotional effect on many people, leaving different marks on each individual person. Some people may not have reacted as much to the situation, while it could end up having extreme consequences for others. Trauma cannot be measured by others, only the ones involved can know if an event has caused traumatic effects or not, through interpretation. This is because one can be traumatized without having lived through a traumatic event, and one can also live through a traumatizing event without being traumatized by it (Bond, Craps 101). This has been shown throughout both *The Ferryman* and *Bog Child*, by many different characters having different reactions to similar or even the same events.

A way one could continue working with the theme of this thesis is to look further into the importance of music and song lyrics. Songs are mentioned often in both texts and seem to have a deeper meaning for the characters. The connection between trauma and music could be explored further through analyzing the song lyrics and connecting them to the events unfolding in both the play and the novel. One could also look further into the connections the bog bodies have to the past, looking more at the ancient famines and hunger deprivations that have been plaguing Ireland for centuries. A possibility is also to look further into the similarities between the bog bodies in the texts and Heaney's bog poems. Furthermore, there is also more historic connections in both texts that can be explored more, such as the IRA bombings and the connections some of the characters seem to have to IRA operations. Analyzing the different characters in depth could also be interesting, looking at the parts each character plays in the texts, what they do to the storyline and whether they can be connected to actual historical figures or not.

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Appendix:

Seamus Heaney's poems:

Bog Queen

I lay waiting
between turf-face and demesne wall,
between heathery levels
and glass-toothed stone.

My body was braille
for the creeping influences:
dawn suns groped over my head
and cooled at my feet,

through my fabrics and skins
the seeps of winter
digested me,
the illiterate roots

pondered and died
in the cavings
of stomach and socket.

I lay waiting

on the gravel bottom,
my brain darkening,
a jar of spawn

fermenting underground

dreams of Baltic amber.

Bruised berries under my nails,
the vital hoard reducing
in the crock of the pelvis.

My diadem grew carious,
gemstones dropped
in the peat floe
like the bearings of history.

My sash was a black glacier
wrinkling, dyed weaves
and phoenician stitchwork
retted on my breasts'

soft moraines.

I knew winter cold
like the nuzzle of fjords
at my thighs—

the soaked fledge, the heavy
swaddle of hides.

Punishment

I can feel the tug
of the halter at the nape
of her neck, the wind
on her naked front.

It blows her nipples
to amber beads,
it shakes the frail rigging
of her ribs.

I can see her drowned
body in the bog,
the weighing stone,
the floating rods and boughs.

Under which at first
she was a barked sapling
that is dug up
oak-bone, brain-firkin:

her shaved head
like a stubble of black corn,
her blindfold a soiled bandage,
her noose a ring

to store
the memories of love.
Little adulteress,
before they punished you

you were flaxen-haired,
undernourished, and your
tar-black face was beautiful.
My poor scapegoat,

I almost love you
but would have cast, I know,
the stones of silence.
I am the artful voyeur

of your brains exposed
and darkened combs,
your muscles' webbing
and all your numbered bones:

I who have stood dumb
when your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railings,

who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge.

The Grauballe Man

As if he had been poured
in tar, he lies
on a pillow of turf
and seems to weep

the black river of himself.
The grain of his wrists
is like bog oak,
the ball of his heel

like a basalt egg.
His instep has shrunk
cold as a swan's foot
or a wet swamp root.

His hips are the ridge
and purse of a mussel,
his spine an eel arrested
under a glisten of mud.

The head lifts,
the chin is a visor
raised above the vent
of his slashed throat

that has tanned and toughened.
The cured wound
opens inwards to a dark
elderberry place.

Who will say 'corpse'
to his vivid cast?
Who will say 'body'
to his opaque repose?

And his rusted hair,
a mat unlikely
as a foetus's.
I first saw his twisted face

in a photograph,
a head and shoulder
out of the peat,
bruised like a forceps baby,

but now he lies
perfected in my memory,
down to the red horn
of his nails,

hung in the scales
with beauty and atrocity:
with the Dying Gaul
too strictly compassed

on his shield,
with the actual weight
of each hooded victim,
slashed and dumped.