Researching Embodiment and Intergenerational Trauma using the work of Davoine and Gaudilliere: History walked in the door

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Abstract The work of French psychoanalysts Françoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudillière centres on the understanding of the ways in which large historical traumas associated with war are brought to life by descendants, often generations later, who carry an experience that they cannot understand and that erupts as psychosis. They have devised a unique clinical method in which, together with the patient, they research what they term as the missing 'social link', a link broken within an earlier generation by a personal or family experience of an extreme situation. Their work, which draws upon a historical reframing and broadening of Lacan, is deeply resonant with implications for psychosocial enquiry within the social sciences. In this article, we show how we developed a method for engaging with interviews with women who were serial migrants. In paying attention to their story, we show how we attended to the complex manifestations in the material of the embodied experiences associated with a history of slavery, colonization, poverty and migration. Our aim was to develop a mode of working, which did not pathologize but still recognized the transmission of suffering and distress in complex ways and its twists and turns across generations. In doing this, we sought to provide a way of working that radically rejected any split between a psychic/personal and social/historical realm.

Subjectivity (2013) 6, 272–297. doi:10.1057/sub.2013.8

Keywords: trauma; psychosis; history; embodiment; social research; Davoine and Gaudillière

Introduction

In their editorial to *Body and Society*, the special issue on affect, Lisa Blackman and Couze Venn (2010) call for the development of new research methods for engaging with the ways in which the body speaks and communicates. This article takes up that challenge to develop methods that engage with the non-verbal and non-conscious dimensions of experience to explore embodied knowing. Blackman and Venn throw out a challenge to body scholars to think about how data of a more embodied kind might be collected. In response to that challenge, we consider here an adaptation for social research of the work of Françoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudillière, two Parisian psychoanalysts specializing in psychosis. In particular, their interest is in how terrifying historical experience (such as the experience of war or genocide) is embodied in a way that cannot be spoken but is nevertheless transmitted down generations as embodied experiences, which cannot be understood until their historical provenance can literally be enacted. Although clinicians have been working for some time with the idea that traumatic experiences can be experienced but not necessarily thought, and can be transmitted down generations without conscious awareness (we are thinking here, for example, of the huge amount of work on intergenerational effects of the Holocaust), it has been a challenge for social researchers to find methods through which such embodied transfer might be understood. We are exploring the work of Davoine and Gaudillière because they are not only psychoanalysts but also social scientists, who in fact understand their own work with patients as a kind of research together. It is in that spirit that we might ask whether their research method and its clinical insights also might be used and adapted for understanding issues that relate to intergenerational transmission in social research.

We recognize that the issue of how historical events are manifest in corporeal experience is a complex issue. Because Davoine and Gaudillière see the indissolubility of the embodied and the historical as central to their approach as clinicians, we felt it was worthwhile exploring whether an approach to social research can be developed using their clinical theory and method as a guide. The position that the clinicians take, as we will outline, is an interesting one. It is that historical events are experienced and transmitted at once in large historical narratives and as small stories that get enacted in relationships. Because they are post-Lacanian, their central consideration is the historicizing of the registers of the unconscious, which Lacan called the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Their approach is unlike most psychoanalysts who engage with historical trauma, who, by and large, understand the trauma as passed between family members and understand the historical as a kind of backdrop (eg Faimberg, 2005). This itself is, of course, contentious, both in terms of clinical method and also because their view of the historical is that symbolization is what keeps the social link going. It is the loss of the social link that means that it has to be passed on and held in the body. Because of these issues that are central for social

researchers today, we offer this approach as a contribution to a debate and hope that it might stimulate discussion.

Our exploration started when we were in a group of researchers working together in a special project taking place at the Norwegian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Advanced Study. As part of this work, we explored the theme of intergenerational transmission. To do this, we divided into small groups in which we looked at different aspects of the topic and different methodological ways of approaching it, using data selected from the research of participants in the group. In this case, we were working on data provided by Ann Phoenix from a study of serial migrants from the Caribbean to the UK, which was written up as Phoenix (2008). Serial migration in this case refers to a situation in which parents of young children migrated from the Caribbean to London and their children were raised by other people, often grandparents, joining their parents at a later date. These interviews are with children, now adult. The particular case study Ann Phoenix shared with us was of a participant, Angela, which she had felt to be a difficult interview and quite unlike her other participants. Angela had a mother who migrated when she was 7 years old and she joined her mother again at 14. During the intervening years, she was raised by her maternal grandmother. Today, Angela is a well-educated professional woman, living alone with her grown-up children. The interviews were narrative in form and conducted by the researcher. We set about approaching the interview transcript and related material (fieldnotes, sound recordings) in a variety of ways. Our group decided to explore whether it was possible to develop an approach that adapted the work of Davoine and Gaudillière, mostly using their 2004 volume *History beyond Trauma*, but also supplemented by direct discussions with them. They commented on what we had written and corrected any points that they thought we had misunderstood. Although Ann Phoenix was not part of the small group who wrote this article, we had constant discussions with her and checked all of our writing with her at every stage. Clearly, what we produced was a different approach from the one that she had used, but this was the purpose of the exercise, that is to see what a different approach might bring to, and highlight in, the data.

In this endeavour, we are of course well aware of the important differences between the clinical practice in which psychoanalysts such as Davoine and Gaudillière are involved, and a psychosocial research project such as Phoenix's and our own. The aim of the two will differ, as the clinical intervention is trying to achieve individual change and relief in a way that the research project is not. The time spent in order to gain knowledge in depth is clearly also of a different order, and the possibilities of direct verification of hypothetical interpretations are of course present in the therapeutic process in a way that are not feasible in research. The limitations in our own case are even more salient, as our interpretations are of a transcript from an interview that we did not carry out ourselves. Although such secondary psychoanalytic interpretations of texts are not uncommon and their intratextual validity could be argued (Ricoeur, 1991;

Nielsen, 1995), they are obviously of a different kind than the one produced within a psychoanalytic session *in vivo*. These limitations will be discussed more in full throughout the text, as will the reasons for our (stubborn) attempt to transcend these limits. However, because Davoine and Gaudillière are also social scientists and because they see their clinical work as research, they generously welcomed our approach. Davoine and Gaudillière have developed a way of working with and thinking about the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma in a way that does not separate historical experience from family processes and offers a radical refusal to separate the social and the individual. It is this uncompromising historical approach to psychosocial research that is the main inspiration for our admittedly speculative attempt of applying their method in analysing a case of serial migration.

Davoine and Gaudillière's Approach

To understand the approach we developed, it is necessary to understand something of Davoine and Gaudillière's theory and practice. The foundation of the work of Davoine and Gaudillière is that psychosis can be understood as a manifestation of a break in what they call the social link, that is, a rupture in the transmission of historically located painful suffering, usually associated with war, across generations. Their approach to historical transmission comes from a radical reworking of the work of Lacan (Racamier, 1989, 1992). The social link is contained in the ways that people relate to each other and may be found in many informal ways of speaking, telling stories, songs, myths, upon which people draw to understand and share their experience. Davoine and Gaudillière work on micro processes and are particularly influenced by Jacques Revel (1996) on microhistory. If experience cannot be transmitted across a social group or down a generation, the link that binds them together will be broken. It is broken because the experience is so painful that it cannot be transmitted and therefore has entered the silence of social amnesia. However, we cannot simply assume that what has been broken or silenced is experienced as repressed. The person living the effects of the break may be one or two generations down and may experience something that they have not repressed because they simply do not know what it is that their body knows and feels. At the beginning of *History beyond Trauma*, the authors quote Winnicott (1974) about the fear of breakdown. He argues that the patient's fear of breakdown in the future 'has already been', but the patient was not there for it to happen. According to Winnicott: 'What is not yet experienced did nevertheless happen in the past' (p. 105). The patient needs to experience the trauma before it can be remembered. The trauma does not belong to a repressed unconscious of neurosis. This means that it cannot simply be remembered, because the experience was a bodily experience, in which the body

registered the trauma, but it was not, at that point, able to be thought. In many ways, this is central to the method used both in a clinical setting and in relation to the research data. What is being transmitted to the researcher/reader/analyst and how? If something is known but not thinkable, it can be communicated, but not in a direct way through the mechanisms of thought and representation. Therefore, one has to find a way to make sense of the communication that is offered. This is what the analyst works within the transference; however, by adapting the methods the analyst uses in order to understand, the researcher can also be sensitive to forms of communication that are different from those through which speech is normally interpreted within social research. Thus, we argue that a key issue is not action or an affective method that avoids speech, so much as the recognition that communication through speech can be indirect and tell us something unprocessed, unthought and yet still communicated.

Therefore, a central argument concerns the issue of an approach that does not stress repression, but rather focuses on the embodied transmission down generations of an unsayable and silenced experience. Davoine and Gaudillière argue that until the thing feared has been experienced in the present it can go on being transmitted. In other words, fears, anxieties can be communicated down generations in various ways without the next generation understanding the anxiety they felt so strongly in the body and transmitted in the culture. This is not repressed although they may, as Winnicott suggests, be afraid of breaking down in the future – of something that may happen in the future that they are trying to prevent, but actually what they are trying to prevent already happened ‘but the patient was not there for it to happen to’ (Winnicott, 1974, p. 105). As we will see further on, it is crucial to understand that, for Davoine and Gaudillière, this relates to an event located in history and the aim of their work is to bring that history into the present by understanding how it is present in the ‘here and now’ of the analytic session.

Thus, an everyday family history (‘small history’, microhistory, cf Revel, 1996) in which an event *cannot* be transmitted is part of a wider historical experience (‘large history’, macrohistory) through which it was lived. In the work that Davoine and Gaudillière do, this is usually experienced in wartime. Thus, they refuse to separate the actual suffering or pain from its setting – imprisonment, deportation, death of relatives, comrades and so on. The pain, however, can be communicated to children and their descendents in a variety of ways that children pick up and incorporate into their own lives without understanding what is being transmitted to them, and subsequently pass it on again in an unrecognizable form to another generation, who finally experience it as psychosis in the cases that Davoine and Gaudillière deal with. The scars of the original wound can be experienced say as a father who has violent mood swings, depression, drinking, to whom the children must pay attention, they understand that there is pain and distress that they take on as anxiety, yet they have no idea what this is about. What their bodies experience is the effects of the transmitted pain as their own

distress and that distress can be further transmitted to their children who again may not understand why they feel so anxious. The attempts to prevent the recurrence of the pain can also be experienced collectively through the ways in which a group, family or community develops practices and ways of being together, which attempt to hold the members against the threat of annihilation (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012). Thus, the work of the analysts is to research together with the patient doing the work on 'anamnesis' in the here-and-now, which is to establish together what might be the transmitted event that the patient is embodying.

The Social Link and Trust

In order to explain their method further, we need to refer to ways in which they historicize Lacanian thinking to introduce an account of trust as the basis of the social link. They argue that what Lacan meant by discourse was a social link, as in, 'we talk together', the subject and the Other. The social link is built on trust and shared reciprocal relations between more than two people. We might also understand this as a reference to the centrality of the relational. It is Bion (1959), in his work on attacks on linking, who also understands the significance of the link for embodied primary communication through which a sense of going on being is produced. When trust is broken, linking has been attacked and we might expect there to be a reaction to linking itself, which is no longer presented as safe. Thus, the break in the social link is experienced at the level of the Real as it is passed down generations. The Real works in tension with the imaginary order and the symbolic order. In Davoine and Gaudillière's terms, the Real is experience that is outside of language and therefore not available to repression.

For Davoine and Gaudillière, the lack of safety can manifest in the two forms of social link that Lacan characterized in terms of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In the Imaginary, although this is the place of connection and containment, it is also a space in which linking and thus trust can be attacked by competition, comparison, seduction and power games. This means that the linking is easily broken and the Symbolic space of the alliance creates a greater possibility for the maintenance of the link. In the Symbolic, one is not trapped in these dual relations, not dependent on what the other thinks of oneself, but can create alliances or treaties that are between more than two people. Trust is 'the foundation of the subject of speech and of history' (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, p. 45). Thus, trust appears not simply in the analytic relation but in large-scale events through social and cultural treaties and trust relations. It is how the small enters into the large and vice versa, which is central for their approach to their material and it is this that we take as central for its message for social research.

The broken trust and link that they find in cases of psychosis are simultaneously a betrayal of small histories and of large histories – one cannot separate the one from the other as we will demonstrate. However, as they say, trust is based on a fragile space, and as we shall see in relation to the material we will discuss in this article that trust is constantly betrayed on many levels. In understanding the dynamics of the alliance or treaty, they refer to ancient Greek etymology of the word symbol (sym/bolon). Symbolon refers to the possibility of reuniting something after a rupture, symbolized by the breaking and reuniting of pieces of terracotta (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, p. 71). Thus, the possibility of the social link created through an alliance is the coming together of those whose belonging had been ruptured or torn apart by betrayal. Thus, symptoms that appear in the analytic session take the analyst to the place of mistrust, or the place where trust was broken, the place of betrayal. The betrayal of trust is therefore central to the understanding of the ways in which a social link can be damaged or severed, an agreement broken. While we might experience this as a failure of trust in a relationship with an Other, it is simultaneously part of a sociohistorical process in which treaties and agreements have also been betrayed. It is at this intersection that Davoine and Gaudillière work, by refusing to separate the one from the other

Using Davoine and Gaudillière as a Research Method

The analysis that Davoine and Gaudillière undertake is characterized by working in the here-and-now through the transference with the patient, in order to re-establish this social link. That is, they work with what is presented, just as a researcher does with an interview or indeed any research material. Although we recognize that the secondary analysis of interview data created for a different purpose is quite unlike a clinical encounter, as we have noted above, we suggest that there are more similarities between a research encounter and a clinical session than may be at first apparent. Although wanting to avoid debates about the clinical specificity and the singularity of the transference (cf Parker, 2010), Davoine and Gaudillière argue that we are routinely in situations in which some kind of transference occurs. However, their use of resonance is designed to create a situation in which a person who has lost connections can be connected with. It is a technical aspect of their approach to treatment that in creating a link from the patient's material to their own experience, they bring the patient into a social link. While we are not connecting with the participant in this analysis, nevertheless, we argue that using resonance is very effective in drawing our attention to a passage with very high affect. Although, of course, other people might pick another event, the issue is more what one does with this event, how one resonates with it, finds communicative and affective links with it. Thus, although the material is analysed,

it is not analysed in a way that understands the surface or the narrative as the entire communication. Thus, methodologically, it is a dialogic process, even if, in this instance, we are creating a dialogue with an unknown person.

Resonance and immediacy

In the first meeting with the patient, Davoine and Gaudillière state that the analyst gets 'close to the uncanny'. In the meeting with traumatized patients, the immediate reaction might be to get distanced in order not to be drawn into the suffering. 'This confrontation destabilizes the therapist's neutrality and brings him (sic) close to affects he would prefer not to experience. At least not right away, when the work hasn't begun and he is not yet able to get his bearings in relation to history – the patient's history, he thinks cautiously' (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, pp. 122–123). To meet the patient in 'the uncanny', guarded neither with benevolent sympathy nor theoretical concepts, represents an almost violent threat. And yet, it is actually in that threatening experience that the possibilities of proximity are found: 'The violent admission of the most extreme heterogeneity is, at this moment, equivalent to defining a place of intense proximity: the proximity of the unknown, the uncanny, which has no chance of getting out of its entrenched position unless an other comes to look for him' (ibid, p. 123).

How do we meet a research participant in the uncanny? Surely, we do it all the time and inevitably. We usually have a strong visceral response to participants, whether we like it or not. Thus, Davoine and Gaudillière are telling us to pay attention to this moment, to listen to what our bodies tell us. Are we entranced? Repulsed? Actually, what they are describing is a process in which an analyst wants to feel 'I am not like you' (in this case, psychotic), but that it is precisely in that moment, that strong proximities, ones that we might rather not feel, are evident. They are the ones through which we can find most engagement with the bodymind of that other, in our case, the participant. Just as the analyst tries to maintain the sense of his/her difference as analyst (and thus not patient), so, in our struggle to be the researcher and not the participants, we may find being shown to us, if we care to look, that what precisely links us to them.

In relation to an interview text, the question is therefore, what kind of *resonance* it finds in the reader, related to the reader's own life. In what way is it possible to find resonance with stories that are always more or less different from our own – to find proximity in the instances of 'extreme heterogeneity'? Put your feelings to work, Davoine and Gaudillière tell us, because in an analytic setting such feelings do not belong to the analyst alone, since they are 'the result of a conjoint work' (2004, p. 58). In our view, the same applies to the resonance evoked by interview texts: it does not belong to the reader (as a more or less private embarrassment) nor to the text alone. It is the result of a connection between histories that throws light on the interview.

The importance of capturing the '*immediate*' moments is for Davoine and Gaudillière seen in contrast to the digging for causes that is usually the case in psychoanalytic work. They propose to go 'beyond the causality principle', as the traumatized patient is also a patient to whom time no longer 'functions in its customary direction': it stands still, or as the Hatter in Alice in Wonderland, says, as the trauma of the beheading Queen: 'It's always six o'clock now' (ibid, 2004, p. 163). In this context, it hardly makes sense to speak of the past, they say, as 'a catastrophe like this, which eludes transmission, could not be inscribed in time' (2004, p. 126). In madness, the self explodes – the person is no longer an individual, but an immediacy, a 'here-and-now' seeking a witness – and through that witness she will try to establish a new social link instead of the one that broke. As an analyst you have to resonate emotionally and bodily to that immediacy, give a token (a piece of yourself) in order to get 'time going' again (2004, p. 164).

Again – an interview text is not a patient. Nevertheless, it is also a 'here and now' which, although often in narrative (and chronological) form, does not directly tell us anything about how what is told comes to be. Reading the interview, we are in the middle of something – and it is from this 'in-the-middle-of' that we have to start our search for a better grasp of what is happening. This approach is different from a narrative reading, as it does not aim to understand the story or the structure of the story, but to find the affective points that could be seen as a way in to an understanding of the (possible) break in the social link. The participant may strive to present a graspable story of her life, and in that way present a sense of a 'coherent self'. Nevertheless, such strivings for coherence will in themselves have gaps and silences – breaks that catch the ear of an interviewer, or the eye of a reader. It is then through the resonance in the reader that such gaps are seen/heard. And although the reader is not present to the interview subject, the resonance the text evokes in the reader, it is this affective contact that opens the text up.

The Event

One of the key tasks to be undertaken in developing a method for applying the work of Davoine and Gaudillière to social science is to understand their use of the concept of the event. The term has come to prominence recently in the Anglo-Saxon world because of an interest in the work of two French philosophers: Deleuze (1990) and Badiou (2006). Psychoanalysts tend to use the term in a different way than Deleuze and Badiou, and therefore we should not conflate or confuse the different uses of this term. They use it to think about something that happens in a clinical session. They begin with a feeling of oddness within a narrative in which there are juxtapositions that set the listener/reader into the feeling that something is put together in a strange way, something that jars or

does not quite make sense. Davoine and Gaudillière put this as follows: The patient brings an event, and what has to be listened for are details, details that do not quite fit, which jar, which lead the analyst to see them as a possible site of rupture, a way into other meanings that cannot yet be spoken because they form part of an ‘unthought known’ (Bollas, 1987), that is, the body knows them but they are too painful to yet bring into being. The event is what the patient brings and what the patient is and comes with this story seeking an Other. The listener then is that Other and the event resonates with that Other. The resonances of the event with the therapist’s own experience are what provide the sense for the patient of being heard. This sense that ‘I know what you mean’ creates a social link.

Thus, the aim of clinical work is, together with the patient, to understand these links and their traumatic impact on the patient.¹ For Davoine and Gaudillière, the event is the site of history. It is the point at which the Real intervenes certainly, but this real is a historical event that attaches itself to the subject through processes of intergenerational transmission through what they call the small histories, that is the micro experiences of the everyday, experienced bodily, affectively, unconsciously. Thus, the event, as described, takes us to the things that stood out – the things that did not fit, experienced as affect. Hence, when details in a story are vivid, they bring the listener/reader to the point of heightened sensory awareness that something significant went on. What feeling does this create in the reader? What resonances does it have for her? It is here that we enter the terrain of the event. The event is volatile and dynamic and is created in the telling and its reception by the listener, and thus we need to pay close attention to the effect of the story on the listener for a clue as to what is being communicated that cannot yet be spoken.

This rupture in being is a suffering that is too hard to bear or indeed to understand. This is the site of trauma and of the transmission of historical experience. The task of the analyst is to work with the patient to together explore what is known but not yet able to be thought. The task of the researcher is to read the material in such a way as to understand the affective communication contained within it, so that we can see the attempt to communicate a rupture in being produced from a history that is not of the participant’s making. This is not yet been able to be made conscious. In stressing the volatile, dynamic, affective and unconscious aspects of the event in the psychoanalytic reading, the rupture is not simply some rational gap in knowledge, separated from being, but a threat to beingness itself. Thus, knowledge is not separated from the historical continuity and experience of the subject.

In the section that follows, we explore extracts from the interview with Angela to show how we picked one part of the interview as an event, why we chose it and then how we went on to analyse the rupture. We will go on to discuss how we think about this in terms of the relation between micro and macro histories and the break in the social link implied.

Angela – Resonance and Event

In the interview, Angela spoke about an unhappy childhood in Jamaica with a disabled and poor grandmother. Her mother in the United Kingdom did not send any money, and her father who never lived with her mother did not provide for her either. Her reunion with her mother in the United Kingdom was also described as hard. When she arrived at her new home, her mother had remarried and had three more children; Angela's stepfather had not heard about her. Her mother left to become a nanny in the United States, when Angela was 16, and Angela was then expected to care for the other children.

This story was told in a rapid pace, without hesitations and breaks for more than five hours. According to the fieldnotes, the interviewer felt bombarded and out of control. The interviewer also felt as if it did not matter whether she was there or not. We could say then that Angela bombards Ann with her story because she is seeking an Other, a social link, a desire to be heard; however, the need is so intense, in a way that Angela cannot yet articulate, that it floods Ann and she feels overwhelmed and repulsed. Thus, there is an attempt at linking and a repulsion of it. We could say then that this very feeling is a key. What is it that demands to be heard but that is so hard to hear that the listener cannot bear to make a link? Is it the story that she tells or is there another more complicated story mixed in? For Davoine and Gaudillière, this more complicated story is one that links her everyday experience and history (small history or micro history) with larger historical events, such as slavery, colonization, poverty and migration.

Resonance

Angela's five hour interview, rapid pace, Ann's sense of bombardment, our own feelings of being overwhelmed, exhausted and even ending up feeling little empathy with Angela for some of us is itself useable data. In Davoine and Gaudillière's terms, all of these are communications of one sort or another, all attempts to make a link, which produce certain responses in the listener/reader, as Bion's (1959) 'Attacks on Linking' demonstrates. We can use these responses to attempt to understand what is being communicated as well as or beyond the words that are spoken.

As mentioned, Angela's narrative is a story full of betrayal and breaks in trust in relation to her closest family and relationships. And we wonder whether Angela's way of telling her story, the rapid pace without hesitations and breaks, is another way of communicating experiences of breaks in trust in the small and big history. When Angela talks and talks, is she trying to hold on to the Other? Does she have an anxiety that the minute she stops, the Other will leave her? Interestingly, the researcher felt that it did not matter to Angela whether she was there or not. Can we understand the talking as a way to 'hold' and 'contain' herself? According to J. Symmington (1985), constant talk can be related to the

primitive defence (second skin) of constant movements.² And can we think of the story in itself as a form of second skin? Is the story her way of creating a continuous unchanging psychic skin without any holes or gaps through which the self could spill (Symington, 1985, p. 483)? In the interview text, there are some places that support this interpretation, and Angela actually uses the term 'hold', herself: 'I can't remember being held'. And when we link the small relation history to the big history of serial migration, as Angela does herself in the interview, we could perhaps say that in Angela's way of relating in the interview situation, she is repeating a situation where she experienced no emotional holding and in which she has to do everything by herself. In the interview, Angela says that she has wondered whether her parents did not take care of her because they did not like her.

Resonance is a relational concept that allows the analyst to connect with the patient and therefore to work together with her/him. In our view, it is also relevant for conducting social research, in that it allows us to approach reading in an actively and affectively aware manner.

According to Davoine (2007), resonance can be thought of as the enigmatic double in the Other. Let us explain by giving an example. One of us with clinical training said the following about the difference between an analysis of the transference/countertransference relationship and working with resonance:

As long as I did this [analysis of transference/countertransference] I felt in control and powerful. I was the interpreter and I had this powerful instrument, the sensory instrument of feelings. When moving from the analysis of the transference/countertransference relationship to look for places of resonance, related to the researcher's own life, something new happened which opened up the analysis. When I looked at the transcript with the concept of resonance in mind, it was not the feeling of no empathy that was most present, but quite the opposite, the feeling of sharing. And speaking about links: social links, links between small and big history, links between generations, the resonance work did create a new link, the link between the researcher and the text. This might also do something with the power relation between the researchers and the interview subject with implications for the ethical relationship in research. We were no longer neutral researchers or therapists 'diagnosing' relationships, but subjects with our own history and similar everyday struggles as the persons interviewed. And to our surprise we felt that we could connect to Angela in a lot of ways, although our histories were not the same, we shared similar experiences and feelings.

In fact, as it turned out, all of us resonated with the same part of the text which we picked out as the event, though in different ways. Of course, there are many 'events' within a text, but we each chose this one precisely because it spoke to us

and therefore stood out as particularly luminous. We take this as central to the method. For Davoine and Gaudillière it matters less why a passage stood out so much that it did. For it is here that a link can be forged.

Event in the Story of Angela

The event we chose was an incident that Angela recounts when she goes home to Jamaica for the first time as a 23-year-old adult. She is picked up from the airport by her father, from whom she was estranged and goes to stay in his house. In picking this as the event, we were all drawn by a number of things. First, it is told in an extremely vivid and sensuous way. Second, it is a completely unexpected turn in the story, where bad relationships have been piled up so far. And finally, it is also the way in which we are taken into this very vivid story as though we are living it with her. For two of us, the sun, heat and mangoes gave powerful resonances of experiences in India and Australia, and for the third it was the festivity connected with her father's car. Thus, without understanding why, we felt drawn into this aspect of the story as though we could effectively dive or plunge into it because of its sensuousness. This sensation often tells us that the senses of the person who experienced it are heightened through the memory and such a memory is therefore, according to this method, a good place to begin.

'In father's car'

Let us start with presenting the event in Angela's words:

I'll tell you about my father in a minute, he had this nice car and he was driving down the road and it was mango season and er, you know there was always people, with mango, (?) big mango tree and buckets of mangoes, and buckets of mangoes and I sat at the back of the car and it was like uuurrgh. Mango mangoes all kinds, you know. Mangoes, oh it was wonderful.

What struck us in the selected event was especially the first few paragraphs of the transcript, that is, the very beginning of the interview that differed from the other stories in its positive and sensuous descriptions.³ Coming back to Jamaica, and sitting in the back seat of her father's car seems to have felt like being in paradise, with mangoes everywhere. 'Mangoes, oh it was wonderful.' But the event did not only strike us in its sensuality and vividness, or that it suddenly was a positive experience that was narrated. It was surprising to hear that it was her *father* who picked her up at the airport and that she was staying in his house after all these years. From what she had told us about her father, we had imagined that

they had no contact. Our joint impression of the father was that he was rather worthless – irresponsible, uncaring and selfish – and certainly not a person who would take the trouble to pick up a daughter whom he had so neglected. Angela never tells us why her father came to pick her up at the airport – she mentions it casually, as if only for practical reasons. However, Angela's way of introducing her father is interesting, as she actually puts it off: 'I'll tell you about my father in a minute'. And instead, she goes on and tells the interviewer about this incident with her father. It is not a story she would have told if asked about her father (which is probably why she says she will tell the interviewer about her father in a minute). It is an embodied story filled with sensuous descriptions – nice car – driving down the road – buckets of mangoes.

However, her positive feelings are not there for long. Already in the next paragraph when Angela thinks about why she is staying in her father's house, a house with carpets and a shower for both hot and cold water, and not in her grandmother's house, a house full of poverty, where she actually grew up, her mind is filled with negative emotions. It reminds her of grandmother and poverty and that her father did not help them with money. The good father who was there for a moment is lost, father is a mean person, who keeps everything to himself.

you know my father, mean person that he is – I'm not going to swear. He always looked after himself.

However, then, the positive feelings return: in the next paragraph Angela tells us how she enjoys that he has this nice house with two showers, and that her father has a good job at the oil company. Hence, we are actually in the middle of a *good* feeling, when in paragraph 4, we are again back in the car with Angela:

we went down to the main town, and er, he was sort of driving back through and there was a group of guys, young men standing on the roadside (of the) liming and er, he called this bloke over./../ I was at the back of the car, eating, finishing my belly full of mangoes you know and he said, he just sort of turned round like this and he said 'Meet your brother'.

In Angela's account, her father seems to ignore the emotional impact that such news will have on her, treating a new brother as a casual event, but to Angela, it was a shock.

At the same time, Angela finds out that they are born almost at the same time by different mothers, which implies that there was no big love affair between her parents – probably a one-night stand 'behind the bike shed', as she laconically describes it. And yet, the way Angela is talking about her brother as a nice guy, and the possibility that there are even more siblings out there, could give us associations to her own delightful metaphor – 'belly full of mangoes'. Although ambivalent, the thought about siblings is not only discouraging, and Angela

thinks it is nice to imagine that she could be the long lost sister. Angela seems actually proud of her father and his conquests - acknowledging him as a desirable heterosexual man.

But R (father) was quite – he’s interesting, in that he was a very selfish man, he’s always been a bachelor basically because he likes the women and the women like him.

And yet, in the last paragraph, her father is again a bastard. The sexual attractiveness is replaced by reflections about the consequences of this kind of masculinity and that way of practicing a heterosexual relationship that in Angela’s story comes out as a new betrayal of trust.

Erm, none of his children’s mothers has he had a deep and meaningful relationship in terms of you know taking responsibility and being that father figure to none of us, neither myself, F–, V–, er, or A– who died quite young. And none of our, we had four different mothers, and none of our mothers you know had had any thing from him in that sort of way and neither did he give it to his children. It makes me very sad because (crying) you know it’s almost as though (crying) you’re not worthy at all. He lived like from here (Bloomsbury) just to the West End. He didn’t live more than 5 minutes, 10 minutes away, always had a car. He work as a charge hand for the oil company so he had a good job (sniffing). And he only had himself to look after and he looked after himself the bastard did. Erm, and he always had a new car, well he owned a good car should I say, nice and shiny and stuff, it’s alright, but he didn’t look after me. He knew that I lived with my grandmother and she couldn’t work because she was bed ridden and didn’t have any money and stuff and he just didn’t (crying), the I’m sorry it’s painful, because,

We argue and will go on to demonstrate that Angela’s relation with her father feels like a break in trust on many levels. According to Davoine and Gaudillière ‘good-enough mothering’ implies a good-enough ‘Name of the father’. They write that: ‘The paternal function concentrates in itself both imaginary and real relations, always more or less inadequate to the symbolic relation that essentially constitutes it’ (2004, p. 71). If we understand them correctly, Angela’s father’s betrayal can be said to be on both an imaginary and symbolic level. He was not there, did not look after her, did not provide. Indeed, Angela’s grandmother sent her to her father to ask for money. Angela presents the interviewer with an image of her as a little girl sitting on his steps alone for several hours, with only a dry crust of bread to eat, waiting for him to come and give them money. There is also a story about her grandmother taking her father to court to make him pay support money. But he does not acknowledge paternity; a break in trust at the

symbolic level because he refused to enter an alliance or treaty with the grandmother and thus recognize Angela as his child, a break in trust. 'Father' is equated with hunger, abandonment, with nothing but dry bread to eat. And yet: there are mangoes and desire involved at the same time.

Understanding the Links to Other Events and to Large Histories

The paradoxical/ambivalent relationship with her father can be linked to her relationships with men as an adult in which similar issues about men, looking after her and her family and pregnancy and babies reappear. It would be easy to suggest that a pathological relationship is repeated but that would be to miss the centrally important point about history, which we will go on to show. It could be argued that our insistence on the historical imbrication of both Angela's and her father's story serves to obscure a significant feminist point about the father's oppression of women. We would not for one moment want to suggest that this is not oppressive. Far from it. Nor are we arguing that Angela has a problem or is somehow at fault. Any of these readings is to misunderstand the central argument about the ways in which history is transmitted down generations and enters unconsciously into everyday practices and relations. Thus, we find it is necessary to place the gender and family relations in history as Davoine and Gaudillière suggest and also not to impose a reading that fails to engage with its cultural production and specificity. These histories catch up all players in the drama, although obviously with different effects. The breaks in trust that Angela experiences are at once micro- and macro-historical – simultaneously in her small histories as recounted and in the large histories, which we gesture towards.

Angela's wavering between positive and negative feelings towards her father in the event of 'in father's car' is (rhizomatically) linked to other episodes in the text – episodes that all involve abandonment and break of trust, not least in her relations with other men later in life – men she loved, but who have deserted her and never been there when she needed them the most. In each case, there is a story of falling for men who are not available or committed in one way or another but are very attractive. This appears as part of a pattern, which is also present in practices of slavery, as we will show later on.

In the first case, Angela meets a mechanic to whom she is immediately attracted and in fact goes on to describe as the love of her life but it is clear that he sleeps around:

you know looking back, shit I don't value myself where men is concerned I don't I just don't, because John, we didn't live together, we weren't that, weren't like partners, I was always in the flat and he would turn up once a week when he feel like it, but I loved him, so then I decided right I'm going

to have a child and I came off the pill and fell pregnant straight away and there is Dave so I thought I could have something of him that's completely mine and not sullied by all these woman he screwed around with all over the London, of course he was married briefly before, it was just, a disaster but anyway, so I had Dave and yeah I had Dave, walked in the hospital when I was in labour because John went party and then got (?) to come back you know so again, and I thought, looking back what I was trying to do to be honest with you is to break a cycle you know what I mean, and I was just getting worse in the cycle, I was just feeding the cycle to be broken even more, because I was thinking with the wrong people and then I thought right I was just going to have the one child.

Indeed, we can hear echoes of both her father as a bachelor, her father's failure to support her and her grandmother financially, and her desire for her father to support her in the story she tells of contacting her stepfather - Pops - when she had no money to feed her baby.

I remember having to go out to the telephone booth at one in the morning and phoning, crying to pops that John hasn't bothered and I have no milk and I haven't any nappies. Pops was really nice. It was awful to have to tell him that because I was just so ashamed and you know having Tim in the McClaren buggy wrapped up in his pajamas and everything, (?) in the rain and stuff again, and I thought god this is like a repeat of me you know, to have to find the father to find the money and then er, I don't know he was very shocked when I said to him to get stuffed.

She then met another man, who was 'prime for picking ... he ended up being the father of my two children. And that again was just another nightmare'. This did not last because the man was not committed, had an affair and left. The results were deeply shocking for her and she ended up making a suicide attempt. After this, she never lived with a man again. On the one hand, this is a story of considerable courage and certainly of oppression, but rather than telling either a simple story of sexism or one of pathological or bad parenting or both, we want to understand precisely how the complexities and confusions of history, of a larger history, in this case of slavery are what is being at least to some extent, unwittingly acted out here.

However, the pattern does not entirely repeat itself as she went to university, became a professional woman, able to support her children. However, there are important intergenerational similarities, for instance, in the way in which sexual attraction and children are separated. Sexual attraction is a must, and the fact that an attractive man has other women or is not committed seems to be taken for granted. This ties in very much with what she says about her father and about Caribbean men in general. That is, her father is an attractive man to women,

he never married and continued to have many relationships. To her this makes her father attractive. Like her mother and her grandmother, she brings up her children alone. Thus, patterns relating to sexuality and child rearing are repeated. Similarly, the necessity of women bringing up children by themselves and becoming strong enough to do this appears to at least echo her grandmother's life. What we want to go on to show is the way in which this history, its link to her father, allows us to see the way in which history walks in the room.

The fragility of trust in Angela's case is not possible to understand outside the social history that is implicated in the event. The way Angela learnt about her 'unknown' brother from her father is one example of an everyday relational history, which is interwoven with cultural practice and larger history. In order to understand how this break in trust in fact does depend on the much deeper break in trust – a broken treaty in effect – that locates the father and therefore Angela in the large history, which we need to understand. In the next section, we will explore aspects of the history of slavery that relate to Caribbean masculinity and then go on to explore how Davoine and Gaudillière incorporate the large history into their clinical practice. What is important here is to understand that Davoine and Gaudillière argue that issues do not disappear but are embodied, and the fact that we may not know what happened one or two generations ago is not proof that it is without effect. Their approach to the large history is not a simple determinist one, but a nuanced reading in which particular historical events and experiences can be so traumatic that they are carried in ways that cannot be determined, through the bodies of descendants especially where they could not be communicated at the time. The central issue is how practices that have their antecedents in slavery get passed on, confused and incorporated into affective relations and patterns of desire.

Large History

The cultural practice that Angela is born into is migration, mainly because of poverty, and also, of course, hope to make a better life for oneself and one's family. In Angela's case, we know her mother migrated for economic reasons, when Angela was 5/7 (unsure age), and she was left with her sick grandmother and a cousin. Thus, her mother was part of the great boom of migration during the 1960s, a migration that started in the late 1940s. They were met with racism and betrayal of trust: The mother country did not want them after all, until she finally closed her border and totally rejected her 'dependents', just like Angela's mother refused to take care of Angela. Migration is directly and acutely pointing to the breakage of the social link itself which has been there since slavery.

Slavery was not just a phase in Caribbean history; it was the main reason most people were there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and determined

almost every element of the region's culture. Through ruling by dividing, ethnic groups and languages were destroyed, and the master's language was to be yours, just as the master's name. Just as the names belonged to the owners, so did the women's bodies. The 'dual marriages' where slave owners had a white wife in England and a black 'housekeeper' in the Colonies was well established (Green, 2007). 'England is for marriage, Jamaica is for sex', as Catherine Hall has put it (2002, p. 72).

The view of the slave family has usually been that it was disorganized and chaotic, not least to the slave owners being directly against firm bonding among slaves. The consequence was both loose bonds between men and women, as well as familial 'matrifocality' (as slavery was through maternal lines). Women were the sole permanent element of the slave family, and nuclear families were not possible within the context of slavery itself. However, historians have argued that alternative kinship systems were created on the basis of an uprooted, and thus transformed, African heritage. Although the family system cannot be understood apart from the trauma of slavery, it is also a 'positive accommodation' (Green, 2007), a social link that involves 'creative syncretism' (Craton, 1979) in the face of such suffering. This can be understood as an attempt to remake a social link through the development of alternative community and family practices. Although, of course, we must be wary of pathologizing such practices, if we take Davoine and Gaudillière's position seriously, we can still say that they can be founded on and transmit the traumatic experience and history of slavery, which is contained within them.

Although the notion of 'matrifocality' in Caribbean families seems relevant, it is, as Green (2007) has underlined, not reasonable to equalize this with 'matriarchy'. This is important, not least in relation to the event picked out from Angela's text. It raises the question of the construction of Caribbean masculinity, both as a result of slavery and ongoing process today. Whereas white masculinity during slavery was associated with power, profit, glory and pleasure, black masculinity 'was negated and relegated to otherness' (Parry, 1996, p. 6). In the quest for control over black men, white slave owners used two key strategies: denial of patriarchal rights and sexual appropriation of black women – violently and deliberately depriving black men of any authority, domestic or otherwise. Slaves were generally infantilized and feminized.

According to researchers, this history is related to the importance that black Caribbean males attach to control over women and a 'manhood' shown through sexual prowess, and measured in terms of serial and multiple partners as well as number of offspring (see for instance Parry, 1996; Linden, 2007). Thus, to become a man is strongly associated with fathering a child, which is regarded as 'a proof beyond question that a boy had made the transition to manhood' (Linden, 2007, p. 6) Although the connections between this kind of masculinity and slavery are convincingly documented, the relationship is obviously also a complex. Thus, we recognize some of these characteristics of Caribbean masculinity

very clearly in the father of Angela. There is no shame connected with presenting an 'unknown' brother to her, it might just prove the father's fertility and desirability – which is also what Angela sees. The problems that such men represent to women and family is often (rightly) stressed. However, there are also 'good' men in Angela's life. And as history is not a determinist force but lived and embodied in different ways, other Caribbean families show a different pattern.

This is highlighted in Tracy Reynold's (2009) research on Caribbean fathering roles in Britain. She points out that normative fatherhood actually has changed across all social groups and that non-resident fathers are hardly 'deviant' in themselves in contemporary Western societies. Furthermore, even though this 'non-resident father' has a long tradition in the Caribbean culture, many fathers are not really 'absent', but rather 'gravitating' around the household following special patterns of relationships. There is a 'visiting union' and a 'friendling', where the father (and sometimes stepfather) keeps in contact with the mother and children, although not living with them (cf Brunod and Cook-Darzens, 2002). Similar to Davoine and Gaudillière, Reynolds stresses that 'networks of trust, values and reciprocity are significant to making family and community relationships work and sustaining the connections that bind societies together' (Reynolds, 2009, p. 20). In Angela's life, it has probably been difficult to build up that kind of 'trust' as the family networks have not functioned in the same way.

To Reynolds, both the nuancing as well as the cultural framing of the Caribbean father are important in order not to pathologize their practices. Although taking this caution against pathologizing seriously, we can also see that the way Angela's father treats her causes suffering and pain. To know the historical context of his masculine performance will not in itself help Angela deal with this suffering;⁴ however, as we argue in the next section, it is the history that Angela has been carrying in her body that has been silenced, and when it is able to be thought, it can act as a place for trust that takes her out of the dyad. The question is what happens as long as she is *not* able to make this historical link? And how can the link be made in her body rather than intellectually? Will the traumatic experiences of slavery – here manifested in a special version of masculinity – continue to be transmitted throughout generations, lived as uncontextualized and therefore not understandable psychic wounds? This situation is discussed by Fletchman Smith (2000, 2011). In an historical analysis of slavery, and many clinical examples with Caribbean people living in Britain, she sets out the central significance of the wounds created down generations by the practices of slavery with respect to the role of men, outlined above. Although she uses a different psychoanalytic framework to understand her case material, her analysis strongly supports the interpretation given here that when attempting to understand present practices and pain, we need to look to the practices of slavery and how they were managed psychically, communicated in complex ways down generations, without slavery ever being mentioned, but having its own

insidious effect on men and women, fathering and mothering and grandmothering, sons and daughters.

History Walks in the Door

We are arguing for an approach in social research that can potentially understand the indissolubility of the psychic and the social. Our presentation of the large history makes sense of the small historical details that Angela presents in the interview and shows us how such material is transmitted intergenerationally through its unwitting actors. In their clinical work, Davoine and Gaudillière make this link through a combination of research with the patient and the analytic relationship so that something can be understood together. In our analysis of this transcript, this route is not open to us. We can make the link between her father and other aspects of her recounted history, but this is often where psychoanalytic and other psychosocial approaches stop. The link to historical processes is crucial because it produces a mode of explanation that does not attempt to reduce complex historical forces and processes to the family. The approach is well explained in a clinical article by Davoine (2007) in which she describes an analysis where a patient who was told as a child that her mother was deported for being in the Resistance, after an enactment in the transference, came to realize that the historical truth was that her mother was sent to Auschwitz. Davoine describes the following process: one day, the patient enters the consulting room and takes on the form of an old Jewish woman come to accuse the analyst as a quasi-Mengele figure of having experimented on her. Davoine recognizes the old woman character as the patient's mother returned from Auschwitz. In this scenario, the analyst feels that she 'became' Hitler, Mengele, who had tortured and experimented on her/mother and made her/mother experience suffering that should never have been aroused. Using the theory of the double taken from the work of Artaud (1958), Davoine argues that an aspect of herself becomes the double, a double which resonated with the patient's story. For Davoine, this allowed her to get closer to the patient and for the historical truth to be acted out in the here and now in the interaction of two minds. Hence, the personal/historical trauma had to be experienced in the transference before it could be remembered (cf Winnicott, 1974). Or as Artaud says, sometimes the scenario has to be performed before the text can be known.

Slavery is not the same as a war, but it is something that took place in a particular geography and in a certain period of historical time. It contained a huge break in trust in the Davoine and Gaudillière's sense and the final abolition of slavery took the forms of various treaties. How do descendents of slavery carry an unspoken and perhaps unspeakable knowledge of it in their bodies? How does it get transmitted in the everyday practices of gender and sexuality even at the

moment of its forgetting, its sense as something belonging to a past that is no longer with us. If there is anything in our analysis, the past is located in the present and cannot be worked through until a social link is once again created and time restarted. In the clinical setting, the emergence of the large history is not forced and the patient's story of her mother's disappearance – already felt in the transference – could be verified by the checking of historical records. In our reading of Angela, we have access to no such clinical practice nor historical evidence. In what way can we then understand the role of the large history?

What sends an analyst or researcher down a particular historical track? For Davoine, as we have seen, in the case of the woman whose mother was deported, it was her reading of what was acted out in the transference. For us as researchers, something in the story of Angela signalled that we needed to understand the production of masculinities under slavery. Indeed, after a lively debate one day where the place of the father was discussed, one of us felt the need to find out more, convinced that she would find some answers in the history of slavery. We need to work on such hunches, to think what clues are being thrown our way, even if, at the time, this seems like grasping at straws. In fact, the reading on slavery was a revelation to us. And it more than confirmed our initial hunches about the complex relationship between Angela and her father and its place in a larger history. Yet, as we have already seen, Angela says that she did not know about slavery until she came to Britain. Therefore, let us try to understand in what way we can say that for Angela, history walks in the door.

As we have already argued, knowing about the large history does not in itself cure anything. What is important about the history is that it allows the possibility of moving beyond two-dimensional thinking in which a complex and destructive relationship between a father and daughter is presented. History walks into the room because it could be argued that her body 'knows' that history through the embodiment of the small histories that she recounts. What is it that sends the group off to find out about slavery? Could this be an act of doubling similar to that recounted by Davoine. Just as Davoine was able to see in her room an old Jewish woman come to accuse her, therefore we as researchers could see a history that neither we nor Angela fully understood. But it was there – it confronted us through her actions, her feelings, her small histories. For Davoine, the act of being able to symbolize the event allows the thinking to become three dimensional, to take it out of the risky arena of breaks in two-dimensional relationship to the three-dimensional space of the treaty. The analyst and the patient form an alliance with history – a history which embraces the patient so that now she knows in a way that can be thought. Davoine and Gaudillière state their position this way:

In cultural relativism, it would differentiate what is normal here and what seems intolerable over there. It would make a chronological distinction between wars in past times and what happens today. We have made the

opposite choice. We cannot, of course, support the fraudulent notion of an ahistorical and universal psychical reality. The constant changes of scale and the temporal paradoxes we encounter in the examples we give imply precisely that they are located with the greatest exactitude in history, space, and time. But we have emphasized the critical moments of the transference where the exactitude of these references becomes blurred and becomes irrelevant ... Subject and object are confused: here and there, inside and outside. The past is present, the dead return. It is a child's voice that is speaking, in a session, through the mouth of the adult he has become, in the name of an entire society threatened with disappearance. Killings on the far-off African shores take up residence in a massacre that occurred in the mountains where the analyst was born, at the same time, or years earlier.

Our work brings into existence zones of non-existence wiped out by a powerful blow that actually took place. However, irrespective of the measures chosen for erasing facts and people from memory, the erasures, even when perfectly programmed, only set in motion a memory that does not forget and that is seeking to be re-inscribed ... Hence, we do not have to choose between minute detail and the global fact. Sometimes a fit of madness tells us more than all the news dispatches about the left-over facts that have no right to existence (2004, p. xxvii).

In our case, the Caribbean history of slavery with its consequences for poverty, family life and masculinity is not just a backdrop for such an analysis, but concretely interwoven in the event, and therefore in the present. Thus, with respect to Angela's relationship with her father, other men, her siblings and her children, we can begin to understand how the small or micro histories recounted by her appear through resonance in the research encounter. We submit that such work is absolutely crucial if we are to develop a nuanced and historically sensitive approach to psychosocial research. The researcher is not in the same position as the psychoanalyst, but what the researcher can do is to gesture towards a different way of understanding phenomena and this itself potentially changes the landscape, in this case providing us with a way of understanding the central importance of history and historical experience in making subjectivity.

We understand that the link between small and large histories cannot be proven within this material as it could be developed within a clinical setting. Our aim here, however, was to explore a methodology for social research in which it is potentially at least not possible to separate family relations from a history in which they exist and have meaning and in which that history does not simply serve as a backdrop to the familial relations rendered separately. If there is anything in our approach, the trauma experienced by Angela relates in the present to a history that took place generations before, times in which speaking about and working it through was impossible. At best, it had to be endured.

In such circumstances, people make the best they can of what there is. But that does not mean that the body does not at some level remember what cannot be spoken. What is passed on is passed across bodies and, as we have tried to suggest, in affects, wishes, desires, child-rearing, gendered and sexual practices, modes and fantasies of masculinity and femininity. Thus, what is passed on becomes sedimented into cultural practices. This could be understood as further developing and going beyond notions like Marianne Hirsh's postmemory (Hirsch, 2012). Of course, we do not see Angela discuss slavery in this interview. Our evidence takes the form of the relationship between the practices and feelings she does talk about and what is known about the practices enforced under slavery, between the small and large histories. However, as many have argued (eg Fletchman Smith, *op cit*), the clinical link is certainly there. Obviously, the method we develop has many contentious points but we offer it in the spirit of exploration of important and complex issues, in the hope that it can engender discussion. We propose that this method potentially provides one way in which social researchers can work with the confusions that terrible histories inflict not only on those who experience them but also on those who follow them.

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Notes

- 1 We might also note that Bion (1961) characterizes an event in a similar way, by noting that it is the site of a 'catastrophe', or a catastrophic rupture in being.
- 2 'Second skin' is a term developed by Esther Bick to understand the development of a psychic skin to contain anxieties in the same way that the physical skin contains the body (see Walkerdine, 2010).
- 3 We give an example of how one of us resonated with the event that we chose. This allows us to see that resonance allows us to connect with what is being said from the point of view of our own experience. In doing so, it allows us to draw nearer to some of the unconscious and affective relations that may be present, from the point of view of the subject rather than the object, as in counter-transference.

What Angela told about her father had a resonance in me. As we shall see in our picked event Angela have sensuous memories of being in her father's car. Like Angela my father didn't live with us, but when he came to visit he would take me for a ride in his posh car. He was always in a good mood, he would tease and play Tom Jones on his cassette player. It felt like colour came into my life.

- 4 In a later communication with the researcher we get to know that Angela did not know about slavery until she was in the United Kingdom.

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