

eSharp

Issue 31: 'Memory'



Lisa Wagner

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Our mind is like a colossal piggy bank where we can stack fresh memories on top of the existing ones. Just like new coins are collected; the memories also overlay the older ones and the past cannot be entirely erased. The piggy bank is closed from outside – only with the help of a hammer the treasure inside could be accessed. In my design, I aimed to craft a colourful, vibrant composition that mirrors our act of encapsulating moments within tangible objects.



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‘Memory’

Editorial Board: Amber Kai Watts, Ziyi Zhao, Emily Menger-Davies, Jacob Harber, and Hanru Yang.

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Letter from the Editors

When we first met in late 2022 and began putting together ideas for this issue, we started connecting by reflecting on our personal experiences of working on a publication and the shared experience of being a postgraduate student. As a topic, it was mentioned that Annie Ernaux had been awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature 'for the courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory', which sparked our discussions around memory for this issue. How do we decide what is remembered and what is forgotten as a society? How do we record past events and who records them? Is memory consigned to the human? Can we also consider memory in non-human entities such as our environment? We realised that an excavation of the ways in which memories reflect on the past and affect our present and our future provides fertile terrain for academic discussion. That is the reason why this theme was chosen, and the reason why these fantastic works are collected and presented in this issue.

Memory is not solely concerned with individual life experiences, but also collective histories. In recent years, we have continued to observe how memories of big events are both informed by reality and subject to human interpretation, fallibility, and prejudice in the media and online. Particularly in the post-COVID-19 pandemic context, the exploration of memory has sharpened our focus on the far-reaching impact of personal memory and collective memory on individuals and societies. Recent events, such as the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as the effects of climate change, have also undoubtedly shaped and triggered the memories of people worldwide.

The pieces included in this issue cover a wide range of fields related to memory across music, gender history, war, memoirs, documentary theatre, novel, moral phenomenology and transatlantic literature. We expect this issue to illustrate the idea that memory is not only about the past but about our future, and the considerations this engenders. We would like to sincerely thank all the authors, researchers who submitted abstracts, peer reviewers, university staff and editors who have contributed to this issue.

Author Biographies

Alyssa Osiecki

Alyssa Osiecki is an American novelist, playwright, and researcher pursuing her DFA in creative writing at the University of Glasgow. Her research has been featured in the SGSAH Research Showcase and at the Oral History Society's Home Conference at London Metropolitan University. Her plays and audio dramas have been produced at Page to Stage Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Alternative Theatre Festival and The Gray Hill Podcast and recently made it to the top 10% of the BBC's Open Call and was a finalist for the BBC's Scottish Voices talent development program. Her coming-of-age novel, *The Rebel Girl's Guide to Love* was longlisted for the Comedy Women in Print Prize. She lives in Edinburgh.

Ruairidh Pattie

Ruairidh Pattie is a final year PhD student in the music department of the University of Glasgow. His thesis charts the performing career of Clara Schumann in Leipzig, London, and Vienna, examining the effect of place on her repertorial choices and the critical response to those choices in each city. More broadly his research addresses issues of music and gender, especially in 19th century contexts, the music of the Romantics, music in relation to Geography as well as a developing interest in the music of the early 20th century. Ruairidh previously studied for a Master's degree at the university of Huddersfield, successfully completing his studies with his dissertation, 'Characteristic Brilliance: an examination of compositional influence in Clara Schumann's op. 5', in which he examined the links between Clara Schumann's early compositions and her adoption of Chopin's 'La ci darem la mano' variations, Op. 2. Ruairidh has presented his research at various conferences, including the 'Women at the Piano 1840-1970' conference at University of California Irvine, and 'Women's Work in Music' at the University of Bangor, both in 2023.

Elisa Pesce

Elisa Pesce (she/her) is completing her PhD in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. Her project investigates the reasons underlying the omission of women from maximalist models by assessing the scope and implications of this narrative mode in the framework of contemporary cultural production in the United States. She is therefore interested in the interrelation between standards of genre formation and literary merit and questions of power. Elisa has presented her research outputs at various international conferences and in international journals. In April 2022, she organised and chaired the International Panel "Fictional Maximalism and The Americas: New Voices, New Perspectives" for the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies in Glasgow. She took part in the editorial board of Issue 30 (autumn 2022) of *eSharp*, the international online journal for postgraduate research in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and education at the University of Glasgow.

Catherine Devlin

Catherine Devlin earned an MSc in Gender History at University of Glasgow as a Fulbright Scholar. Before completing her Fulbright, she worked as the lead researcher and associate producer of the 2020 NBC documentary *Sky Blossom*. She teaches sixth grade history at a Boston charter school. She can be reached at catherine.devlin@fulbrightmail.org.

Sami Shaheen

Sami Shaheen is an MSc student in Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. His research focuses on 18th and 19th century German philosophy, especially in the philosophies of Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the history of transcendental-idealist thought. His research critically engages with the epistemological, moral, and phenomenological tenants underlying the arguments that connect Nietzsche's theory of transvaluation of values with transcendentalism, particularly arguing that Nietzsche's moral philosophy is a reformulation of Kantian thought. Sami's work considers how a transcendentalist take on Nietzsche could reformulate current readings and interpretations of his works, how these reformulations could be applied to current political, social, and ethical debates, and whether or not this approach's conceptualizations of spiritual development and wisdom are feasible to help individuals overcome moral struggles. In addition to his primary focus, Sami explores the philosophy of innovation through a synthetic analysis of Nietzsche and Schumpeter. He advocates for a re-evaluation of contemporary discussions and conceptualizations of innovation to enhance economic and social development, especially within developing countries.

Sam Dobbie

Sam Dobbie (University of Glasgow) is a PhD candidate, whose work focuses on the political agency of women in revolutionary Paris. Her research focuses primarily upon the years between 1789 and 1793 and considers a broad spectrum of women living in Parisian society during this period. She has previously published an article about the marriage of the Condorcets in *Epoch*, a magazine run by Lancaster University. Other research interests include the revolutionary phases of 1848 and 1871.

Audrey Chan

Audrey Chan is a PhD student reading English at St. John's College at the University of Cambridge. Her research project focuses on Hemingway's oeuvre in relation to Joan Miró's art, and the historical networks that facilitated his engagement with modernist art. She will be convening the Twentieth Century and Contemporary Research Seminar, a scholarly forum hosted by the Faculty of English. She is also the Vice-President of the Fitzwilliam Museum Society and the Academic Officer of St John's Samuel Butler Room (the MCR postgraduate society). She has recently been awarded the Blake Emerging Scholar Award and the Jim and Nancy Hinkle Student Travel Grants. Audrey earned an MSc in Literature and Modernity: 1900 to the Present at the University of Edinburgh with Distinction.

Rachel Millar

Rachel Millar is a PhD researcher at University of Glasgow funded by Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities Doctoral Training Partnership. Her research is focused on representations of women's work in First World War visual media. She is particularly interested in artworks and objects which had been used in centenary commemorative projects on national, regional, and community levels. Her work utilises object studies and combines theoretical concepts from history, art history, and museum studies. She holds an MSc in Art History: Collecting and Provenance in an International Context from the University of Glasgow and a BA (Hons) in History from the University of Strathclyde.

Hear Us Now:

Re-imagining the Future of Boston’s Catholic Community Through Storytelling and Theatre

Alyssa Osiecki [University of Glasgow]

Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of how the practices of oral storytelling and documentary theatre can help create space for more authentic trauma-informed narratives in drama and literature. How can storytelling contribute to the reintegration of our individual and communal identity after a collective trauma? What does it look like for writers and creators facilitate this space in an ethical way? Grounded in Participatory Action Research, which positions researchers and subjects as collaborators, the methodology of this project is inspired by Paolo Friere’s notion that, “Oppression is not a closed world you can exit, but a situation you can transform.” In this work, documentary theatre techniques serve as a lens to view the prismatic, ever shifting nature of memory. Hear Us Now brings powerful testimony to light from a breadth of intergenerational Catholic individuals who have historically been silenced, celebrating the newfound communities which so often emerge from the rubble of unspeakable memories. Interviews with women, mothers, queer and questioning youth, etc., reveal unexpected insights into the resilience of this community. How does a queer ex Catholic go from trying to pray away the gay to accepting David Bowie as her personal saviour? What would a Boomer mom say to Cardinal Law if she had the chance? What, if anything, would ex-Catholics bring with them from the church into their new lives? This paper traces the evolution of the project’s methodology; from interviews, to a multi-media digital theatre piece, to a novel that weaves first person testimony into the fibres of a fictional narrative. This research suggests a template for creators who wish to utilize groundbreaking theory in the role of the arts in trauma recovery, as pioneered by practitioners such as Bessel Van der Kol and Dominick la Capra.

Keywords: Oral history, creative writing, documentary theatre, trauma informed arts.

What does it mean to be Catholic in Boston in the twenty-first century? How do collective memories of growing up Catholic evolve across generations and what role can storytelling techniques have in

creating an intergenerational dialogue that makes space for the things left un-said and misremembered from one generation to the next? *Hear Us Now* began as a deeply personal quest to unpack the evolving identity of Boston's Catholic community in the wake of a decades-long clergy sex abuse scandal. The goal of this exploration was the development of an original piece of theatre which would also inform the narrative of a fictional novel.

For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on the process of developing the piece of theatre through the collection and adaptation of qualitative data in the form of interviews with Boston area Catholics. The interviews conducted were primarily focused on memories in the form of stories and anecdotes from the participant's past lives, relating to their identity as Catholics. The participants' evolving thoughts and opinions on modern Catholic identity were also recorded. For the purpose of this project, memory is approached as a dynamic concept developing over the course of a participant's lifetime rather than a static recalled event.

As a creative writer and applied theatre practitioner working in a humanities space, my primary goals were to listen, hold space, and create a dynamic container to develop thoughtful work that approaches emotionally charged subjects with respect. Through interviews with primary subjects acting as storytellers, multiple iterations of scripts were developed. Each version of the script sought to capture an aspect of the complex and emotionally charged subject of modern Catholic identity in a very specific sub-section of individuals living in the greater Boston area.

Hear Us Now brings powerful testimony to light from a breadth of intergenerational Catholic individuals who have historically been silenced, celebrating the newfound communities which so often emerge from the rubble of unspeakable memories. Interviews with women, mothers, queer and questioning youth, etc., reveal unexpected insights into the resilience of this community. How does a queer ex-Catholic go from trying to 'pray away the gay' to accepting David Bowie as her personal saviour? What would a Boomer mom say to Cardinal Law if she had the chance? What, if anything, would ex-Catholics bring with them from the church into their new lives?

In this work, documentary and verbatim theatre techniques serve as a lens through which to view the prismatic, ever-shifting nature of memory and suggest paths to rewriting our narratives in a more empowering way. At its heart, this paper is an exploration of how the practices of storytelling and theatre devising can help create a space for the lived experiences that society prefers we forget and consign to the past. What does it look like for writers and creators to facilitate this space in an ethical way? This paper will explore the development of a bespoke methodology to address these questions, highlight the challenges encountered during the process, present a snapshot of the artistic results and community impact of this work, and suggest some possible applications of these methods for future work.

How Clergy Sex Abuse Shaped a Generation of Catholics

Although Boston's clergy sex abuse scandal may loom large in the memories of present day present-day American Catholics, it is still important to frame the scope and scale of this wide-reaching cultural event for a broader audience. In his ground-breaking book, *Sex, Lies and Power: The Anatomy of a Crisis*, researcher, psychologist, and former priest A.W Richard Sipe estimates that at any given time, 'six percent of Catholic priests in the United States were having sex with minors' (1995, p.27). Applying this estimate to the scale of the archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, with its population of just under two-million Catholics, this would work out to about 90 priest abusers in the community, a staggering number (Otterman, 2018).

In 2002, The Boston Globe's *Spotlight* reporting series tore the lid off of the clergy sex abuse scandal, exposing the extent of the problem to the public and leading to the conviction and defrocking of a number of priests. *Spotlight* was one of the first investigations that spoke directly to Clergy Perpetrated Sex Abuse (CPSA) survivors, highlighting in intimate detail the pain and suffering they experienced long after the initial trauma. For over twenty years, the public has had the irrefutable evidence that CPSA is a problem endemic in Catholic communities, and that something must be done about it. Pope Francis himself has condemned CPSA in the strongest possible terms and called for church reform, 'In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church' (Beste, 2021, p.30). Although the words of the Catholic Church were strong, the Church's actions tell a different story. According to Newsweek, between the 1980s and 2018, the Catholic Church spent over \$4 billion on settlements that silenced CPSA survivors (Zogbi, 2018). The message was clear: the crimes of CPSA must not live on in the collective memories of the Catholic community.

According to the 2015 census, 45% of Massachusetts residents consider themselves Catholic (GBH News, Herwick, 2015). With such huge numbers of Catholics in the Boston area, it is impossible to enumerate how many people were indirectly impacted by CPSA as witnesses, loved ones of survivors, or simply as bystanders who have had their trust in the church shattered. Regardless of this, the majority of Catholics remain publicly silent on the issue.

The engine of this work are the stories of Catholic individuals who grew up in the Boston area during a great seismic shift in the church's power and influence. I began this project because I believed that the values and opinions of the average Catholic were more nuanced than what we were seeing in public. It is the irrepressible spirits of these so-called, 'everyday Catholics' that I hope to capture in this project. *Hear Us Now*, is a journey to discovering another layer of the narrative, a facet of the multiple truths that exist when we listen and hold space for those who are unaccustomed to being asked for their side of the story. It is about the incredible ingenuity of survivors and their allies. It is about creating our own spaces where we can feel joyful, whole, and accepted for who we are.

Developing a Bespoke Methodology

When I first endeavoured to create a schematic container for this work, I ran into two major challenges: what theatre methodology would I use and how would I approach developing this work ethically? As a theatre educator and practitioner, I naturally gravitated toward verbatim theatre methods pioneered by dramatists such as Anne Deavere Smith in the USA and Alecky Blythe in the UK. Verbatim can encompass a breadth of techniques but what these techniques have in common is the use of real life events and interviews with the people who witnessed them as the catalyst for a piece of theatre. In this practice, the spoken words of interview subjects are heavily woven into the script.

Verbatim has historically been a useful technique for unpacking complex communal events. Anna Deavere Smith's verbatim piece 'Twilight: Los Angeles,' explores the civil unrest in Los Angeles in the wake of the 1992 verdict of the Rodney King Police brutality trial. Alecky Blythe and Nick Cork's 2011 verbatim musical, 'London Road,' unpacks the fallout when a quiet town in Ipswich, UK, is rocked by the discovery of the bodies of five murdered women. Verbatim appealed to me because it offered a way of engaging directly with stories and memories from people in my community. Due to the timing of the project as taking place in 2021, I needed a safe, reliable method of collecting interviews and developing the piece. In pre-pandemic conditions, interviews for verbatim projects were generally done in person, with the practitioner utilising audio and video recording equipment. I found that the need to have quality audio and video documentation of the process naturally lent itself to conducting interviews on Zoom. Once it became clear that the pandemic was likely to continue, the shape of the project took an unexpected turn. Instead of simply conducting interviews on Zoom to gather material for a live in-person theatre performance, I decided to develop, produce, and perform my verbatim piece completely online.

Although having a solid verbatim methodology was essential to this process, one key difference between my work and the work of other verbatim practitioners continued to prove challenging. Namely, what Smith and Blythe's methods had in common with my goals was that they were ways of drilling down into the previously unexpressed memories, opinions, and beliefs of a specific community. Where they differ from what I was about to endeavour has to do with the spark or catalyst that inspired the work. The Rodney King verdict and the London Road murders were both very specific events that can be pinpointed on an individual and communal level. These events are a clear moment in time, and in both works, the thread that connected interviews with people of diverse backgrounds was their memories and reactions to the specific event.

What I was attempting to do was very different. I was asking interview subjects to encapsulate their memories, thoughts, and opinions of what it meant to be Catholic in Boston, and how that had evolved over the course of their lives. As my subjects would range in age from late twenties to early seventies, these memories did not capture one specific, clearly identifiable moment in time. They took place over

the span of decades and were quite possibly warped by time and challenging to evoke without a specific story or headline to anchor them.

Another early roadblock with the design of the methodology for this project involved the mindful safeguarding of participants. Because of the large shadow of CPSA on the Boston Catholic community, the topic was likely to come up in some of the interviews and along with it, the possibility of evoking personal trauma in participants. Although for some people trauma and memory can be inexorably linked, for the purpose of this paper trauma is approached as a particularly painful memory with potential to provoke psychological distress in participants. Although exploiting people for sensational stories or exposing their trauma without offering support could not have been further from my intention, it also did not feel authentic to me to forbid interviewees from discussing painful subjects. The more I tried to impose a safeguarding structure around the interview process, the narrower it began to feel. How would I balance my deeply held ethical obligation to do no harm with the desire to allow people to express their unfiltered thoughts and opinions? There had to be a way to make room for the unexpected whilst still holding space for the tremendous vulnerability people were going to be offering the process.

The answer was in building a safe space for the dynamic interplay between interviewer and subject to evolve. Thus, I was introduced to the world of Participatory Action Research (PAR) a methodology which, ‘Involves participants and researchers in collaborative processes for generating knowledge’ (Kendon, Pain, Kesby, 2007). PAR opened me up to an endless world of possibilities for the trajectory of this project allowing me to imagine a space in which the interviewees and I would become co-authors of the project. Instead of supporting the interviewees with a rigid structure, I decided to create a flexible process in which my role became that of a facilitator instead of a traditional researcher. As I read through Kendon, Pain and Kesby’s guide, I was so relieved there was an ethical model to conduct my research while putting down the burden of having to be the expert.

With this philosophy on my side, I was ready to create a template that was collaborative in spirit and allowed for ongoing consent throughout, with the goal of an affirming end product that would arise from subject input. However, I was still in search of a verbatim technique that would allow for specific stories to emerge from a vast ocean of participant life experiences. Enter the *Hear Us Out* technique. *Hear Us Out* was pioneered by drama educator Dino Aristidou. What intrigued me about this method was the fact that Aristidou had used it to develop an international theatre festival online during the height of the pandemic. Students from dozens of schools all over the world came together to produce and share verbatim work based on their experiences of Covid-19. What made this method different and completely suited to my needs? In Aristidou’s own words:

I believe it's a powerful and transformative learning experience for young people. For young performers and theatre makers it engages them with questions of authenticity, responsibility and ethics regarding theatre making, truth and other people's stories (Aristidou, 2021).

One of the things that drew me to the *Hear Us Out* process is that the ethical sourcing of the material is baked into the process. Although other verbatim methods offer robust technique on faithfully collecting, developing, and performing from source material, they do not suggest a specific ethical template. Rather, practitioners must rely on their best judgement. *The Hear Us Out* manner of framing questions allowed me to conduct research in the collaborative spirit of Participatory Action Research, with the subjects exerting agency over the questions they were being asked. Using the *Hear Us Out* model as a template, I developed the questions for my research. Here is an excerpt from my original call for participants:

Subjects will be invited to participate in a Verbatim Theatre project exploring the identity of Boston's Catholic community in the past, present and future. What does it mean to be Catholic in Boston in the 21st Century?

Initial Question:

1. PAST: Share a photo, object/ piece of ephemera such as a small memento, book, toy album, piece of clothing, etc. that to you, captures a moment in growing up Catholic in Massachusetts. Tell me the story behind this photo in 5-10 minutes. Why is this significant to you/ why did you choose it?

2. PRESENT: Tell us about something that's changed since that picture was taken. You may find it useful to frame the story as: 'It used to be...now it is...'.... Or, 'I miss...now x is different.'

3. FUTURE: What do you imagine the future will be like for the community? If you could articulate a hope or fear what would it be? (Osiecki, 2022).

Once the project was approved by the ethics committee, it became time to connect with interview subjects. As it was essential to maintain a participatory, collaborative spirit throughout the project, it was important that subjects self-selected to speak with me, rather than being recruited. Respecting people's comfort levels in talking about personal and potentially sensitive topics was paramount. Due to my lack of training as a trauma counsellor, I purposely did not advertise to or seek out people who were directly involved with CPSA, nor did I seek out people who were beyond my social network. The participants volunteered to partake in this project, responding to an ad placed on social media. Therefore, many of the participants come from similar backgrounds to myself. This created an ease between the interviewer and the subject, which allowed for deeper listening and conversation. This

narrow snapshot of a very specific subset of Boston’s Catholic community allowed for a deeper level of exploration than a wider survey would have, yielding valuable insights into character for me as a writer, which I would then develop into a digital theatre piece with input from the original storyteller collaborators, as well as a cadre of Boston area theatre makers.

Transcript to Script: The Process of Creating Theatre

Interviews for Hear Us Now took place via Zoom between December 2021 and February 2022. A total of six Zoom interviews were conducted. All of the interviewees but one identified as female, and participants came from across generations, from Boomers to Gen X, Millennials to Gen Z. The call for participants was worded very carefully to invite open-ended responses. The original Instagram post was simply a photo of a ‘Bathtub Mary’ (the ubiquitous statue of the Virgin Mary on a half shell often seen on the front lawns of Catholics in Boston area neighbourhoods) with copy in the local vernacular, ‘Grow Up Catholic in Boston? Share Some Wicked Good Stories’ (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The original call for storytelling participants, posted across social media.

And share they did. Another unexpected outcome of this process was the sheer volume of memories that came out of this small cross section of Boston Catholics. Although I set aside an hour for each interview, the original callout asked for people to share, ‘one story for 5-10 minutes.’ In most cases, the interview participants talked to me for hours. Instead of a few specific stories, rivers of interlocked memories came flowing out that ranged from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. Time and again I heard the words, especially from older women, ‘nobody has ever asked me what I thought about this before.’ It is no secret that the voices of women are undervalued in patriarchal structures in general, and in the church specifically. Many of these female-identified participants chose to speak with me because it was their chance to finally be heard.

At the conclusion of the process, I had hours of videos and hundreds of pages of transcripts to sift through. As I anticipated, it was challenging to find a through line without a specific moment in time

anchoring the storytelling of the participants. After spending a significant amount of time examining the material, it became very clear to me that this was not a question of using participants' words to reconstruct specific events as in a standard piece of verbatim theatre. Instead, I decided to take a more fluid approach, looking for overarching themes, events, and archetypal characters I could then weave into a new story. As I went through the material, three clear archetypes emerged:

1. The Mother

The Mother is a Boomer generation woman, born sometime in the early 1950s. Features of the Mother's childhood would have involved living in a neighbourhood where the community was culturally and religiously homogenous. Women of this era received religious education by rote and were taught to revere priests. 'Everybody thought that priests were like God, they were godly. They were the representation of God in your life, in your neighbourhood, in your church. And people thought they could do no wrong' (Osiecki, 2022). Although the Mother archetype often wanted less constrictive roles for their daughters, they usually found themselves at a loss when their daughters chose to exercise that freedom.

2. The Daughter

The Daughter is a Gen X or elder millennial woman. This generation tended to also grow up in communities that were more diverse than the ones their mothers grew up in, having friends and classmates of different religious and cultural backgrounds. As she grew up, being LGBTQIA+ was more normalised as well, and this daughter may themselves identify as LGBTQIA+ or have friends who do. The Daughter came of age during the clergy sex abuse scandal and witnessed it unfolding in the media. This was the first generation to grow up with a mistrust of the church. When the Daughter exercised her right to make her own choices, she may have been met with confusion and resistance from The Mother, family and others.

I remember telling my mother, I don't go to Catholic church anymore, and she got really angry. And she said, 'Do you dislike your mother so much that you have abandoned this faith?' (Drexel, 2022).

The Daughter may have left the church and undergone a period of spiritual homelessness, in search of a community more in line with her values and ideals. Often, she retains this mistrust of all religion into

adulthood. The Daughters who participated in this project often regained a sense of community via participation in theatre and even via more transgressive art forms such as burlesque and drag.

3. The Next Gen

The Next Gen is a younger Millennial or Gen Z woman. Like the daughter, the Next Gen grew up in a more culturally and religiously diverse community than previous generations. For the Next Gen, the clergy sex abuse scandal might feel like ancient history. What makes the Next Gen unique is that they grew up feeling empowered to speak out about social injustice and to break with authority. They may have left the church from an earlier age and felt less guilt and conflicted emotions surrounding it. Like the daughter, the Next Gen often finds community in unexpected places such as theatre groups. But unlike the daughter, that mistrust of *all* religious communities doesn't always hold. One Next Gen woman I spoke with rediscovered her sense of spirituality by joining her local Unitarian Universalist church. The Next Gen may feel more comfortable with creating their own bespoke form of spirituality and community that clearly reflects their values and beliefs.

[Being a part of the Unitarian Universalist Church] is really liberating and freeing...first of all...the structure of a service... just so different from the strict structure of Catholic mass... also the progressive values or with the UU church...that's also a difference that I really like (Dion, 2022).

Once I established the three archetypes in the project, it became time to weave a narrative. I decided to drill into the manner in which identity has evolved across these three generations, both through sense of self, and identification with family and church. The ideal crucible for this evolution to come to a head would be the Catholic Church's coming of age ceremony, confirmation. In the first scene of the play, I place the mother (who I named Teresa) and daughter (who I named Katie) together on the eve of the daughter's confirmation. Teresa is putting the finishing touches on the white dress that young women traditionally wear to be confirmed. The dress serves as a powerful symbol of Teresa's hopes and dreams for Katie. Will Katie take on the traditional role passed down to her as symbolised through the white garment?

Although the dialogue springs directly from the words of the storyteller participants, the narrative is fictional, and the dialogue is word-smithed around clearly showing these developmental relationships. Let's take a look in some of this wordsmithing in action. In her interview, one Boomer mom described her childhood relationship with the church thus:

You know, like the nuns, like I said, it was total brainwashing. You had the Baltimore Catechism. And you read the Baltimore Catechism and you learned, you know, who made us God made us, you know, and all the questions, they would ask the questions, and you were rote supposed to answer those questions in a group. So it really was brainwashing (Osiecki, 2022).

In the dialogue of the theatre piece, this is the interaction that evolves between Teresa and Katie:

TERESA spins KATHERINE around and begins pinning lace on her bodice.

TERESA: Rules? You wanna talk about rules? You know when I was confirmed, first of all they did it much younger than they do now. Second of all, I didn't get a choice about anything. Not the dress, not the bible readings, none of it. The Mass was all in Latin. And the nuns! We were petrified of them! They basically taught us how to behave in church, and they had this little clicker, I used to call it the cricket. And they would click it when it was time to stand, when it was time to sit, when it was time to kneel, time to genuflect, all that kind of stuff. They'd be clicking away in there. They made us memorize the Baltimore Catechism, Katie. You probably don't even know what that is. "Who made us, God made us," It wasn't learning. It was like how you learn your math facts, repeating, repeating, repeating. And they were very, very, very strict, very strict.

KATHERINE: What's the purpose of all of this if I'm not even sure I believe in it? The dress? The readings? The whole confirmation?

TERESA: I just want you to know where you come from, Katie.

KATHERINE: I *know* where I come from, Ma.

TERESA: It's my job to give you a solid foundation. Pretty soon you'll be an adult in eyes of the church. Then you make your own choices about what rules you do and don't follow. It's my job as your mother to get you there in one piece, without looking like nobody owns you.

KATHERINE: So that's it then? Wear the dress. Go through the motions. Who cares what you really believe in? (Osiecki, 2022)

Now let's take a look at our daughter character, Katie. In the interviews, the daughter discusses looking for strong female role models in the church:

St. Catherine Drexel was a very rich woman, and was very she had deep faith, deep seated faith. And she is a saint because...she worked with Black people and got them education and got them medical attention when they needed it. And she gave up all of her wealth, gave it to the church and became a nun (Drexel, 2022).

This is the dialogue that evolves between Katie and Teresa in the theatre piece:

KATHERINE: St. Catherine Drexel. Wealthy philanthropist? Gave up all her money to help the poor and be a nun? We visited her tomb when we went to Philly last summer. Remember? The lady in the gift shop gave me a little laminated card with her face on one side and one of those prayer thingies on the back, what's it called?

TERESA: A novena—I'm raising such a good Catholic.

KATHERINE: And she told me if I held the card against her tomb and prayed real hard the card would become...what did she call it? A tertiary relic. *(laughing)* She was so serious about it. I don't know how people actually believe in that kind of stuff.

TERESA: *(gently)* Katie. I didn't raise you to be disrespectful of other people's faith.

KATHERINE: I'm not trying to be disrespectful. It's just. Cards? Relics? It's kind of silly. Who believes in this kind of stuff anymore? Do you believe in this kind of stuff?

TERESA: I believe God loves us, and he wants us to love each other.

KATHERINE: Yeah, but I chose St. Catherine because she like, gave it all up to give people medical care and education. That's so badass!

TERESA: Katie!

KATHERINE: Well it is! And then when I read her writings it's all about like, surrendering to the will of God and how women should be meek and submissive. I don't think I believe in all these rules (Hear Us Now, 2022).

The voice of the Next Gen came to me via a totally different method. After I completed the first scene of the play, taking place between Katie and her mother shortly before her confirmation, I assembled a focus group of local theatre makers for a staged reading. When we finished the reading of the first scene, they flooded me with ideas. In the end, it was decided that the voice of the Next Gen would be a kind of a Greek chorus made up of goth, misfit, and freak archetypes, the very opposite of the embodiment of a, 'good, Catholic girl.' This chorus also could also represent the found family The Daughter discovers through theatre, drag and burlesque. Here is some dialogue between Katie and the chorus, whom she stumbles upon in church before her confirmation rehearsal, after an argument with her mother:

As KATHERINE prays softly the ENSEMBLE enters. They are two gender non-specific actors, a motley crew of renegade drama club types. ONE is dressed in alter server vestments, TWO has the robes of Virgin Mary on, with full gothy drama club regalia on underneath. As KATHERINE prays, they move around her as if they're setting up for a Mass, they're slowly moving in, light-heartedly mocking her, but she's so lost in thought she doesn't notice.

ONE: Look at her, so wholesome.

TWO: Coming to confirmation practice early just to pray!

KATHERINE: Hey, this is the only place I can hear myself think. My mother knows how to *talk*. I'm not the one who goes to mass for fun.

ONE: Hey, Christmas Eve Mass is *lit!*

TWO: The candles, the bells, the incense.

ONE: The singing!

KATHERINE: So you guys aren't like, super goddy?

TWO: If by God you mean my personal saviour, David Bowie.

(They all pause in reverent prayer for a moment.)

ONE: So tell us Miss...

KATHERINE: Katie.

TWO: Miss Katie what really is it that brings you here today?

KATHERINE: I'm supposed to give this reading, at my confirmation. And I know I'm supposed to like, *feel* something or understand something about what I'm reading but I just can't. All I can think about is how I want to get the hell out of this place.

ONE: What are you reading?

TWO: *(snatching the prayer book sitting next to Katie on the pew.)* "Reflections on the Life of St. Catherine Drexel." So what does St. Katie have to say for herself?

ONE: *(Reading aloud)* "Christ proved his love for his spotless bride, not only by his tireless labours in constant prayers, but by his sorrows into sufferings gladly lovingly endured for her sake, having loved his own he loved them unto the end."

(ONE and TWO act this out in dramatic pantomime.)

TWO: 'It was only with His blood that he purchased the church Let us then not be willing to unwilling to fall in the bloodstream footsteps of our King.'

ONE: Humph. If you're a bride you deserve a better husband.

TWO: Somebody, clearly somebody male, collected these writings and put them into this book because they're supposed to be for women to like focus, and be more pure and give oneself to god.

KATHERINE: This is word soup, it makes no sense! I can't stand in front of a church and say this.

ONE: Typical. The bible gives one set of rules to men and another, subservient one to women.

KATHERINE: But if we were made in his image, there's got to be a side that's the goddess too, because we wouldn't be made in his image if the female, the feminine wasn't possible and powerful too.

TWO: Now you're talking, sister.

KATHERINE: What about serving god, but not necessarily serving man at the same time?

ONE: Uh, oh, sounds like a dangerous idea.

TWO: What about gay people?

ONE: What about divorced people?

TWO: What about non-binary people?

ONE: What about people who don't want to have children at all?

KATHERINE: What if I don't believe any of this? What If I don't want to go to church anymore? (Hear Us Now, 2022)

In the final moments of the piece, Katie's mother arrives at the church, holding her freshly sewn white dress out to her, an offering. Katie takes hold of the hem, pondering whether or not to accept her mother's gift. The last moment we see before lights out is Katie letting go, and the dress slowly fluttering to the ground between her and her mother.

Outcomes

In May of 2022, Hear Us Now was filmed and recorded via Zoom. It was then shared as a workshop performance at the Glasgow Centre for Contemporary Art in Connect Fest, an interdisciplinary scratch night for emerging creators in Scotland, along with the work of six other artists.



Fig 2: Original advertisement for Connect Fest, an interdisciplinary scratch night for local creatives.

All of the storytelling participants received copies of the script before the play was recorded and got to approve details before the play was shot and released. Even seemingly small details, such as names and nicknames of minor characters were reviewed by the participants. This was to ensure a sense

of authenticity and respect for their memories. Participants reported that having agency over the project felt affirming. One participant said, ‘Your sample reads like the biopic I never wrote. (Drexel, 2022).

One of the things that the premiere of *Hear Us Now* reveals is the commonality of the themes explored in this piece. As the facilitator of a theatre piece about Boston which premiered in Glasgow, I was perhaps a bit concerned that some of the themes and humour wouldn’t translate cross-culturally. Time and again I heard from audiences that some of them saw their own family members reflected in the dialogue. As one of our Connect Fest panellists put it, ‘Loved the characters. They felt real as individuals. I also thought the shifts within the scene felt very natural...foremost it feels like an exciting and engaging piece of writing’ (Langley, 2022). An exciting outcome of this project for me as a researcher is witnessing the dynamic interplay between memories and devised narratives in a piece that spans the gap between documentary and fiction.

One of the essential takeaways from this project as a researcher is that working with memories, even with painful ones, does not have to be a heavy, laborious process for both the researcher and the subjects. For me, the key to an ethical exploration was to put my faith in the community I was engaging with, allowing them to guide the way. By letting go of a need to predict and shape the outcome and to control for all potential possibilities, I instead made space for the kind of, ‘deep listening’ Aristidou says is essential for the kind of understanding and empathy we seek in these types of artistic endeavours.

Applications: A Template for Future Work

The methodology and artistic products developed for this work will live on with several exciting applications. As outlined in the opening of this paper, the transcripts and dramatic text produced for this work are currently being applied to the development of a fictional novel. Set in the Boston area during the late 1990s, the novel explores the impact that witnessing the clergy sex abuse scandal had on youth attending an area Catholic school. While the characters and premise of the fictional novel differ greatly from those developed in the *Hear Us Now* play, the script and transcript have facilitated a deeper understanding of the interpersonal and family dynamics of the novel’s characters. The application of the dramatic text to the character development of the novel provided insight that I was unable to access through traditional resources such as print journalism, psychological case studies and critical and historic texts developed from research. The flexible and customizable approach developed to create *Hear Us Now* and its related projects will live on to inform future works including works of fiction and nonfiction.

In the end, this model of research suggests that verbatim theatre techniques are a powerful method of capturing a developmental snapshot of the thoughts and opinions of a diverse, intergenerational group of subjects. It also demonstrates that verbatim techniques are an effective way

of collecting and synthesizing personal anecdotes relating to a broad theme and taking place across a vast period of time. Within the context of this work, modified verbatim theatre techniques have proven to be an adaptable method of unifying intergenerational memories and weaving them together as a cohesive work of theatre with exciting implications for informing works of prose as well.

Perhaps most encouraging of all, is the development of *Hear Us Now* as a P A R informed ethical template for artists to employ when developing work about complex and potentially sensitive subjects. As a creator and researcher, I look forward to using this method to continue to expand my practice of developing artistic work that is grounded in truth whilst still leaving space for joy, creativity and most of all, participant agency.

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Clara Schumann and Cultural Memory: Using Concert Programmes and Reviews to Understand the Process of Canonisation

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Abstract

Music is often linked to ideas of memory and memorialisation, from funeral masses to the continued evocation of the ‘composer’s intentions’ in works of the long dead music can be used as a bridge to understanding people of the past. How this bridge between the real person of the composer and the version of them that exists in a collective cultural memory is formed has significant implications for who is remembered and viewed as a ‘canonic figure’ and who is forgotten.

The 19th century composer Robert Schumann in many ways embodied the Romantic archetype of a tortured genius, dead long before his time. However, this paper focuses on the career of his wife, Clara Schumann how she shaped the perception of his memory and how others interpreted the memory of Robert Schumann through her performances, even in places he had never been, through her performances of his piano music.

This paper explores the relationship between the Clara Schumann and the cultural memory of the early German Romantic composers in London, as chronicled in the reviews of the concerts she gave. In her earliest concerts in the city (1856) she was viewed as a celebrated pianist, married to a tragically ill composers of contested merit. By the end of her concert activities in the city she was recognised as one of the last living links to a by-gone era of ‘great-masters’. Through the pieces she performed and her interpretations of them, Clara Schumann had a lasting impact on the understanding of the music of her early-nineteenth-century contemporaries in Britain, with her legacy, through her pupils, lasting well into the twentieth century. As the authoritative interpreter of this music for over three decades, Clara Schumann’s role in shaping the cultural memory of composers like her husband and Mendelssohn, and the reception of this provides a new insight into our understanding of the development of musical tastes in London during this period.

Key words: 19th Century Music, Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann

Introduction – Ideas of musical memory and preservation of people through music

Music is often linked to ideas of memory and memorialisation, from funeral masses to the continued evocation of the ‘composer’s intentions’ in works of those who are long dead, it can be used as a bridge to understanding people of the past. How this bridge, between the ‘real person’ of the composer and the version of them that exists in a collective cultural memory, is formed has significant implications for who is remembered and viewed as a ‘canonic figure’ and who is forgotten. Mark Evan Bond has explored the paradigmatic shift in the aesthetic understanding of the music of past composers, that occurred towards the end of Beethoven’s career, towards a biographical interpretation of a composer’s music, in that their compositions were seen to contain individual emotional experiences (Bonds, 2021). In this paradigm, we might understand a composer’s music to be preserving a part of their experiences beyond their lifetime. One composer whose work would have been interpreted by audiences through this paradigm was Robert Schumann, who in many ways embodied the Romantic archetype of a tortured genius, who died at the relatively young age of forty-six. This paper focuses on the career of his wife, Clara Schumann, how she shaped the perception of his memory, and how others interpreted the memory of Robert Schumann through her performances of his piano music in London.

As Colin Eatock has described in ‘The Crystal Palace Concerts: Canon Formation and the English musical Renaissance’, for a composer’s work to be understood as part of ‘the canon’ it must be seen to have passed the ‘test of time’ (Eatock 2010). However, as Eatock acknowledges, this is a somewhat nebulous measurement. It is certainly true that most versions of a canon of Western classical music have, and continue to be populated by, the music of composers who are dead, and often have been for a significant length of time. The necessity of the passage of time for a composer to be considered ‘one of the greats’ suggests that canonic thinking can be understood as a shared cultural memory and consensus on what is desirable in music. Consequently, if we accept a canon as a group of pieces or composers who are considered by society at large to be the ‘best’ at a particular time, then these composers and their music will also define the context in which the value of other music is judged. In *Gender and the Musical Canon*, Marcia Citron argues that the test of time ‘represents the passing down of partial, biased, and socially contingent value systems’ (Citron 1993). The implication of a canon built on the foundations of the tastes of previous generations is that it requires concurrent generations to agree on their positive opinion of a piece for it to be considered canonic.

To establish which composers were considered in canonic terms, how the perception of them progressed to this point and how long this progression took, we must examine accounts of the performance of their music through different stages of history. Therefore, this paper will use the reviews of the concerts of Clara Schumann in London to measure the progress of the critical opinion of her husband, Robert Schumann’s, music. By exploring the history in this way, we see that in the 1850s, ‘poor Robert Schumann’, the man languishing in a sanatorium, near death, was the main perception of this composer in the London critical press. However, by the 1880s, we find discussions of ‘the great Composer, Schumann’ the equal of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schubert, at the end of Clara Schumann’s performing career in London. By understanding the intellectual journey from one conception to the other we can see how the perception of his music developed in London and how the cultural

memory of Robert Schumann changed in order to suit the prevailing critical opinion of his music, and how it stood up to ‘the test of time’.

Clara Schumann’s concerts in London provide a particularly pertinent case study for this endeavour for a number of reasons. Firstly, she was Robert Schumann’s wife and then widow, giving her a direct familial connection to him, and as such had a symbolic connection to his music in the mind of the public. This connection to Robert Schumann’s music would endow her performances of it with greater prestige in a socially contingent value system, as they were the closest available source to the music’s original creator. Secondly, her aim as a performer was the promotion of her husband’s work, therefore we find that she performed this music consistently, instead of turning to the work of a different composer when Robert Schumann’s music was not immediately warmly embraced by the London public. Thirdly, the regularity of her concertising in London provides a comprehensive view of the time in which it took Robert Schumann to be firmly cemented into London’s musical canon, and so the ‘test of time’ can be understood in significant detail. Through her own efforts to maintain the memory of her husband, she brought his music to a wider public and allowed it to become a part of the broader cultural memory of the ‘glorious Chopin-Mendelssohn-Schumann era of musical life’ (1887).

Who was Clara Schumann? – A brief biography

The life of Clara Schumann, one of the 19th century’s greatest piano virtuosos, has been the locus of interest in the fields of historical musicology and women in music since the 1980s, with a particular surge in interest arising around her bicentenary in 2019. The biographical details of her life have been extensively explored, most notably by Berthold Litzmann, Nancy Reich and Beatrix Borchard (Litzmann 1913) (Reich 1985) (Borchard 1991). Most recently, *Clara Schumann Studies* has advanced scholarship around this extraordinary musician (Davies 2022). She was born Clara Wieck in Leipzig, on the 13th of May 1819 to Friedrich Wieck, a piano seller, who also taught the instrument, and Mariane Wieck, née Tromlitz (later Bargiel), a soprano and pianist. The Wiecks divorced early in their daughter’s life, but Clara Schumann’s piano instruction continued with her father, giving her daily lessons until she was eighteen. Another pupil of Wieck’s was Robert Schumann, who lived with his teacher for a time in the 1830s. This is where Clara Wieck met the man who would become her husband. An important note from this period is that Robert Schumann permanently damaged his hand, whilst using a machine to allow his fingers to stretch further to benefit his piano playing. Consequently, from early in his career as a composer, Clara Schumann performed her husband’s music, offering authoritative interpretations of his works.

As a young child star in Leipzig, and into her adult professional life, Clara Schumann worked closely with many of the greatest musicians of the nineteenth century, performing with Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn and Friedrich Chopin as well as on one occasion performing for Niccolò Paganini. She also played alongside many others whose names are less recognised today but who were influential figures at the time, such as Sigismund Thalberg, Ignaz Moscheles and Friedrich Kalkbrenner. In her later career, she would go on to perform significant amounts of music by Mendelssohn, Chopin, Beethoven and Robert Schumann. Importantly for the arguments in this paper, she outlived all these composers by between four and seven decades. In a conversation reported by Adelina de Lara, a student of Clara Schumann’s, in her biography *Finale*, she is told by another student, Fanny Davies, that

‘[s]ince his [Robert Schumann’s] death she has devoted her life to making his works better known’ (Lara 1955). It was this work, carried out after the death of her husband that, in large part, enabled his music to be subjected to, and be deemed to have passed, the ‘test of time’, and make its way into the wider cultural memory.

Throughout her career Clara Schumann concertised across northern Europe, conducting tours most often to Austria and France in the 1830s, 40s and 50s, as well as venturing as far as Russia in the 1840s. She only began performing in London in the months before her husband’s death, at which point he was housed in the Enderich Sanitorium and was therefore unable to undertake the journey with her. Clara Schumann’s subsequent tours to London would prove to be a vital part of the second half of her career, representing the largest number of public performances she gave in a single city. Although John Ella had introduced Robert Schumann’s compositions in his Musical Union concerts during the 1840s, the impact was not felt particularly widely, and his music was not generally known or appreciated in London before the arrival of Clara Schumann in 1856. Therefore, by examining the reactions to Clara Schumann’s concerts in London, we can follow the reception of her husband’s music from uncertainty to acceptance. In effect, in London, Robert Schumann was never a ‘living’ entity, but always the name of a composer, whose music had to be interpreted by others. This paper tracks the reaction to this music when performed by his wife throughout her tours in London, the change in its reception, and examines the way in which this can inform our understanding of the process of a composer’s canonisation in a certain place.

Literature review

At its core, the idea of a musical canon is founded on the cultural memories of composers and their pieces. The formation of the canon has been thoroughly explored by William Weber, notably in *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (Weber 2008). In this volume, Weber outlines the transition from concerts at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which were based largely on contemporaneous music, towards concerts in the second half of the century, which instead comprised of music of the past. A significant amount of this ‘past’ music came from the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the ‘ancient music’ portions of these concerts could date from the time of Bach, and sometimes earlier. Weber has also argued that canonic thinking can be broken down into three main categories: performance, critical and pedagogical. The canon of performed works is a ‘standard repertoire’ of pieces most often played in concerts; the critical canon consists of those works deemed to be ‘the greats’ by the musical intelligentsia; and the pedagogical canon are the works used as ‘exemplar models’ for teaching. Crucially, canonic status may be assumed by a composer in one of these three categories, without it necessitating the same status for them in the other two.

Joseph Kerman, in ‘A Few Canonic Variations’, stated that:

Repertoires are determined by performers, canons by critics — who are by preference musicians, but by definition literary men or at least effective writers about music (Kerman 1983).

Kerman argues that the impulse behind the current form of the musical canon is the objectification of ‘the work’, in the score, replicating the literary canon. However, he acknowledges that this situation is not entirely suitable for the activity of music, as performers are necessary for the realisation of a score. His above statement delineates the

work of performers and critics, in a hierarchical fashion, the canons created by critics are longer lasting and the Performers' repertoires must be continually updated in order to satisfy the appetites of the public. For a work to have stood the 'test of time', and be designated as canonic by critics, it must first remain in the repertoires of performers. In this paper, I will demonstrate that the continued performances of Robert Schumann's compositions by Clara Schumann in London kept her husband's music in the critical conversation and therefore lead to it being considered to have withstood the 'test of time', and consequently, part of the canon.

The reviews of Clara Schumann are complicated by her gender. She was widely regarded as one of the best pianists in Europe at the time, and often considered to be above gender. However, even being afforded this consideration implies that although she was understood to have surpassed the gendered aspect of musical criticism, the reaction to her abilities was still an attempt to comprehend her activities through a gendered lens. One example of this comes from a letter written by Joachim Raff, the director of the Frankfurt Conservatoire, at which Clara Schumann taught. When approached by another woman about a teaching position, he wrote:

With the exception of Madame Schumann, no (female) teacher is or will be employed at the Conservatory. Madame Schumann herself I can probably count as a man. So if you wanted to give lessons here, you could only do it privately (Borchard 1991).¹

Despite Clara Schumann being considered the equal of her male colleagues, the politics of the time still impacted upon her entirely male, critical audience's interaction with her performances. In 'Female Pianists and their Male Critics in 19th Century Paris' (Ellis 1997) Katherine Ellis argues that because of women's status primarily as interpreters, instead of composers, who specialised in particular types of music, they challenged the notion of what it was to be a piano virtuoso, and also developed much of the modern performing repertoire. She also acknowledges that significant barriers existed in terms of social expectations for women, dictating which repertoire was appropriately performable on stage. Furthermore, Ellis argues that the repertoires, performed by women at this time, themselves became gendered, as pieces more commonly played by female performers became associated with the feminine. As Ellis argues all of these aspects contributed to the reception of women's performances by critics.

As Ellis delineates, and as was often the case in the critical response to Clara Schumann:

For critics who tried to raise the profile of particular women pianists, a common tactic was to minimize the impact of their femaleness or, indeed, to elevate them to the status of honorary men as a mark of professional respect (Ellis 1997).

¹ „Mit Ausnahme von Madame Schumann ist und wird im Conservatorium keine Lehrerin angestellt. Madame Schumann selbst kann ich eben wohl als Mann rechnen. Wenn Sie daher hier Unterricht geben wollten, so könnte dies nur privatim geschehen“ (Original text, translated above by R. Pattie)

Two sides of the gendered understanding of female musicians can be seen in the first two reviews of her performances in London. In the first her performance is described as ‘masterly and intellectual’ (1856), both masculine coded traits, whereas in the second she is described as ‘the unfortunate composer’s gifted and amiable wife’ (1856), casting her in a traditional feminine role. Although the gendered aspect of the reception of Clara Schumann’s concerts is not specifically at issue in this paper, it is an important context for understanding and interpreting the reviews of her concerts.

Clara Schumann’s performances in London

Clara Schumann first travelled to London in the spring of 1856. Significantly for the London audiences’ understanding of the music of Robert Schumann, which Clara Schumann championed on her tour, he was still alive, although gravely ill. For the previous year and a half, he had been held in the Endenich sanatorium. As it would transpire, this tour to London would be the last Clara Schumann undertook during her husband’s lifetime, as he died shortly after her return to Germany. In a review of her first concert on this tour, and indeed in England, in *The Musical World*, published on the 19th of April, the critic wrote that:

The audience were enchanted both with [the] concerto and variations [which Clara Schumann had performed that evening], and never was a warmer tribute of applause bestowed upon the efforts of an artist. If poor Robert Schumann could but hear his wife’s success, who knows but some good might come of it (1856).

The description of Robert Schumann as ‘poor’ would suggest he was regarded with more sympathy than respect at this juncture. This is the last line of the review, in which Clara Schumann’s playing had been discussed with great excitement. Given this is a review of a concert in which she did not play any of her husband’s music, it is not altogether surprising that he should occupy such a relatively insignificant position. However, I would suggest that such a lowly placement of the comment on Robert Schumann seems to indicate he was regarded as an afterthought when discussing the performances of his wife. Nevertheless, the fact that he is included at all, does suggest that the public were aware of his musical activities, either as a journalist or a composer. Furthermore, his situation is only alluded to. This would imply that his plight was already understood in London, and that even though his music was not yet universally accepted, there was a pre-existing degree of public awareness around the Schumann couple prior to Clara Schumann’s first visit to London.

The relative regard in which Robert Schumann was held by the English musical establishment in the middle of 1856 is highlighted by the way in which two other composers, whose music Clara Schumann did perform in this concert, are described in this review. Firstly: ‘Her performance of Beethoven’s superb concerto was masterly and intellectual (1856)’. Secondly: ‘The 17 variations of Mendelssohn were equally well played – very much, by the way, in the manner of the great composer himself (1856)’. The first contrast to note here is that both Mendelssohn and Beethoven are referred to by their last names only. If we are to take a charitable view, the specification of ‘Robert’ Schumann was included in order to differentiate him from his wife. However, common practice at the time would have been to refer to the husband by the family name, and the wife either as ‘Mrs’ or in the case of non-British women *Mdme* or *Fr*, this therefore seems unlikely. Instead, this signifies that knowledge of Beethoven and Mendelssohn’s music is ubiquitous enough throughout English musical society that their name alone suffices to specify the composer. They are the person

from whom all others bearing that name must be differentiated. In contrast, the Schumanns both still require their first names in order to differentiate them from the crowd.

Furthermore, Clara Schumann's performance of Mendelssohn's variations is judged against the composer's own style of playing, which had been heard in London during the early 1840s. In part, this is to lend the reviewer's opinions some weight, as the reader is to presume that they were able to hear Mendelssohn's performances. There is already a sense that the composer's interpretation is the correct one, and that for her close replication of this style, she is to be admired. This is consistent with Clara Schumann's commitment to the ideal of 'Werktreue', or 'truth to the work', in which the intentions of the composer are held above the individual preferences of the performer. Lydia Goehr has discussed this concept in depth, delineating the way in which the 'Work concept' dictated hierarchies between the composer, with whom the 'original' work lay, and performers whose duty it became to faithfully reproduce the work, in a position of subservience to the composer (Goehr, 1994). This ideal of 'Werktreue' also introduced ideas of ownership over pieces of music, with the composer given ultimate authority. Lalonde has previously discussed how Clara Schumann's commitment to Werktreue contributed to the image of her as a 'priestess of art', and how the subservience of her own performance style to the intentions of the composer became a particular hallmark of Clara Schumann's playing (Lalonde 2021). At the beginning of her career in Leipzig, Felix Mendelssohn had been the director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and the pair had played together on many occasions, Mendelssohn often offering advice to the young virtuosa. Even at this early stage in her London tour, Clara Schumann's authoritative connection to the past 'great composer' was being used by critics to demonstrate to their readership her exceptional position among performers.

Clara Schumann would return to England three more times in the next five years, in 1857, 59 and 60. However, although the reception for her performances were extremely warm, the London public did not yet fully appreciate her husband's music, which was her particular aim. The critical opinion of her husband's music and his status within the London musical canon did not alter much during this period. She therefore decided to tour elsewhere, only returning in 1865. On that occasion, she wrote in her diary:

I find a marked change, since five years ago, in the attitude towards Robert. To my great surprise I now find a large number of Schumann devotees – one of the most zealous is Grove, whom, apart from that, I like more and more, and with whom I feel quite at home (Litzmann 1913).

Grove, mentioned her by Clara Schumann, was George Grove. Initially trained as a civil engineer, he became a musical administrator at the Crystal Palace, where he wrote a series of programme notes for the concerts, which would later be turned into the *Grove Dictionary of Music*. These programme notes were designed to aid the audience in their understanding of a piece of music. Eatock argues that Grove and his contemporaries would not have viewed themselves as 'creating' a canon per se, but instead engaging in a process of musical discernment, highlighting those composers' music which had stood the 'test of time' (Eatock 2010). These endeavours were self-consciously intellectual, positioning the music they found to be desirable as 'serious', in opposition to 'trivial' virtuoso show pieces. Part of the reason for their championing of Robert Schumann's music was that he had espoused similar views in his Leipzig journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, in the 1830s and 40s. By designating Robert Schumann's music as 'serious', Grove was encouraging his audience to engage with it

as an intellectual exercise, and to consider the music as lasting art compared to a display of ephemeral virtuosity which could be enjoyed only on a superficial level.

The first concert in which Clara Schumann appeared during her 1865 tour was at the St James's Hall as part of their Monday Popular Concerts, and was entirely made up her husband's music, a gesture intended to honour both halves of the couple. To have a programme entirely constructed from the music of one composer was highly unusual in this concert series, which had been set up in opposition to the concerts of the Beethoven Quartet Society precisely because they only programmed the music of a single composer. The Popular Concerts tended to follow a style of programming known as 'miscellany' in which a variety of music, both instrumental and vocal, is played by many different performers throughout the night. In this particular concert, they maintained the mixture of vocal and instrumental pieces, in keeping with this style of programming, but selected only works by Robert Schumann. The beginnings of a change can be seen in that the reviewer of this concert in *The Musical World* describes Clara Schumann as first 'the widow of the composer, Robert Schumann' and secondly as 'the celebrated pianist'. This would suggest that of the Schumann couple, the husband's reputation was beginning to overtake that of his wife. However, the reviewer goes on to show that Grove's opinion of the music of Robert Schumann was not yet universal, writing:

Space will not permit, at this busy time, of our discussing the merits of so many works of importance from the pen of a composer, the question of whose claims to consideration still divides the opinions of thinkers on music. But the reception awarded to every effort of Madame Schumann, who stood valiantly forward as the champion of her regretted husband, and played from beginning to end with an enthusiasm that never flagged, was according to her deserts (1865).

The music of Robert Schumann is often significantly less bound by the constraints of Classical form, compared to his contemporaries, especially that of Mendelssohn, and often utilises more outlandish modulations. This perceived lack of adherence to musical structure was interpreted as innovative by some and wild or unrefined by others, and this was often the source of the disagreement. Notwithstanding Grove's efforts in his programme notes, Clara Schumann was viewed as the foremost champion of her husband's music, and it was her presence in London that was the impetus for the performance of such a wide range of his music. However, Grove's intervention through his programme notes should not be overlooked as a crucial step in the canonisation of Robert Schumann.

During the same tour, Clara Schumann was invited to perform her husband's piano concerto, Op. 54 in A minor, in a concert at the Crystal Palace. The concerto is both a tour de force for the pianist and adheres to audience expectations of a piano concerto. This inclusion in their programming would have signalled somewhat of a vindication of Grove's efforts to explain the music of Robert Schumann. By having the music demonstrated by his closest living relative and most significant artistic collaborator, the audience at this concert would be given the greatest opportunity to understand and appreciate this work, thereby increasing the number of devotees to Robert Schumann's music, in that this was the closest they could get to the original composers' conception of the piece.

The next review of particular note to the current discussion was published on the 30th of April 1870, again in *The Musical World*, in response to the concert of the Philharmonic

Society on the 25th of April, at which [Robert] Schumann's symphony was performed, as well as Clara Schumann, who played Beethoven's fourth piano concerto. In this review, the critic states that they do not believe the symphony will ever achieve the lofty, canonic status that the advocates of Robert Schumann's music believed it deserved, despite it having been played 'repeatedly at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere'. They argue that:

The fourth and fifth movements stand in the way. At each performance the audience tacitly reject all that follows the slow movement. Their interest, lively up to that point, flags, and the end of the symphony is a visible relief. There is nothing to wonder at in this, even though Mr. MacFarren, the society's analyst, talks of "deeply solemn harmony" and "singular melodiousness." The characteristics he points out are far from plain; indeed, the common eye sees something very like their opposite (1870).

Although this is not directly in relation to a performance of Clara Schumann, but a piece that was performed by others on the same programme as her, it still has a bearing on our understanding of Robert Schumann's journey to canonic status. Firstly, in this review, he is no longer referred to as 'Robert Schumann', but simply by his family name. This suggests that although the audience is yet to be entirely won over by his symphony, there is a greater level of respect afforded to the composer as well as a wider degree of public renown, compared to the 1850s. That this symphony had been performed several times would also suggest a degree of popularity, as it would be against the interest of concert halls to continue to present works that the public did not wish to hear, as this would harm ticket sales. Therefore, it would seem that the popularity of the first three movements was sufficient to outweigh the less favourable reaction to the last two. However, most significantly, what this review shows is that there was still a lively debate over the status of Robert Schumann's music as late as 1870. His advocates, including Clara Schumann, George Grove and Mr. MacFarren who wrote the programme notes on this day, were bringing supporters to their cause, but there was still a significant degree of opposition or apathy towards his music. Nonetheless, to have caused this level of controversy would suggest that Robert Schumann's music was beginning to be more widely performed by the early 1870s, and consequently his reputation was growing, although the status of his music was still under dispute.

The next significant development in the understanding of Robert Schumann, as interpreted through Clara Schumann's performances, is contained in a single sentence in a review of a recital given by Clara Schumann, published in *The Musical World* on the 15th of March 1873, it reads:

Admirable as is her interpretation of the music of other masters, she is never, in our opinion, so entirely herself, so beyond all rivalry, as in that of Schumann, whose spirit seems to breathe through her fingers (1873).

This is the first reference in the musical world to the direct intercession of the 'spirit' of Robert Schumann in the performances of his wife. The image of Clara Schumann as a 'priestess' is one that had a long history through her career, beginning with Liszt, who used the term in reference to her serious character and devotion to her artistic ideals. Brahms also makes reference to this image in a letter to Clara Schumann dated the 27th of August 1854, writing: 'I think of you going to the concert hall like a priestess to the altar' (Litzmann 1927). In more recent scholarly literature Amanda Lalonde has explored the idea that Clara

Schumann stood in more as an ancient Greek ‘sibylline’ priestess in her early career, seeming to enter a state of trance in performance in her chapter ‘The Young Prophetess in Performance’. April Prince, in her article ‘(Re)Considering the Priestess: Clara Schumann, Historiography, and the Visual’, argued that the labelling of Clara Schumann as ‘priestess’ ‘attempted to regulate her sexuality and femininity in seemingly benign terms’ (Prince 2017). The moniker of ‘priestess’ had followed Clara Schumann in the German press from the early 1850s, however, this was the first time in London that she is specifically described as being in communion with a particular composer’s spirit.

The idea that Clara Schumann could stand as an intermediary between the spirit of her husband and the presentation of his compositions can be argued to be analogous to the positioning of a Catholic priest during a service, interceding between the congregation and the saints. The canon of saints also holds close parallels with the musical canon. Individuals are elevated after being judged to have undertaken a work that is worthy of special recognition. This recognition is often many years in the making and often requires the concerted efforts of a dedicated devotee or group, but once an individual is deemed to be worthy, they ascend to be venerated by the public at large. That Robert Schumann is now a spirit whose invocation guides the performances of his wife would suggest that, in the public understanding, he has moved beyond the memory of ‘the man’ to ‘the composer’ whose name conjures the sound of his music, instead of the memory of an individual. This quasi-saintlike invocation would suggest that Robert Schumann was beginning to be understood as a canonic composer, and as such was entering the collective memory of the London public, almost a full two decades after his death. This could raise the issue of Clara Schumann’s performances being valued as the proxy for Robert Schumann’s original genius. However, I would argue that given Clara Schumann’s reputation as a performer preceded that of her husband as a composer it was her genius as a player that audiences originally wished to see, not merely her channelling of her husband and other composer’s intentions.

The next stage of Robert Schumann’s ascent to the canon can be seen in two reviews from the early 1880s, the first on the 16th of April 1881 and the second on the 11th of March 1882. In the first, the reviewer writes that:

With extraordinary power and facility the gifted lady [Clara Schuman] interpreted the thoughts of the great man [Robert Schumann] with whom her fame, as well as her life, is identified, and every phrase stood out sharp and clear (1881).

The use of the term ‘great man’ holds a great deal of weight, as it is often the signifier that a composer has been accepted as a genius, and therefore part of the canon. Furthermore, Robert Schumann is not referred to by name in this review but by implication, as the husband of Clara Schumann. Were this earlier in their respective careers this might have been a sign that Clara Schumann’s fame eclipsed that of her husband, as had been the case on several tours during her lifetime. However, only needing to be referred to by implication and context would suggest that knowledge of Robert Schumann can now be assumed to be ubiquitous, he has become a household name, and can therefore be understood as part of the canon.

The second of the two reviews encapsulates a larger sense, in the critical literature around Clara Schumann’s concerts in the 1880s, that they were witnessing the passing of an age. There is a clear reverence for the pianist as the representation of the age of Robert Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Chopin, all of whom had long since faded from public view

themselves, and to whom living connections were becoming increasingly difficult to find. This reverence can be seen in the following passage:

Mdme Schumann, now a rare visitor to this country, made her first appearance for the season. Robert Schumann's widow, and the great artist who, more than a generation ago, made the name of Clara Wieck famous, will command increasing interest as long as she appears before the public. It is natural that this should be. The period she more particularly represents is rapidly receding towards that point in the past where venerated traditions begin to form, and where a nimbus of heroism akin to that of divinity encircles with a growing radiance illustrious heads (D.T. 1882).

This idea of a past golden age, to which the Schumanns belonged, is the solidification of a canon and the enthronement of both musicians in the collective memory of the London musical public, one for their efforts from the concert stage and the other for their compositions.

Towards the end of the 1880s, the tone of the reviews of Clara Schumann's concerts becomes almost nostalgic. By this point, it was clear that her public career would soon be over, although her powers of performance remained. This invited comment on her place within the history of music, and acknowledgement of her contribution to the appreciation of her husband's music. During her penultimate tour to London, one critic wrote:

When Schumann heard little Clara Wieck for the first time he at once recognized her genius, and his prediction of future greatness for her proved, as in the case of Brahms, prophetic, although at that time he could not foresee [*sic*] how intimately that greatness would become connected with the fortunes of his own music. It was as the interpreter, and for a long time almost solitary champion, of her husband's genius that Madame Schumann gained for herself that permanent place in the history of the art which is denied to the ordinary virtuoso (1887).

A week later, in the same publication, the critic wrote:

If exceptional interest attaches to any public appearance of this great artist as one of the few remaining representatives of the glorious Chopin-Mendelssohn-Schumann era of musical life, this feeling is considerably intensified when the performance is that of a masterpiece which it has been the pianist's privilege to watch in its very inception and development by the composer (1887).

These two passages show that at the end of her performing career, Clara Schumann was considered to be part of the same canon as her male counterparts. However, this underlines the issue of an artistic endeavour's ability to withstand the 'test of time', and the difficulty of understanding the impact of ephemeral performances on the musical canon.

Conclusion

As these extracts from the reviews of his works show, the path to canonic status for Robert Schumann's music in London was not simple. It entailed significant opposition, and required the dedication of several individuals, most notably and consistently Clara Schumann, across several decades. Without these efforts, it is highly likely that Robert Schumann's music would have been consigned to a footnote in history, like many of his contemporary composers. However, given the steadfast efforts of his wife to disseminate his works from the

concert platform, his music continued to be performed. As the decades wore on, it could be said to have passed the 'test of time', and therefore to have entered the canon. In all, this took approximately twenty-five years after the death of the composer for his music to have entered the wider, musical cultural memory. This length of time is not a constant and had this been a study of different musicians in an alternative city, the answer may have been different. However, in this case, we can see how a wife's dedication to the memory of her husband and his music kept it in the public sphere for long enough that it would be considered as a significant part of the musical canon.

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Re-membering National Identity in the American Maximalist Novel

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Abstract

In an article for U.S. men's magazine *Esquire*, literary journalist Jonathan Russell Clark recently wondered whether the maximalist novel still matters or if, as a distinctive form of post-WWII U.S. fiction, it has nothing significant left to say. Aligning with Clark's conclusion that 'maximalism is alive and well; it's just under a wider and more eclectic stewardship', this paper foregrounds examples of maximalist women writers to claim that the genre's perceived decline in prestige in the framework of contemporary cultural production is not due to its aesthetic or ethical irrelevance, but results from approaching maximalism as a prescriptive, rather than a descriptive, critical category. Consequently, with the progressive association of size with masculinity in twentieth-century U.S. culture, big, ambitious novels of ideas by white male authors such as Pynchon, DeLillo and Wallace have been celebrated and canonised as maximalist for allegedly speaking of, to and on behalf of the whole nation; simultaneously, and uncoincidentally, the numerous – mostly non-white – women writers who aimed maximalism at hyper-specific, real-world issues have been largely excluded from models of this narrative style. By engaging with criticism by Nick Levey, Paul K. Saint-Amour and Kasia Boddy, as well as with Elaine Showalter's history of women writing in the United States, I argue that, freed from universalising and nationalistic prescriptive connotations, the maximalist novel is a powerful means for carving out space for the marginalised in U.S. literature and society, thus posing a threat to dominant notions of U.S. identity.

Introduction

In western history, the development of distinctive national bodies of literature has traditionally depended on and followed the emergence of those geopolitical units known as nation-states (Buell 2014, p.10). While most European nations bring together people with a shared racial, cultural, and/or linguistic history, the U.S. represents an exception: its territorial vastness and landscape diversity is matched with an equally heterogenous population, united more in theory

than in practice by a set of myth, beliefs, and ideas that mostly reflect the experience of the dominant, white, Anglo-American group (Miller 2009, n.p.; Buell 2014, p.13 and 17). Since its emergence during the Civil War, U.S. literature has thus developed a peculiar category for works of fiction that show a particular concern for and ability to represent the nation's 'essence and character': the Great American Novel.² The first definition of the GAN dates to 1868, when John William DeForest describes it as 'the picture of the ordinary emotions and manners of American existence' and the 'task of painting the American soul within the framework of a novel' (28). As a critical category, however, the GAN has predominantly evolved as a product of academic and professional literary criticism, with an equal share of detractors and supporters. Despite being a project fraught with contradictions – first and foremost its predominantly white and male author base – it survived and adapted to the profound socio-cultural changes of the twentieth century and progressively intersected another category associated with ideals of literary greatness: the maximalist novel, a type of prose that celebrates excess in all its forms – aesthetic, stylistic, and of scope.

In this paper, I discuss unacknowledged instances of maximalist fiction in which memories of an unrecorded, erased, manipulated, or traumatic past are presented as crucial to the identity-building, survival, and mental well-being of both U.S. individuals and communities, especially in marginalised or minority groups. By analysing episodes from Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), Karen Tei Yamashita's *I Hotel* (2010), and Lucy Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport* (2019), I show that maximalism can offer more than the hegemonic representations of U.S. identity that early critics of the 'big' American novel – such as Edward Mendelson, Frederick R. Karl, and Tom LeClair – identified in the genre. Its drive to detailedness is exceptionally suited and consequently exploited by non-male and/or non-white authors for complementary, alternative, and subversive portraits of (inter)national realities. Remembrance is key to these literary projects, in which the characters' ability to develop an individual and a national sense of identity strictly depends on the extent to which they can access or control knowledge of the past. Memory thus becomes a major tool deployed by the authors to denounce and challenge the systematic erasure and manipulation of U.S.

² The Civil War is conventionally considered the starting point of a distinctively American body of literature because in the Colonial and Early National Period (17th century–1830) the first colonists wrote texts (mostly but not exclusively in English) that were more practical, straightforward, and often derivative of literature in Great Britain, as well as dependent on British literature for literary models and standards.

history and the sense of alienation on which the development of an abstract, universalising idea of U.S. national identity has traditionally relied, to the detriment (predominantly but not exclusively) of citizens with a multi-ethnic or multicultural background.

I begin by presenting the main features of the maximalist novel and explaining how its relationship with both dominant and oppositional ideas of U.S. identity is forged in the peculiar, all-pervasive presence of warfare in the U.S. I then illustrate the way Silko, Yamashita, and Ellmann exploit maximalist narrative techniques to challenge traditional western systems of knowledge production and distribution and raise concerns about who decides what is worth remembering when the definition of American is at stake. Full of conflicts and revolutions, Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* takes historical and cultural memory as a fundamental prerequisite for the survival of the Indigenous people of the Americas, for whom the five-hundred-year war against the coloniser has never ended. Yamashita's *I Hotel* foregrounds the role of retrieving immigrants' lost voices and traditions alongside the creation of a Pan-Asian American identity, catalysed by the civil rights movements of the late 1960s and 1970s and the Vietnam War. In Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport*, the protagonist's memory is in thrall to her endless grief for her mother's death, which leaves her powerless against the psychodynamics of total war that has become the natural state of things in the U.S.

Maximalism, War, And Identity

The adjective maximalist enters the language of literary criticism through a 1986 essay by John Barth which mainly discusses its opposite trend, that is, minimalism. In this piece, Barth defines both tendencies as particularly relevant to the U.S. postmodern literary scene because linked to old, distinctly American features and concerns (1986, p.1). Consequently, while the minimalist short story values economy and austerity in unit, form, scale, style, and/or material, the maximalist doorstopper novel harks back to the vastness (both geographical and of the spirit of initiative) that fuelled the myths of U.S. exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny. Therefore, this writing style unapologetically deploys totality and excess on all levels, as a means of showing its profound engagement in the way the individual's everyday experience connects with and draws meaning from the broader development of national affairs. In the 2010s, Barth's taxonomy evolves into the name of a distinctive type of novel, when scholars such as Stefano Ercolino and Nick Levey propose maximalist as the most suitable term for articulating the cultural value of the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first-century 'big' U.S. novel. While Ercolino focuses mainly on the aesthetics of the genre, characterised by extensive use of the

encyclopaedic mode, linguistic digression, redundancy, multiple interconnected plotlines, myriads of characters, and a complex overall structure that often results in a lengthy and overwhelming reading experience (2012, p. 242), Levey suggests a more philosophical approach to this type of narrative and describes it as a ‘mindset and approach to novelistic poetics that finds the lure of detailedness irresistible, despite its often troublesome nature’ (2017, p. 6). Indeed, excess of details in the arts has historically had a bad reputation, as a sign of imperfection, decadence, and amorality unsurprisingly associated, especially since Neoclassicism, with femininity. Despite this, maximalism is largely considered a typically masculine (and white) writing style, mostly because of the solid association between encyclopaedic detail (a defining and common feature in the maximalist novel) and literary mastery established by postmodern critics such as Edward Mendelson and Franco Moretti. The maximalist novel thus represents a literary niche in which detail is not only praised but even considered a marker of ultimate greatness – at an individual and national level, one of the reasons why the category came to overlap with that of the GAN. As Naomi Schor observes, however, this revaluation of detail did not lead to an erasure of its gendered connotations but resulted in a mere defeminization of detail that ‘leav[es] the masculine and its prerogatives intact’ (1987, p. 97). It comes as no surprise, then, that the increasing number of maximalist novels by women writers published since 1990 have only recently been acknowledged as such since the type of details and the worldview that they offer poses a challenge to previous definitions of the genre.

Postmodern theories of the ‘big’ U.S. novel, which later influenced the maximalist framework as well, draw a tight, long-lasting connection between the frequent use of fictional encyclopaedism in this type of narrative and GAN-like representations of a unitary national identity, predominantly by declining the former as a modern version of the epic. While scholars such as Antonio Barrenechea and Paul K. Saint-Amour have recently suggested alternative, less-western-centric interpretations of encyclopaedism that debunk the limitations of considering over-detailedness as a marker of epic-like totalising narratives, to my purposes here I wish to stress the inherent relation of epic with war, one that has rooted western nation-states in ancient organic national units that emerged from the ashes of unifying conflicts.³ As a

³ In *America Unbound – Encyclopedic Literature and Hemispheric Studies* (2016), Barrenechea approaches the encyclopaedic novel from a hemispheric perspective, that is as a phenomenon ‘guided by a shared sense that American parts live in complex relation to a hemispheric whole’ (p. xi). In *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (2015), Saint-Amour looks at modernist interwar encyclopaedic novels in Europe

narrative genre galvanised by war and a hotbed for accounts of national becoming, epic categorically excludes women from its authors. Moreover, as suggested by the fact that (as an adjective) epic also evokes monumentality (and therefore all sorts of bigness or greatness), the exclusion of women's novels from models of maximalism finds explanation also in the progressive association of size with masculinity and male intellectual superiority identified by Kasia Boddy throughout U.S. literature and culminating after World War II (2019, p. 320-22). In what follows, I analyse the way Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, Yamashita's *I Hotel*, and Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport* subversively use maximalist techniques to foster remembrance and allow for the development of a sense of individual and national identity in marginalised U.S. subjects. In so doing, I also expose the way conflicts and warfare have historically provided and continue to provide an exceptionally persistent catalyst to such process, which these three novels describe from the perspective of the margin rather than from that of the dominant social group.

***Almanac of the Dead* – Retrieving The Erased Histories Of Indigenous Americas**

Set in a near dystopian-like future, Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* features more than sixty characters and multiple interconnected plotlines, all eventually converging in Tucson, Arizona. Most of the characters prepare themselves for some kind of impending, unspecified change, caused by the progressively evident demise of a neoliberalist capitalist system irreparably tainted by violence and corruption. While the descendants of the European colonisers (called 'the Destroyers') dismiss the increasing upheavals in the Indigenous communities on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border as the demonstration of their belatedness and resistance to Western standards of modernity, the latter see their subversive actions as a continuation of the American Indian Wars that they have been fighting for more than four hundred years. Moreover, they interpret the increasingly anxious response of the U.S. authorities and elites to social unrest as a sign that the times are ripe for the long-awaited revolution that will fulfil an ancient prophecy foretelling the disappearance of European culture from the Americas.

For the revolution to succeed, however, the masses need to be prepared and brought on board, something that requires the novel's revolutionaries to retrieve the knowledge of the Indigenous histories and cultures that centuries of colonialism and domestic imperialism have manipulated and/or erased. To counter the weaponization of ignorance of the past on which

to redefine the genre as counter-narrative, that is, as a type of novel that provides alternative portraits of reality to those offered by totalizing hegemonic discourses (p. 9).

Europeans have heavily relied, Silko's Indigenous character uses a range of texts and strategies to challenge and redress the official archives of American history. The most prominent among them is the novel's titular almanac, a series of notebooks passed down for generations that stands for the real-world Meso-American codices that survived the destruction of the Indigenous libraries by the Spaniards. According to Adam Sol, they represent an encyclopaedia of sorts for the ancestors of the current native inhabitants of the American Southwest (Sol and Silko 1999, p. 25). In fact, one of the purposes of the almanac, a form common to several premodern civilisations around the world, was to provide representations of favourable and unfavourable days with advice on what should be done on each of them. Since several ancient and/or Indigenous cosmologies had not a linear but a cyclical conception of time, the fact that the days were supposed to eventually return means that almanacs were instruments of prediction. Accordingly, in Silko's novel, the sisters Lecha and Zeta and the twins Tacho and El Feo can interpret the titular manuscript to identify in the present the signs of the forthcoming days of the revolution. The intrinsic prophetic function of the almanac form is the main instrument used by Silko to subvert the early definitions of fictional encyclopaedism. According to Saint-Amour, postmodern critics ascribed to novels that extensively used this narrative mode an ability to announce and represent the emergence of new phenomena, but implicitly limited it to the individuation of Eurocentric, universalising paradigms of national development. Contrary to that, Saint-Amour argues that encyclopaedism is as frequent in mainstream narratives of western-style modernization as it is in accounts of alternative realities from outside the nation-state metropolis or at the margins of the empire (in the post-colony or among the underdeveloped populations within the first world) (2015, p. 213). I maintain that *Almanac of the Dead* deploys encyclopaedism in a similarly unconventional and subversive context, that is, from the perspective of Indigenous America. The following two examples illustrate how encyclopaedic information is used in the novel to link remembrance and the acceptance of one's ethnic and cultural background to the development of a comfortable sense of identity and even to survival.

Angelita La Escapía is an Indigenous Maya woman who infiltrates the Marxist group of the white Cuban Bartolomeo to intercept and divert fundings and weapons for the Indigenous rebel cell that hides in the mountains around Mexico City. When Bartolomeo is about to discover and strike back at the organised resistance of Angelita's people, she takes him hostage and puts him on trial for 'crimes against the people's history' (Silko 1992, p. 525). This act is a symbolic one through which vengeance is exacted against the innumerable offences of the white colonisers. While, until the very end, Bartolomeo is incredulous that he – a white man –

is being tried and declared guilty by people whom he calls ‘[j]ungle monkeys and savages [with] no history’ (Silko 1992, p. 525), just before sentencing him to death, Angelita recites a list of ‘only a few of the *big* uprisings and revolutions’ that Native Americans have fought since the arrival of the Europeans (Silko 1992, p. 527, original emphasis). The list, which takes up three pages, represents information that official U.S. accounts omit or report from the perspective of European history makers. As Herbert Hirsch reminds us, the construction of memory is not only influenced by paradigms of time purposefully used for suppressive writing of history but is also ‘manipulated to serve political power, [hence] the ability to manipulate memory is, in itself, a measure of that power’ (1995, p. 22). Angelita’s recuperation and distribution of forgotten Indigenous histories, therefore, aims at giving agency back to her people. With this information, they begin to imagine and build a new future, one that conforms to the Indigenous cultural beliefs and the temporalities preserved in the ancient almanac.

Angelita’s activities also include gathering information on the illicit business of Menardo, a self-made insurance salesman who, despite his Native ancestry, manages to buy his way up the social ladder in the Chiapas region. His story follows an opposite trajectory to that of most of the novel’s Indigenous characters: while those who reconnect with and embrace their past find new instruments to fight oppression and survive, Menardo represses and denies his ethnic origins, thus becoming the cause of his own demise and death. Barrenechea defines Menardo’s story as an instance of ‘Latin American identity at war with itself’ that exemplifies the Spanish peninsular caste system’s preoccupation with *limpieza de sangre* after the Counter-Reformation (2016, p. 123). Bullied throughout his childhood for his Native appearance, Menardo cuts all bridges with his relatives, including his beloved grandfather, whose tales he nevertheless remembers. Because of his entrepreneurial abilities, he manages to marry into a formerly wealthy family with claims of direct descentance from the Spanish colonisers. Deep down, however, he knows that the members of the local high society barely tolerate him. As a consequence, the increasing success of his company and the beginning of his extramarital relationship with the younger and beautiful Alegria are accompanied by unbearable pressure that causes his mental health to plummet. The man is tormented by dreams that, as a Native Mexican, he knows are premonitory. Unable to interpret them, he relies on the help of his driver, Tacho (a spy for his brother El Feo and Angelita). The fact that the latter lies to him about the meaning of his dreams is totally irrelevant: Menardo’s rejection of his ethnic origins is so profound that he dismisses all signs of Tacho’s treachery and his own residual memories of his grandfather’s stories. Driven crazy by fear, he is eventually – and ironically – killed precisely by Tacho. Menardo’s story thus is emblematic of the consequences of repudiating

one's roots: had he chosen to embrace his ancestry, he could have accessed the prophecies and teachings of his people's intertextual encyclopaedic almanac and saved himself. Instead, he falls victim to the white man's greed for money and power.

***I Hotel* – Celebrating the Polyphony of Asian America**

I Hotel mixes historical facts and fiction to chronicle the emergence and evolution of the Yellow Power movement between 1968 and 1977, a decade that also saw the Asian American communities in San Francisco rallying to save the titular International Hotel from demolition. The characters, who represent students, labourers, artists as well as militant revolutionaries, all gravitate around the hotel, a symbol of the struggle of people of Asian birth and descent for the preservation of a strong sense of identity. As Rychetta Watkins observes, while Yellow Americans share the same basic problems as other people of colour in the U.S., they simultaneously must fight for dismantling specific stereotypes, such as the 'model minority' myth. Additionally, early activists found it hard 'to define a unified identity and articulate a collective purpose and objectives sufficient to propel a political movement [because they] had to negotiate the distinct histories of Asians in America (2012, p. 38) – an extremely heterogenous community that formed over a long span of time and under the most diverse conditions. In what follows, I discuss two moments in Yamashita's novel that foreground the role of scholars, artists, and writers in retrieving memories of an Asian past, fostering remembrance and crafting a new identity. The first one allows me to discuss the role of the anthology in building the literary body of Asian America, a process that equates intellectuals with activists and warriors in the heated climate of the civil rights movements and the Vietnam War. The second one explores multimodal writing as a means for addressing questions around alienation and disconnection from past histories and traditions, in which memory is presented as both problematic and vital for Americans of Asian origins.

Paul and Jack are second-generation Chinese and members of the Poetry Boys Club at San Francisco State College (the centre of the 1986 student protests). While editing a literary anthology, they find a discarded copy of John Okada's 'first real serious novel in Asian America [which went] out of print with a couple of lousy reviews' and nobody recognises as a classic (Yamashita 2010, p. 96). They also come in possession of a letter in which Okada mentions that a second novel is in the making. The boys, therefore, arrange a meeting with the author's widow to ask for permission to reprint her husband's first novel and search for the second unfinished manuscript among his papers. Jack enthusiastically explains the importance of the

retrieval of Okada's forgotten work for their literary ambitions: 'It means we got a history! We're yellow writers who come from a tradition of yellow writing!' (Yamashita 2010, p. 96). The episode is based on real facts and on a text that gave a terrific contribution to the development of an Asian American literary canon.⁴ As Watkins remarks,

Okada's *No-No Boy*, originally published in 1957, anticipates the demands for self-determination and issues of representation and racial consciousness that characterized the Power moment. Republished in 1976, Okada's story of Ichiro's struggle to forge a Japanese American identity against the backdrop of World War II and the unjust internment and imprisonment of Japanese American citizens resonated with young Asian Americans struggling to secure their place in America even as the war in Vietnam raged on. (2012, p. 115)

Different generations, different wars, but like most other ethnic groups in the U.S. Japanese and Chinese Americans forged their identity surrounded by wars and conflicts, both global and local. As another character exclaims at a student rally at UC Berkley, in the 1970s, Asian American students 'saw three choices: go to school, go to prison, go to war' (Yamashita 2010, p. 127). These choices, however, were seldom mutually exclusive and often represented overlapping stages of a single life experience for the novel's characters. Hence, when the aforementioned Paul loses his dad to a heart attack, the whole episode is narrated as a parallel between death in Chinatown and death in Vietnam, both described as irrelevant because they involve invisible American citizens (Yamashita 2010, p. 4). Literature is a powerful, inherently political act with a long history of contributing to fixing this invisibility issue. At the time in which *I Hotel* is set, journals and anthologies were its primary weapons.

As Watkins argues, in the late 1960s and 1970s, some early activists drifted from military combat to militant resistance, exercised predominantly by infiltrating academia. The result was the appearance of the first Asian American Studies programmes in U.S. universities (along with their Ethnic Studies and African American Studies counterparts) and the flourishing of periodicals such as *Gidra* (2012, p. 82). Intellectuals also committed to redressing the flattening of differences entailed by the creation of a Pan-Asian American identity, which was essential for political reasons. Several literary anthologies, therefore, attempted to represent the variety of perspectives in Asian America by disentangling its individual components (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc.), while simultaneously trying to insert a new authoritative "Asian"

⁴ The novel was really found in a used book store by Jeff Chan in 1970 and reissued under the Combined Asian-American Resources Project (CARP) label in 1976 (Schleitwiler 2018, np.).

category in the U.S. canon. One such text is *AIIEEEEE!* (1974), curated by Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong.⁵ The introduction presents the editors' intent to give voice to a long-silenced group:

Asian America, so long ignored and forcibly excluded from creative participation in American culture, is wounded, sad, angry, swearing, and wondering, and this is his *AIIEEEEE!* It is more than a whine, shout, or scream. It is fifty years of our whole voice. (1974, p. viii, original emphasis)

The task, however, was challenging because of the difficulty to recognise and give equal weighting to a number of Asian languages and identities, all alive and in a constant intersection.

In a chapter significantly entitled '1971: Aiiieeeee! Hotel', Yamashita joins the debate on the efficacy of the anthology by deploying a diverse range of modes and genres to reflect on the composite identity of the new generations of Asian Americans. In '2: Theater of the Double Ax' (a subchapter structured like a play), Pa has a Chinese delicatessen and five sets of American-born Siamese twins. While talking with a customer he says: 'These kids all sneaking around with split personalities' and 'Every paper son split into two memories' (Yamashita 2010, p. 231). The playwright/narrator analogously laments:

Come to America and your children all come out hyphenated. Half this-half that. Nothing whole. Everything half-assed. [...] One half trying to be the other half and vice versa' (Yamashita 2010, p. 231).

The latter point is further articulated in the comic-strip form in '6: Chiquita Banana', where Chiquita's Siamese daughters (both named after popular figures in U.S. culture) have low self-esteem and each suffers the consequences of her sibling's abuse by their mother's lover, Don Juan Samuel (which is dressed like Uncle Sam). Along with Chiquita (who is named after a famous multinational corporation), the twins are symbols of the ongoing exploitation of the U.S. neo-imperialist, multinational capitalistic system. As Ruth Yvonne Hsu argues, the twins 'are constituted in the transnational discursive Imaginary of Asia and the Americas' and the fact they are eventually saved and split with a sword by Mulan Rouge (Chiquita's sister from China) points out the necessity of 'understanding colonialism in Asia in order to more fully grasp the history of the indigenous and Asian America in the US' (2022, p. 296). However, by

⁵ The title of the anthology reproduces a sound (aiieeeee!) stereotypically associated with the yellow man as something when wounded, sad, angry, swearing or otherwise screaming.

ending with one of the girls wondering ‘Now what?’ (Yamashita 2010, p. 264), the comic strip raises questions about whether the twins’ separation leads to a real liberation and suggests that an autonomous sense of identity is a much more complex condition to attain.

Accordingly, the rest of the chapter – as a whole, a fascinating reinterpretation of the doppelgänger motif – further elaborates on the importance of remembering Asian cultures and traditions and merging them with Anglo-American ones to strengthen conflictual, hyphenated identities. The subchapter ‘8: Dance’ does that in the most visually striking fashion. It illustrates a choreography in which the story of a legendary Chinese outlaw (a recurrent figure in the novel) is performed on a mix of Peking Opera and avant-guard sax-based jazz. Over six pages, two double narrative streams progressively intertwine and merge, representing the (comm)union between the body of music(ian) and the body of danc(er). In the process, the outlaw’s legend intersects the life story of two Asian Americans from very different family backgrounds, which consequently become outlaws themselves. As the narrator explains, the experiment seeks to answer the following questions:

What is Asian American dance? [...] Does the body have a memory? What’s the memory of the Asian American body? [The choreographer] says she choreographs as if blind. Choreographs as if deaf. Choreographs in silence. (Yamashita 2010, p. 279)

I argue that Asian Americans might feel they are carrying on in their life blind, deaf, and silenced, but their bodies remember. By following the choreographer’s suggestion to ‘listen to the bodies’ movements’ (Yamashita 2010, p. 279) offered by all types of artists, they can get back into contact with the stories and beliefs enshrined in their DNA (whose structure is evoked by the layout of the narrative streams on the page). Like the arts, activism fosters communication among generations of immigrants that too rarely share their life experiences. As another character in the novel admits during a pilgrimage to Tule Lake (the site of a Japanese American WWII internment camp), there are ‘Lots of stories. We [older generations have] been silent all these years. You kids are right to make us talk about this again. Shouldn’t forget as if it never happened’ (Yamashita 2010, p. 186).

***Ducks, Newburyport* – The Memories That Tell Us (Apart)**

The narrator/protagonist of Ellmann’s *Ducks, Newburyport* seems to embody a radically opposite condition, in which she constantly struggles to keep her memories at bay and focalise on the present in the attempt to reconnect with herself. The novel deploys the interior

monologue's potential for exploring the life of the mind on an unprecedented scale, following the thoughts of a white, middle-aged, middle-class, Ohioan woman for almost one thousand pages. While Ellmann's wordiness and interest in the everyday fall among the canonical features of the maximalist novel, *Ducks, Newburyport's* domestic setting and exclusively feminine focalisation undermine expectations of an epic narrative concerned with big, abstract, universal issues. Nevertheless, the novel engages with an array of topics conventionally considered highbrow, from colonial history to contemporary politics, from global warming to gender violence, and provides a state-of-the-nation-like account of present-day U.S. By doing this through the mind of an unnamed woman, it challenges stereotypical views of the male perspective as the only one capable of bridging the distance between the individual and the universal, illustrating how the former is imbricated with and affected by a complex network of (inter)national socioeconomic forces. In this final subsection, I investigate the causes of Ellmann's narrator's sense of alienation and fragile identity. Firstly, I explain that contrary to the woman's belief, memory is not the bane but the staple of her own existence and identity. Secondly, I argue that the narrator's unresolved relationship with her traumatic past severely limits her ability to cope with the pervasive violence that characterises life in the Trump era, thus further tarnishing her ability to feel part of U.S. society.

As *Ducks, Newburyport* unfolds, its narrator/protagonist reveals a personality crippled by emotional instability and numbness. The woman thinks that this is due to her inability to overcome two traumatic past events: her beloved mother died prematurely after a decade-long illness, leaving her broken and unable to grow into her own person. Additionally, the narrator recently survived a nasty form of cancer, following which she quit teaching and started a home pie-baking business to supplement her husband's income. Therefore, for the last two years, she has been drowning in house chores, childcare responsibility toward her four children, and anxiety about the financial difficulties that increasingly affect the U.S. middle class. To convey a lack of control over both her past and the contemporary world, the woman's interior monologue alternates with moments when a stream of consciousness is used to stress her insecurity and powerlessness. I maintain that the perspective offered by French philosopher Henri Bergson's notion of *durée*, or consciousness as duration, on Ellmann's narrative technique helps identify a contradictory, double relationship of the narrator with her past. Bergson describes the mechanisms of the mind through the image of a snowball, rather than that of a flowing stream, because of its implicit element of accumulation. Hence, for Bergson, the present condition of the self is always the result of an ongoing swelling of the mind produced by the accretion of memories over time (2002, p. 171). This process constitutes a

fundamental condition for the exercise of free will, in that, as Anne Fernihough explains, ‘through memory, [...] our actions transcend predictable mechanical responses to the extent that we bring our accumulated experiences to bear on a given situation’ (2007, p. 69). I argue that *Ducks, Newburyport* displays the jamming of this essential mechanism. The narrator is obsessed with her inability to cope with her past and blames trauma for her idleness. Consequently, on the one hand, she is doing her best to block out her memories and live ‘in the now’ – ‘nothing compares to the pain of losing Mommy [...] this is why I don’t like remembering things (Ellmann 2019, p. 164, original emphasis). On the other hand, however, the continuous repetition of the connective phrase ‘the fact that’ reveals that she is scavenging her past for a solution to her problems. She is relentlessly and uncontrollably drawn to reconsider even her most painful memories in her search for a ‘centre of being’. I maintain that the protagonist cannot hold such a centre because she cannot fully accept that it is her past that made her what she is, and that her present is the result of the inevitable accumulation of fragments of her past. Unable to either observe reality from this perspective or resist the lure of memory, the woman keeps spiralling close to some sort of revelation or resolution, only to be bounced back to square one.

The narrator’s conflictual relationship with remembrance does not only affect her personal sense of identity but also her ability to visualise a positive future for herself and her children. In fact, her insecurity at an individual level translates into an enhanced exposure to the psychodynamics of collective dread and anxiety that according to Saint-Amour has characterised life in the U.S. since the interwar period and become the naturalised state of things, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks (2015, p. 8, 16-17). This phenomenon, Saint-Amour explains, goes by the name of total war, ‘modern warfare’s putative expansion beyond the battlefield to encompass a nation’s very political, economic, and cultural domain’ (2015, p. 7). In addition to extending constant preparation for an imminent, apocalyptic conflict to all aspects of civilian life, total war forecloses futurity by hindering the work of the imagination at an individual and collective level. Consequently, it prevents people from counteracting hegemonic narratives that present destruction and strife as normal, inevitable conditions. Ellmann’s narrator is utterly at the mercy of total war dynamics in the Trump era, as demonstrated by her anxious, helpless reaction to inputs from her surroundings. These are represented by the stream-of-consciousness moments in the narrative, which also mimic the data bombing to which we are all subject in the contemporary world. Like most characters in – and readers of – maximalist novels, *Ducks’* narrator struggles to extract meaningful information from this wall of white noise and is generally anaesthetised by it. Her resulting

inability to respond to danger climaxes in the novel's final pages, where the woman and her family survive being held at gunpoint by a neighbour thanks to the courage and prompt intervention of her fifteen-year-old daughter, Stacy. Through the woman's stream of consciousness, however, Ellmann also denounces critical aspects of U.S. history and culture, such as the Indian genocide, gun culture, stereotypes against women and mothers, and the normalisation of isolation, violence, and insecurity. Though unable to counter it, the narrator shows awareness of and contempt for these negative components of Americanness. It ensues that her national identity is as compromised as her personal one: she is an atypical mother who cannot and will not spend her days organising her children's social life, is against open carry laws and refuses to have weapons in the house, keeps Native Americans in high esteem for their respectful and caring relationship with nature, and tirelessly 'thinks up' against the climate of amorality in Trump's U.S. Despite its negative consequences, her fraught relationship with the past and the act of remembering is also what makes her capable of seeing the flaws in hegemonic accounts of the nation and offering an alternative experience of it from the perspective of an unconventional American.

Conclusion

By using fictional encyclopaedism, exploring the communion of literature with other art forms, and concerning themselves with the rapport between individuals and the nation, their past and their everyday, Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, Yamashita's *I Hotel*, and Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport* expand canonical notions of fictional maximalism to include the perspective of the marginalised. Through their characters' struggles for personal and national identity, the novels challenge the western-centred trajectory of epic-like foundational narratives to remember – in the double sense of re-collecting and re-organising – the body of U.S. literature and society. Silko, Yamashita and Ellmann engage with the GAN-like 'big novel' to defy the historical association between size and masculinity and subvert enduring stereotypes around the gender and ethnicity of the 'great American writer'. Their works of fiction deploy memories of the Native Americans' erased past, the rediscovery of a polyphony of voices in Asian American communities, and the traumatic past of an alienated middle-class mother respectively in order to challenge mainstream ideas of what it means to be an American and paint a broader, more colourful picture of an extremely heterogenous nation-state.

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Remembering the Domestic

Rose Dabney Forbes and the Future of Female Biographies

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Abstract

Female activism performed within the home, such as raising money or awareness through parlor meetings, remains overlooked in historiography. As a result, there are almost no secondary accounts of Rose Dabney Forbes, a celebrated peace activist and suffrage leader. In this paper, I bring light to archival material that chronicles the life of a woman who was prominent for her time yet quickly forgotten. In doing so, I seek to both ensure that Forbes' life is not forgotten and to showcase a feminist historiographic approach that challenges gender binaries, particularly around the concept of domestic activism.

Introduction

No one can predict whom history will remember, but none of Boston's twentieth-century elite would have expected Rose Dabney Forbes (1864 -1947) to be forgotten. A prominent socialite and celebrated activist, Forbes served as an officer of the Massachusetts Peace Society, the chairman of the Massachusetts branch of the Women's Peace Party, and on the advisory council of the World Peace Foundation. She dined with U.S. presidents, hosted European nobility, and influenced almost all of Boston's major Progressive Era movements, from education reform to suffrage. Yet, while Forbes is mentioned in self-published works such as Joseph Abdo's *On the Edge of History: the Story of the Dabney Family on the Island of Faial in the Azores Archipelago* and is referenced as part of broader academic works such as David S. Patterson's *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women's Activism and Citizen Diplomacy in WWI*, her story has yet to be foregrounded in academic literature. Instead, her name is reduced to an archival folder at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The fact that her story can be uncovered at all speaks to her privilege as a wealthy, white woman. Her documents were saved, when the voices of countless queer folks and people of color's were discarded or never recorded at all. Furthermore, as the heiress to a family that grew rich on colonial exploitation through opium and tea trade, her legacy must acknowledge the depth of her privilege. Nonetheless, recovering Forbes' story allows us to better question gendered binaries within academic remembrance of activism.

In this paper, I apply feminist methods to archival-based biography as I examine why Rose Dabney Forbes, a hugely prominent woman for her time, was so quickly forgotten. I primarily cite the Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, housed at the Massachusetts Historical Society. This archival collection

chronicles Forbes' contributions to the Massachusetts peace movement through meeting records, speech transcripts, and peace society literature. When viewed through a feminist lens, Forbes' archival collection offers insight into how Gilded Age female activists made change within and because of their society.

Forbes' activism consisted of donating and hosting. Her donations kept alive multiple peace organizations, and she used her social and financial capital to influence male dominated spaces. To forget Rose Dabney Forbes and her fellow peace activists is to deny the powerful work they undertook from within their gendered society. By tackling international issues from parlor meetings, these women disproved the separate spheres and the gendered binary of public versus private roles. They did not need to enter traditionally 'male' spaces to enter political conversations, and they wielded social networks (often dismissed as trivial) to benefit their causes. Their absence in the historiographic record is shaped by a Western devaluation of female social activism. By recognizing Rose Dabney Forbes as an activist, this article begins to reframe how we write biographies in a way that moves away from male-dominated narratives. Of course, the work of shedding light on forgotten figures must continue across marginalized communities, including recovering stories the historical record has more deeply erased, such as women of color and queer voices.

Summary of Forbes' Life and Activism

Although she spent most of her life directing Boston's activist and social scenes, Forbes was born and grew up on Fayal Island, Portugal. In remembering Forbes' life, we must acknowledge her proximity to U.S. imperial projects. She was the daughter of U.S. Consul to the Azores, Samuel Wyllys Dabney, and his socialite wife, Sarah Hickling Dabney. In 1892, at the age of twenty-eight, Rose moved to Milton, Massachusetts to marry J. Malcolm Forbes, a member of a prominent Boston family who made their fortune in the opium and tea trade with China (*The New York Times* 1904). Rose was Malcolm's second wife, and the couple had one daughter: Alice Hathaway Forbes. Malcolm died in 1904 after suffering from what his obituary called an 'internal malady' (*The New York Times* 1904). Rose never remarried.

Forbes dedicated her adult life to activism. While many wealthy Bostonian women were philanthropists, the proliferation of Forbes' activism was noteworthy even for her era and class. Among other roles, Forbes served on the executive boards of the National Committee for Constructive Immigration Legislation and the Foreign Policy Association of Massachusetts, and she was a member of the Boston league of Women's Voters, the Milton Women's Club, and the Women's National Committee for Law Enforcement. Her greatest passion, however, was the peace movement. In 1911, she revived the Massachusetts Peace Society alongside Dr. William Mowry and Reverend Samuel Bushnell (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 1). Forbes was the only woman on the establishing committee, and she subsequently served on the Board of Directors (Rose Dabney Forbes

Papers, Box 1 Folder 1). Because Massachusetts was the largest – and most powerful - branch of the American Peace Society, Forbes' influence from this role extended beyond the state. Forbes was further involved in the peace movement as a member of the advisory council for the World Peace Foundation, the main benefactor of the American School Peace League, and the chairman of the Massachusetts Branch of the Woman's Peace Party (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 1). Studying Forbes' activism – and why it was forgotten – reveals misconceptions about the passivity of female dominated forms of activism such as parlor meetings. Wealthy women sharing dinner may not appear to be a political event, but these evenings legitimized causes, enabled female political participation despite societal subordination, and led to great social change. Including these women in the historical record establishes a more accurate view of Gilded Age politics and gendered power negotiations, as women influenced international affairs from within their supposedly separate spheres.

Remembering Feminist Domestic Activism

The Massachusetts Peace Society (MAPS) claimed to be open 'any person who believes that war between nations ought to be abolished' (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 1). The only caveat: they had to pay the membership fee. The twentieth-century peace movement was visibly populated by upper class Bostonians who promoted the peace cause via parlor meetings and hefty donations. These activists used class to encourage discussions about pacifism and push forward the peace agenda. Rose Dabney Forbes' activism via parlour meetings and monetary donations, a form of social change often obscured or overlooked in historical memory, provides evidence for recent feminist studies of domestic feminist activism.

Since 1960, feminist scholars across the humanities have interrogated the usefulness of separate spheres as a framework for understanding nineteenth-century female activity. In her 2010 survey of the field of American women's history, Andrea Merrett noted that scholars have trended towards recognizing separate spheres as describing spatial divisions rather than differences in motivations or activities. Merrett explained that historians in the late twentieth-century recognized that the 'boundaries of everyday life were more porous' than originally assumed, yet nonetheless still identified female culture sprouting from physical, domestic spaces (Merrett 2010, p. 1). This perspective negated the idea that the domestic placement of many upper-class women meant their separation from ideological and political movements. Judy Giles' 2005 text, *The Parlour and the Suburb*, used the term 'domestic modernity' to argue that private spaces occupied by women played as large a role in developing modernity as public spaces occupied by men (Giles 2005). Susan Fraiman pushed understandings of domestic complexity even further by introducing the idea of 'extreme domesticity,' a term she used to 'decouple domestic spaces, figures, and duties from necessary identification with conservative "family values" in order to highlight the diversity of thought demonstrated by those in the domestic sphere' (2017, p. 3). In this article, I use Forbes' work

with the Massachusetts Peace movement to add to agree with these scholars' dismissal of separate spheres by demonstrating the politicization of the domestic amongst Boston's upper classes.

MAPS hosted lavish events as a means of gaining support, communicating respectability, and promoting involvement. As one of its most prominent members, Rose Dabney thrived as a hostess. From formal academic speakers to anti-war knitting circles, Forbes opened her home to myriad peace events (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 3). In one instance, when a friend worried about how to best host a peace gathering, Forbes promised to help her plan every step of the way and even offered up her own house if needed (Rose Dabney Forbes to Mrs. Gorham, 16 August 1912, Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 3).

For her class, Forbes' enthusiasm for hosting does not indicate frivolity. Across Gilded Age activist movements, upper-class women wielded the social tools available to them to further political causes. Nineteenth-century American norms encouraged women to focus on domestic rather than external concerns, but by connecting social events to political causes, women advocated for their goals without alienating potential allies by infringing on gender roles. These parlor meetings signaled that a cause was supported by the upper class, thus creating an air of respectability and exclusivity. However, their gatekeeping demonstrates classism, which precludes these women from being considered true feminists by modern parameters. Intersectional feminism recognizes that overlapping systems of oppression cannot be isolated, and feminism cannot succeed unless we address all forms of discrimination. Therefore, by upholding class inequity, these hostesses contributed to systemic oppression. Nonetheless, their tactics succeeded in reaching short-term goals for their causes. For example, at an 1894 parlor meeting philanthropist Olivia Sage secured over two-hundred signatures for a petition to remove references to sex from the New York state constitution in order to allow women greater political influence (Crocker 2006). Hostessing as a form of activism might appear to be a compromise: women who could not enter public politics found a way to create change from their private homes. Yet, such movements radically disprove the concept of domesticity as its own sphere. By politicizing their homes, Gilded Age women showed that there was no impenetrable border between public and private. In appearing to work within their social boundaries, they disproved the system altogether.

Forbes' hostessing demonstrates this subversion. The speakers who visited Forbes' home included some of the most hotly debated public figures of her day. For example, on December 12, 1912, Forbes opened her home to Bertha von Suttner, Baroness of Austria. A case study in the success of Forbes' peace-promoting hostessing, the Baroness' visit to Massachusetts represented a female-dominated, upper class evening indicative of how Forbes and her peers used their class and gender roles to advocate for peace. The first woman to win the Noble Peace Prize, the Baroness explained that she had come to the United States to implore help from 'this young country...which has shown

that its ideals are for the happiness, not only of its own race, but of all races' (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, 'Meeting of the Massachusetts Peace Society at Mrs. Malcolm Forbes). A modern perspective puts the Baroness' idealistic view of America into major question. Her comments on the happiness of all races seem particularly out of place in this era of intense Jim Crow. However, the fact that the Baroness' speech was a concrete call to action demonstrates the value of parlor meetings. The Baroness did not consider her presence to be solely for entertainment purposes but rather foresaw genuine change from this social event.

Despite the fact that the evening was made possible and led by women, one of the speakers – Professor George Blakeslee – spent most of his speech praising American manhood. Blakeslee clearly recognized that women dominated the evening; he thanked 'Mrs. Forbes for the opportunity to be together' and declared the Baroness to be 'possibly the most distinguished representative of Europe,' so his speech's content says more about who we assign credit to on a larger scale than his personal feelings (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, 'Meeting of the Massachusetts Peace Society at Mrs. Malcolm Forbes). History has decided that soldiers make for more compelling narratives than hostesses. The entire evening was run and centered around women, yet the stories remained male-focused as history remains.

Donations are another form of female activism that lacks compelling optics, but social movements cannot exist without financial backing. Susan B. Anthony, the epitome of a marching and orating activist, complained that 'more than half of my spiritual, intellectual and physical strength has been expended in the anxiety of getting the money to pay for the Herculean work that has to be done.' Donations from wealthy women were especially necessary to sustain female-led activist movements. While male-led causes received donations from both women and men, very few men donated to female causes (Johnson 2017). The emphasis that historians (and women of the time, as seen by Anthony's above quote) place on the need for female donations to the suffrage movements suggests that the female vote could not have been won at all without the support of rich women. With this claim, I do not intend to negate the contributions towards women's rights made by working-class women. As Rebecca Mead helpfully summarizes in *How the West was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914*: 'Working-class women voted and ran for office within their unions, went on strike, supported labor parties and candidates, and lobbied for legislation' in the name of suffrage (2004, p.2). Nonetheless, efforts of upper-class women were perhaps an intrinsic, inevitable facet of Gilded Age activism.

In addition to sustaining such movements, wealthy women greatly shaped the trajectory of the causes they donated to. Many donors gave their money conditionally, forcing movements to meet a set of demands in order to receive the cash. When the incredibly wealthy Fanny Garrison Villard became chair of the Women's Peace Society, Elinor Byrnes (who wrote most of the group's

ideological statements and pamphlets) resented the power that Villard's purse strings gave her over the direction of the society (Alonso 1993). Such conditions allowed women to influence activist movements without having titled positions. In this way, they skirted male authority. Women who gave to causes that were not run by women – such as colleges or libraries – greatly affected these male-dominated institutions.

Rose Dabney Forbes donated frequently to the peace cause. Her correspondence records are filled with letters thanking her for her generosity. Forbes financially backed MAPS activities with everything from straightforward monetary donations to furnishing peace offices with desks and filing cabinets to gifting ornate peace society pins (James Tryon to Rose Dabney Forbes, Rose Dabney Forbes Papers Box 1 Folder 3, Henry Haskin to Rose Dabney Forbes, Rose Dabney Forbes Papers Box 1 Folder 3, Samuel Capen to Rose Dabney Forbes, Rose Dabney Forbes Papers Box 1 Folder 2). Even practical gifts sometimes came with implications for her vision for the direction of the movement. The filing cabinet, for instance, signaled a suggestion that the organization put more emphasis on 'having everything well systematized' (James Tryon to Rose Dabney Forbes, Rose Dabney Forbes Papers Box 1 Folder 3). Furthermore, Forbes was the main financial backer of the American School Peace League. Forbes corresponded frequently with Fannie Fern Andrews (the founder of the American School Peace League) thus showing her an active role in League projects, even as she is remembered only as a donor. Forbes's donations were so integral to the success of the American School Peace League that its demise is directly tied to her withdrawal of financial support in 1929. Much of the literature from the Massachusetts Peace Society mentions Forbes primarily to thank her for monetary contributions. Yet while such donations are often dismissed as passive, Forbes joined a network of Gilded Age women who strategically provided money as a means of exercising social control and pushing forward activism agendas. Through parlor meetings and charitable contributions, these women built movements and subverted gender roles.

Remembering a Peace Activist Who Supported a World War

Despite dedicating most of her life to promoting peace, Forbes supported the United States' entrance into World War I. While initially condemning the war, Forbes scaled down her protests as the nation increasingly labeled dissenters as dangerous traitors. Forbes rationalized her decisions to tone down war protests by arguing that it was better to win a just, defensible, and lasting peace than to insist on ending the war at any cost. Deeply nationalistic and committed to her social standing, Forbes bought into a xenophobic notion of the United States spreading the light of democracy through the war. She did so at the expense of the cause she had dedicated her life to. Feminist scholarship rightly condemns imperialism and argues that, in the vein of intersectionality, a fight against one kind of oppression requires a fight against all oppression. As Angela Davis notes in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Robin Riley's anthology *Feminism and War*, "the tradition of feminism is linked to

all the important social movements – against racism, against imperialism, for labor rights, and so forth” (2008, p.2). Yet Forbes, a woman who proudly called herself a suffragist and pushed gendered boundaries through her peace leadership, supported the United States’ imperialistic endeavors during World War I. Remembering Forbes, therefore, provides an important data point for feminist literature concerning the relationship between class, gender, and imperialism. Applying a feminist lens to Forbes’ reaction to World War I requires accounting for gendered power dynamics when chronicling female reactions to the war while still holding individuals accountable for their roles in upholding oppression.

Forbes’ shift to supporting World War I was unequivocally a change in messaging. In fact, the Women’s Peace Party – for which Forbes served as the chairman of the Massachusetts Branch – was founded expressly as a reaction against the European conflict (Frahm 2005). Even when tensions continued to rise in the United States, Forbes’ correspondence shows her initial aversion to the United States joining the fighting. For example, a letter to Forbes from Nobel Peace Prize winner Norman Angell highlights the ‘absurdity of America’s joining in the war over the problems arising out of the destruction of the Lusitania’ (Norman Angell to Rose Dabney Forbes, 19 July. Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Reel 73.1). Yet the increasing likelihood of the United States joining the war did not go unnoticed by those connected to the peace cause, and some pacifist leaders began to strategize how to maintain their social standings and not alienate their peers. In a 1916 letter to Forbes, MAPS member (and later Paris Peace Conference delegate) Charles Homer Haskins explained that he felt it was important that MAPS did not come down too harshly against preparedness. ‘Our Society is on record as emphasizing a general constructive program rather than activities in opposition to preparedness,’ he reminded Forbes, a decision built on ‘the results of our referendum vote, which showed that a majority of our members were in favor of increasing our national armament’ (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers Box 1 Folder 5). In response, Forbes softened her stance against war preparedness. However, a feminist reading of Forbes’ response must account for gendered power dynamics. As the only woman on the MAPS board of directors, Forbes may very well have felt pressured to cave to male authority, and her decision could reflect strategic defense rather than a genuine change of heart.

Forbes scaled back her pacifist stance in the Women’s Peace Party as well, and the Massachusetts branch switched from anti-war advocacy to relief work. Forbes admitted that Massachusetts was ‘thought to be perhaps the most conservative’ of the WPP branches and that ‘some members are sorry and some glad of the accusation’ (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, A Few Words on the New Internationalism, Box 3 Folder 6). This straightforward report shows Forbes’ hesitancy to take a vocal stand on whether Massachusetts’ conservative reputation was for the best. Forbes did not shy away from coming down firmly on the side of peace during times when the cause was popular, so her timidity here shows how her desire to maintain likeability affected her activism. As such a

prominent member of Boston society, Forbes' taking a controversial stance might seriously have detracted from her social standing. Forbes was unwilling to take this risk.

Forbes' support of the war reveals her nationalistic and classist views of global populations. Forbes defended her acceptance of the United States' participation in World War I by arguing that it was better to have the war result in a permanent peace than to end the conflict quickly only to have aggression spring up again. She was especially concerned that the U.S. should not settle for 'a peace which shall fail to remove the menace of Prussian Military domination' (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, A Few Words on the New Internationalism, Box 3 Folder 6). Here, Forbes shows how her perception of different countries shaped her perspective on the war, using her mental hierarchy of nations to determine who deserved post-war power. Prior to the United States' involvement in the war, a 1914 MAPS pamphlet highlighted this sense of international responsibility saying, 'Americans feel strongly that America has a unique and influential place in the present crisis' (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 3). The pamphlet went on to praise America's role as a peacekeeper, pointing to the nation's neutrality and 'friendship and confidence of all the nations now at war' (Rose Dabney Forbes Papers, Box 1 Folder 3). Forbes' acceptance of this brand of nationalism adds evidence to the claims of feminist scholars who chronicle United States imperialism. For instance, in the introduction to *Feminism and War*, the authors explain that they focused the anthology around U.S. imperialism because:

Given the centrality of U.S. imperial wars in the world today, it is impossible to understand "feminism and war" on a global scale without understanding the specificities of the racist, heterosexist, and masculinized practices and ideologies mobilized by a USA in pursuit of economic and political hegemony (2008, pg.2).

Remembering Forbes, therefore, supports literature which attempts to unravel the connection between U.S. colonialism and other systems of oppression, as Forbes' xenophobia informed her decreased pacifism.

Conclusion

While Forbes' classism and nationalism preclude her from being remembered as a celebrated feminist, they do not justify her absence from the historical record. As stated in the conclusion to Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel's *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, to dismiss all women who were complicit in empire building:

'as racists and participants in contemporary imperialism without understanding their personal experiences and springs of motivation, their complexities and ambiguities, leaves us with labels, not history' (1992, p. 94).

As a visible, powerful member of her society, Forbes provides a window into the social mechanisms of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America. Her influence over politics from within the

domestic realm disproves the notion of separate spheres, while her eventual decrease in pacifism reveals the depths of xenophobia among Gilded Age Boston's upper classes.

Forgetting Forbes and her fellow pacifists overlooks the subversive ways that Gilded Age women made change. As historians reconceptualize the notion of separate spheres and move away from viewing the domestic as an apolitical arena, Forbes' influential hosting adds evidence to the notion of parlour meetings as political sites. Forbes promoted peace by hosting informative and support-raising events, and she sustained and directed the Boston peace movement through targeted donations which financed organizations while dictating their priorities. Forbes used her money to consciously adjust peace operations according to her vision. In shaping the peace movement via parlor meetings and donations, Forbes disproved the notion of separate, gendered spheres. While fully operating within social constraints, Forbes engaged in public and political conversations.

Nonetheless, during World War I, Forbes caved to male authority and nationalism and altered her position on the United States' involvement in the war. Remembering Forbes therefore adds to feminist scholarship on the relationship between gender and imperialism, as Forbes' desire to maintain her social standing outweighed her pacifist advocacy. As the field of gender studies revisits who gets remembered, Forbes' story shows the value of examining lives beyond accepted historiographic structures and personas.

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On Moral Memory and its Influence Over Individual and Collective Moral Identities

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Abstract

Philosophers of mind and moral philosophers have contributed to a considerable number of studies that highlight the importance of memory for moral judgements. Memory is commonly appropriated to personal conditions which harbor experiences that form personal impressions towards certain motives, actions, rhetoric, or incidents. This is also appropriable to collective memory. That is, part of the foundation of a society's political structure, institutional decision-making, and overarching culture erupt as a result of a collective memory that recollects past moral dilemmas and, subsequently, produces moral rules and regulations that restrict potential tragedies and misfortunes that often result from corrupt motives, excessive self-absorption, denialism, or false narratives. *Accordingly, this paper aims to argue that memory is a vital factor for the construction of moral identities on both the personal and collective levels.* Hence, the concept of moral memory grants us an alternative, if not a novel, interpretation of personal, social, cultural, and political formations. It also introduces a metaethical perspective within phenomenological analysis in which emphasis on memory, moral experiences, and moral identities becomes part-and-parcel of phenomenology's concern.

Key words: Moral Phenomenology; Moral Memory; Personal Memory; Moral Identity; Collective Memory

Introduction

Memory harbors past experiences and impressions to reassure a person's speculative nature towards their choices, and project their history in ways that allow them to determine which actions are most beneficial for them under the guises of knowledge and not mere true beliefs. Epistemologists argue it is likely that knowledge has attributes which closely connect it to truth more so than a justified true belief, making it more fundamental and 'basic' than the process of producing a belief. Those who have knowledge are more deserving of credit than those who hold a justified true belief as the former does not tamper with luck, while the latter usually depends on luck, and not certainty, as its prime source of validation (Lackey, 2007, p. 346).

Knowing how the past shapes one's decisions ultimately influences one's own identity, one's own moral sense, and one's own knowledge of what and why certain incidents, whether it be potential or actual, are significant and relevant. It allows individuals to be aware of factual truths rather than 'opaque' truths with *deserved credit*, distinguishing between *knowing* how and why some X is true, rather than merely *believing*.

I first start discussing the issues of moral memory in relation to personal moral identity and individual moral responsibility. This section defines moral memory and its significance in identifying the main factors which constitute one's moral responsibility and help attribute a unique moral identity onto an agent. I then move on to the notion of collective moral memory and its significance in constituting a culture's moral code, duties, norms, and moral values by recollecting past moral dilemmas which over time provides this culture with its unique identity and constitution. In both cases, I aim to show how moral memory is a vital factor for recollecting past incidents that would issue moral accountability to those who transgressed moral principles, whether it be individually or collectively.

What is Moral Memory?

Moral memory does not have an independent definition. Philosophers of memory and morality have used a combinatory method, assimilating a definition of morality and its influence on memory. Morality is concerned with what is right and wrong and suggests a metric of value that measures the goodness or badness of a given behavior. Memory is the ability to recollect and process past incidents that one has learned from or experienced over the years. When recollecting past incidents, individuals tend to question whether what they did or experienced counts as morally right or wrong. This is because most people are concerned about possessing "positive moral traits and qualities" that shape their moral identities and contribute to the maintenance of societal moral values (Stanley and De Brigard 2019, p. 387). These recollections of past events and their underlying moral inquiries are what define moral memory.

One reason why moral memory has grown popular in the literature on memory is because there are increasing interests and debates concerning moral identity and its relationship with self-agency. Personal recollections tend to be biased due to our strong desires to present ourselves in good ways, in order to accumulate the necessary amount of positive impressions to sustain a strong self-esteem. For example, there is increasing evidence which suggests that people deliberately forget details of their own behaviors that would otherwise alter their self-view. Matthew Stanley and Felipe De Brigard (2019) also note that "not only the accuracy but also the phenomenology of our remembered immoral

behaviours seem to be subject to selective and strategic obfuscation, as our unethical behaviours are remembered less clearly and less vividly than our ethical deeds” (p. 388).

In other words, certain experiences are deliberately forgotten because they run counter to our biases concerning our own moral standing. The more vaguely remembered experiences are, the less inclined we are to consider them accurate moral and epistemic representations of ourselves, leading to a lesser sense of responsibility for the content of the memory. Similarly, people tend to contend with “interpersonal feedback”, a process which normally justifies praises or punishments incurred upon individuals (Stanley and De Brigard 2019, p. 389). For instance, if one receives negative responses to their behavior by others, and these responses are recognized as justified, this would weaken one’s self-assessment of their own good moral character. Therefore, one is more likely to frame these responses as insignificant to avoid reactivating their inner self-reflections, which would otherwise recognize what others see as a flaw in one’s character. Stanley and De Brigard call this process “self-threatening feedback”, which allows individuals to forget “the the most threatening feedback assailing those particular traits and qualities of utmost importance” (Ibid.).

Consequently, one major aspect of moral memory is that it assists in developing a person’s moral agency over time. For example, past moral dilemmas are recollected to maintain a degree of caution against unnecessary or avoidable consequences, whether it be in substance (the content of the moral action or incident) or form (how the moral dilemma represents itself). Moral memory also assists people in protecting themselves from unnecessary identity crises that could lead individuals into a state of disarray, confusions, and extreme insecurities. This distances them from undesirable pasts in order to experience “self-enhancement and self-protection” (Stanley and De Brigard 2019, p. 389).

Of course, there are ways in which one could totally detach themselves from their past ‘self’. Such detachments are sometimes a result of one’s insistence on representing themselves with a particular virtuous trait or quality. It is more likely that such detachments occur when the person focuses on reorienting their identity along those traits in order to continue being perceived as virtuous persons. Stanley and De Brigard observed that participants who reflected upon some of their past moral actions usually identified themselves strictly with those actions, attributing virtues onto their characters without evidence pointing to their consistent performances of virtuous actions over time (Stanley and De Brigard 2019, p. 390). Participants that reflected upon their past immoral actions usually perceive a meaningful transformation in their identity from the time of the action to the present (Ibid.).

Finally, some argue that moral memory acts as a guide for individuals to assess past actions to deliver moral judgements in an intellectual and non-dogmatic manner (Perler, 2020, p. 134). Take the example claim - punishments are only effective if they are applied justly onto transgressors. This claim is evaluated according to our definition of good and evil, and by the strength of the justification given as evidence for the claim. This should result in the preservation of justice, upholding the order and

design of the moral structure of society. When properly preserved, social and cultural development ensues, which in turn causes the development of individual identity and the maintenance of their psychological wellbeing, all under the guise of refinement of moral knowledge and social justice. Thus, recollecting the past helps (a) identify the gaps that people usually overlook concerning moral action and value and, accordingly, (b) helps regulate social and cultural rules by identifying which actions or motivations are considered as morally transgressive. In other words, by recollecting past events and assigning them moral status, a collective can self-generate cultural and social moral laws and norms.

On Personal Moral Memories: Identity, Responsibility, and Moral Memory

One of the main facets of memory discussed by philosophers is known as the memory *criterion*. This criterion assesses the immediacy of memory connections and their relevancy for personal identity. As Newton Garver puts it: “A typical case would be where the criterion of memory suggests that the person of whom X is the case and the person of whom Z is the case are one and the same person” (1964, p. 781). One can therefore specify the qualities of one’s identity “without having recourse to any other standard” than memory (Garver 1964, p. 782). Drawing out connections between memory and personal identity provides philosophers with tools to distinguish between what I will define as ‘fundamental’ and ‘surplus’ memories. Fundamental memories are ones that are closely tied with one’s personal identity. Such memories are constitutive of one’s values, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, etc., such that removal of these memories from an individual would cause dramatic shifts in their character. On the other hand, surplus memories do not hold major influences on one’s character, or affect one’s beliefs or values. They merely reflect some past incident. This distinction marks a vital idea: the essence of ‘the self’. ‘The self’ is a substance that cannot be further deconstructed, for it is the core which characterizes a person’s moral, social, and psychological fabric, and is in turn intimately tied to fundamental memories. As Hegel (2018) points out in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*:

Observational psychology, which at first recounts its perceptions of the *universal modes* which it encounters in the active consciousness, finds all sorts of faculties, inclinations, and passions, and since, in the enumeration of this collection, the *memory* of the unity of self-consciousness defies repression, psychology must at least go so far as to be astonished that such a contingent medley of heterogeneous things can be together in the spirit, as in a bag, particularly too since they show themselves to be not dead, inert things but restless movements (pp. 122-123; emphasis added).

The concept of ‘the self’, here Hegel’s spirit, has one sole function: to maintain a degree of homogenous behavior, values, and ideas that are unique to their possessor. So, Hegel’s concept of ‘the self’ closely resembles the distinction between fundamental and surplus

memories by denoting “faculties, inclinations, and passions” as part of the person’s oneness in character. This oneness could only function if one’s memory identifies, distinguishes and recollects fundamental memories, as opposed to surplus memories.

Moral Recollections as Necessary Factors for Moral Identity

It is important to realize that part of what maintains the fabric of the self is that one has done x for the sake of y and, therefore, one is rightfully attributed such action. This statement exemplifies how accountability works; that one is assigned a particular status according to what memories dictate about their past deeds, legitimizing their presence within a larger group of equally accountable individuals. Accordingly, the only way moral accountability could materialize is by attributing a given set of events to the right person. It is through this process that aspects such as justice, order, stability, and self-knowledge manifest themselves. Furthermore, character traits such as temperament, ability, and *moral dispositions* are, more or less, defined by memories (Nichols 2017, p. 173). These factors must be accompanied by refinements in moral character that are supported by memories that are, as previously argued, validated by the past experiences which helped shape them.

However, some philosophers are skeptical regarding the closeness between experiencing recollections (i.e., memories) and personal identity, let alone moral identity. Imagine Sam, an amnesiac who develops new, virtuous aspirations, ambitions, and goals, because of his lack of memory. However, prior to his amnesia, Sam had immoral aspirations, ambitions and goals. Two concerns emerge. The first is that Sam does not seem to have consciously chosen to replace his immoral goals with moral ones. The second is that it is open whether we can hold Sam accountable for his past misdeeds. One way to address these questions is via Reidian phenomenology, which argues that “it is *nomologically* impossible to remember a past action without ‘the conviction that one existed at that time’. As Stanley Klein and Shaun Nichols (2012) put it: “It is possible that the episodic memory system simply cannot produce any output unless the output includes the sense that the same self had the experience that is being remembered” (p. 683). In other words, it is a feeling of ownership of one’s own past commitments and actions and not the incident itself that dictates one’s identity (Klein and Nichols 2012, p. 688).

Therefore, for Reid, Sam’s current memory states do not store his past actions, yielding the idea that Sam is exempted from any sorts of moral accountability because he ceases to be

part of his own psychological continuity. This aligns with at least some of our intuitions of justice: we ourselves would regard it to be an injustice committed to us if we were to be punished for acts that we did not view as acts we (our psychological continuity) had performed.

Some philosophers deny that humans exhibit a sense of self only because we can recollect memories *par excellence*; that there surely must be some additional components that elevate the status of the “self” such that we compose a stratified personal identity from memories (Nichols 2017, p 175). They tend to argue that humans hold a very unique conceptual self-representation that pictures their identity in a way (a) exemplifies our unique ways of reflecting and representing our identities such that each individual hosts a set of traits that are constitutively unique to their pasts and present and/or (b) justifies some other philosophical critiques that argue that people who still lose their memories are subjected to accountability for their past misdeeds. Point (a) argues that the nature of a character complexion and trait acquiescence are so deeply embedded within the human psyche that it is difficult to alter (Klein and Nichols 2012, p. 695). This embedding seems to suggest that some aspects of our character remain the same despite time, providing support for point (b). Though how we come to interpret point (b) is controversial, the most prevalent explanation would be: if I existed in the past, then I am certainly the exact same self that once existed in the past. If I have done actions in the past while being myself, then I have inherited a moral accountability in light of the fact that *I am certainly the same exact self that once existed in the past*. Therefore, whether one holds the self to only be composed of memories or not, one is accountable for their past actions.

Quasi-Memories and the Question of Moral Accountability

Though it may seem that the question of moral accountability is settled, there still lies confusions and obscurities regarding the concept of *quasi-memories*, which somehow exempt a person from *direct* moral accountability (i.e., ones that incur moral judgements unto the person). Quasi-memories are memories that seem to pertain to some true past event, yet are not directly or explicitly held by a person’s conscious memory. From a Reidian perspective, since they are not appropriable to one specific person at a particular time, quasi-memories do not presuppose personal identity. As further argued by Schechtman (1990): ‘To have a quasi-memory is to have an apparent memory (properly caused) and to hold no view about whose memory it is’ (p. 78).

Schechtman proposes a moral and identity dilemma which sheds doubt on the soundness and clarity of quasi-memories. She argues that a given attribution of a quasi-memory must do one of two things: either presuppose a type of delusion that alters the factuality of the memory itself or presuppose an undeniable personal identity (assuming that the memory is factual) (Klein and Nichols 2012, p. 693). Suppose two extreme hypotheses:

- (a) One really did partake in past incident but loosely remembers it, intentionally or unintentionally.
- (b) One holds a false belief that they remember partaking in an activity with depth and accuracy but never actually happened, subjecting it to a false memory.

Again, the question of accountability arises: does an individual who holds a quasi-memory deserve to be held accountable for their action or non-action? The central issue here involves differences between what one *knew* in the past as opposed to what we *currently know* of the past; that “what one *now* knows, thinks, and feels, is different to what one *then* knew, thought, and felt” (McCarroll and Sutton 2017, p. 116). Irregularity between these two strongly alters the relationship between the individual and their past actions, making it difficult for the self and others to hold one morally accountable.

One way to resolve this might be to say that we are morally accountable for actions that one is morally responsible for. I consider moral responsibility as being contingent on moral memory, and is only attributable when an individual vividly recollects their past with clear, unequivocal, and verifiable evidence. That is, moral responsibility is contingent on recollecting certain moral instances that are substantiated through one’s awareness of first-order, or fundamental, moral propositions. It is natural to think that one is responsible for preserving a good moral character if they possess good “moral memories”, and that one suffers from bad moral character if they possess bad “moral memories”. However, people in possession of ‘bad memories’ – memories of upsetting experiences – are capable of not repeating these experiences upon others. We also intuitively think of these persons who do this as good – since not only do they behave morally, but they do so despite their moral experience. Likewise, we are likely to think that those who do not learn from good memories are more likely to be bad persons.

We have a duty to remember incidents to enable us to consider every possible condition with potential affective consequences; that every action holds immense value such that its

effects are experienced and noticed both by the agent committing the action and by the wider community (Blustein 2017, p. 352). This raises our moral sensitivities for past and future considerations. But this moral sensitivity also shapes our characters, namely, by highlighting our proclivities to react in certain ways for certain triggers. The way we react is indicative to how much self-knowledge we hold and whether or not our identities truly represent our moral conscience. If an individual continually and consistently rebukes past wrongdoings with honesty and commitment, then we can assume with reason that their moral conscience is genuinely good and their current identity is sufficiently representative of such moral status.

Moral Phenomenology as an Analysis of Moral Identities

Having to argue what constitutes one's moral conscience must be followed with the following question: what are the conditions underlying one's memory of their moral principles? The answer to that is linked to *moral phenomenology* - moral experience. Moral memory is intimately tied with phenomenological principles, as it is derived from an agent's direct experience of moral phenomena. Part of our moral knowledge is gained by experience that (1) motivates us to engage in participating or avoiding certain activities, (2) allow us to produce impressions about these activities and shape our temperaments towards them, and (3) permit us to produce first-order moral propositions. First-order moral propositions are shaped according to our direct assessments of a person's moral conscience. These impact our memories of a particular event or person, allowing for judgements to ensue either towards the person's traits or their overall character (Horgan and Timmons 2005, p. 59). We could characterize this reconstructive process as follows:

1. An agent starts identifying the axiological – morally relevant - features of a given incident.
2. Identifying axiological features allows one to structure moral principles and values in ways that contribute to strengthening their moral obligations, consequently producing basic principles.
3. Those moral obligations act as standards for one's actions to be reflected upon. As Edmund Husserl remarks, these standards are constructed upon past experiences. Husserl's argument is that memory presupposes past experiences, which indicates that experience has "its own span or extension" (Carman 2017, p. 557), taking space from one's character to reflect upon the past and anticipate for the future (i.e., assigning rewards or punishments, characterizing virtues and vices, eventually leading to ascribed

moral judgements). Husserl further claims that because “temporal openness of the present is a necessary condition of experience as such”, then it “must *a fortiori* be a condition of the possibility of remembering things experienced in the past” (Carman 2017, p. 558).

Accordingly, moral memories are memories substantiated by first-order moral propositions which are formed by the agent’s position in the world and the aggregation of beliefs generated by their past experiences. Consider the following propositions:

If S apparently remembers that p, then S is thereby aware that she seemed to perceive that p.

This proposition states that a subject’s memory is composed of their apparent awareness of what they perceived and that their memory is not linked or related to direct testimonies or subjective reasoning (Fernandez 2006, p. 44). Thus, one could argue that two key factors characterizing the relationship between memory and experience are (a) first-person factual and verifiable perception of objects and moral properties and (b) first-person experience of events which impress on a person’s memories, especially ones that are emotionally provocative.

If S has a memory experience M that she would express by saying that she remembers that p, then the content of M is p.

This claim states that each memory experience acts as a representation of the propositional content, that identifies with the set of truth-conditions that an experience is grounded in. These truth conditions refer to a ‘causal chain’ between memory experience, past perceptual and conceptual experience, and the interaction with objects or events.

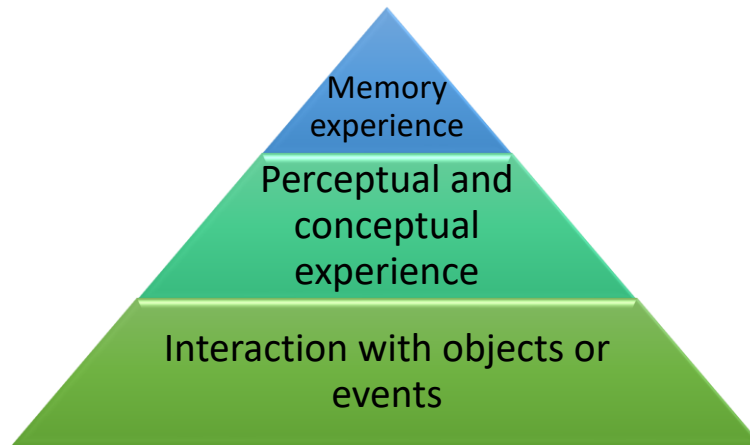


Figure 1. A hierarchized depiction of the causal chain for memory experience.

By providing a foundation for moral memory, this causal chain then produces a moral identity that is unique to the individual. This unique identity guides their moral judgements. However, how could moral memories, let alone a moral identity, be produced by interacting with events or objects (more so for the latter) that are non-axiological? While an individual interacts with non-axiological properties, the meaning which impresses the individual is then treated as a tool that extracts axiological properties from non-axiological properties. Knowing that impressions are driven by emotions, extracting axiological from non-axiological properties is best done through emotional states. As John Drummond (2008) argues: “In responding affectively to these non-axiological properties, the subject has sensations of pleasure and pain, liking or disliking, approbation or disapprobation, which, by virtue of their attachment to the underlying presentation, ground a feeling-act that values the object” (p. 38). Valuing an object, in this case being a moral proposition, allows an individual to produce a purpose for it, dictating factors such as its significance relative to its appropriate context. This would later allow individuals to pose judgements according to their cognitive insights of the object’s content, giving them a particular experience that substantiates the very “span and extension” that constitutes the nature and form of one’s memory.

On Collective Moral Memory and Collective Moral Identity

Like personal memory, collective memory is comprised of multiple factors that lead a shared commitment to cultural, social, and moral norms and values. Those commitments are structured in unique ways and vary in form depending on culture and history. Commitments to norms and values often happen through constant communication, interaction, and eventually agreements or disagreements

between individuals over certain normative principles. This is what J.L Mackie (1977) defines as “intersubjectivity”, or the amalgamation of subjective valuations that lead to a collective agreement on what constitutes morality (p. 22). Collective memory is an abstract, or “metaphorical” (Gedi and Elam 1996, p. 35), representation of the social substance which produces a framework “where concrete individuals are capable of transforming their obscure images into clear concepts” (p. 38), where in this case ‘obscure images’ denotes moral conceptualizations.

But how do these collective commitments erupt in the first place? Firstly, every successful action is connected to its corresponding intention. Such connection is evaluated according to a set of standards that are intersubjectively agreed upon, i.e., actions and intentions which produce desirable effects are collectively considered as good while actions and intentions which produce undesirable effects are bad. When this connection arises and becomes normalized, people will intuitively act according to society’s moral expectations. We can then assume that people hold intentions which concern not only their actions but also other people’s actions, or in other words each person’s intention is predicated on what others intend on doing as well (Butterfill 2017, p. 358).

Like personal moral identity, collective moral identity is configured by a collective moral memory. Cultural standards that represent a society’s moral framework are contingent on that society’s past moral experiences. This relationship is also used to meet future moral expectations. Previous moral mistakes are constantly recalled and reflected upon to restrict their reoccurrence in the future. For example, due to collective recollection of the acts of 20th century fascists, acts that align with fascist values causes the outcasting of those who committed the acts. However, this only holds if individuals treat their collective identity as having meaning. A collective identity is considered to be meaningful if and only if its members gain insight into one another’s moral and social experiences, therefore collectively producing an overarching moral law that dictates their social affairs. By delving into the memories and experiences of others, we come to know how similar conditions affect us differently, and from that we extract the different impressions held by people, enabling us to envisage their beliefs, emotions, values, behaviors, commitments, and goals (Fivush and Graci 2017, p. 270). When aggregated, these factors construct a cultural and social identity which enjoys a process of universalization, particularly being recognized first among those inhabiting the society and then acknowledged by their neighboring societies and cultures.

Recollecting past incidents that hold immense moral value is vital for historical continuity, social trust and social stability (interterritorial or extraterritorial) precisely because it allows for a mutual agreement on who must be held morally accountable for their actions. Not only does this maintain the fabric of a society’s moral law, duties, and social rules as well as regulations, thus ensuring “moral and intellectual continuity (Wang 2008, p. 310), but it also allows for individuals to reflect on their pasts to further develop their futures and bring about goals that benefit everyone equally. Thus, unlike personal

moral memories as well as personal moral judgments which are often asymmetrical in nature (i.e., the negative outweighs the positive or the inaccurate outstrips the accurate, whether it be on the side of recollections or judgements), collective moral memories and collective moral judgments are more likely to be *less* asymmetrical due to the constant negotiations and dialogues held by different members of society. The functionalist theory of memory is best representative of this case. Take the following:

For any subject S and event e, S remembers e just in case S has some mental image *i* such that *i* tends to cause in S a disposition to believe both that e happened and that S experienced e to happen, and *i* tends to be caused in S by having experienced e to happen. (Fernandez, 2018, p. 64)

Implementing such a theory on a collective basis yields the following - a society recollects event e through some general mental image *i* if, first, *i* is shared by all participating members of society S and, second, this image is agreed upon as being a justified representation of either their direct past experience or their knowledge of their past. However, not all justified propositions are accurate. Similarly, what if *i* is inaccurate due to a lack of fact-checking strategies existing between the memories of individuals? There is an easy solution: a society collectively and co-operatively strategizes fact-check mechanisms that encourages citizens to hold other citizens accountable for their actions. This mechanism is underpinned by a collective effort to evaluate past incidents as well as standardize and formalize rules concerning transgressions against the society's moral values and duties. Hence, with rigorous collective assessments comes sufficient understanding for the content of memories.

This does not entail reliability, however. Even though collective moral memory suffers less from individual asymmetry, its fact-checking dynamic is more susceptible to collective asymmetries. Take a highly censored state such as North Korea. In these states, informational exchange is heavily restricted, such that it manipulates people's sense of being, becoming, and consciousness of the world surrounding them. Whatever image appears to their collective consciousness is symmetrical in terms of local moral knowledge yet morally and factually questionable in terms of intercultural perspectives and historical accuracies. Thus, collective memory produces a sense of collective consciousness which precedes those of individual memories and introduces a sense of uniformity amongst its citizens (Funkenstein 1989, p. 13) that is not necessarily grounded in honest recollections or morally virtuous histories.

Despite the fact that some political conditions may cause some erroneous collective testimonies, I will argue that some of the methods implemented by the collective are nonetheless more rigorous than individual methods. Some of those methods are:

1. Gaining new ways to conceptualizing the past, such as through lessons learned strategies which result in the production of guidelines for conducting future commitments and measures.
2. Tracking repeated experiences such that we generalize or composite them for the sake of continuity and consistency.
3. Introducing social and personal meaning(s) into certain memories
4. Employing certain ‘knowhows’ and methodologies (i.e., objects, rituals, practices, etc.) to cohere certain purposes or underlying meanings of a particular memory designated by a collective agreement, therefore producing a collective belief towards its reliability (Campbell 2014, p. 32-33).

The significance behind those methods is that they allow for:

- (A) An emotional tie to materialize between citizens or members of a community.
- (B) A raising of the standard of trust between citizens or members of a community (which in turn increases the likelihood of informed moral decisions and judgements).
- (C) Allows for all members to actively participate in dialogues and reevaluate each other’s ideas and judgements to better contextualize and recontextualize them according to the moral, social, and cultural conditions at hand.

It is an incumbent duty upon all participating citizens to recollect past instances to avoid repeating similar mistakes and violating their society’s moral codes. However, what constructs such a duty to start with? The duty to collective recollections is based off three steps that Fivush and Graci (2017) enlist (p. 271):

1. Co-constructing and sharing narratives with different members of the society such that “socio-cultural norms of narrative practice” is ensued.
2. Formulating structures and methodologies that mediate different personal experiences such that a narrative identity materializes.
3. Producing conditions and techniques whereby social bonds between people are maintained and structured in such a way that emotional coherences are sustained over time (i.e., people understand each other emotionally).

The purpose of such duties is to elicit strong bonds between people and produce effective sentiments towards ethical matters represented by collectively shared memories of their past.

The stronger those empathetic responses are, the more affirming moral judgements become. These empathetic responses are contingent on dialogues and emotional engagements between people which engenders a general consensus towards what and how actions must be conducted. Jan Assman and John Czaplicka (1995) argue that such dialogues are important because they govern the way that citizens perceive each other. Citizens perceive each other as a collective which happens to share the same fate, same collective history, and same communal experiences (p. 126), thereby recognizing a general framework for morality that binds all people equally. Hence, we can assume that collective memory helps instigate a communitarian ethos that best represents duties and moral laws which legitimize moral judgements targeted towards transgressions. But this communitarian ethos is only possible through culture's reflective abilities to perceive themselves in ways that would allow them to:

- A. Reevaluate their own standards and claims that makes them unique and distinguishable from other cultures that harbor different experiences and memories. Therefore, they reinterpret their own practices by reevaluating their methods of recollecting their past.
- B. Attempt to explain and criticize the mistakes and/or defects found in what is assumed as being part of the culture.
- C. Attempt to produce a representation of the social system that guides the people in ways to enhance their self-image, both internally and externally, and therefore affirm a personal and moral identity.

What is the link between personal and collective memories? By harmonizing one's individual memories with others' memories, the collective can begin to identify the parameters of what constitutes a fair and authentic moral judgement. This, over time, allows personal memories to become part of the collective's memory. However, having many individuals who "all happen to remember the same episodes" does not necessarily entail a collective memory (Sutton 2008, p. 32). Rather, philosophers of memory and social theorists largely view collective moral memory as a byproduct of "constructive processes at all levels from the individual to the communal to the cultural", that eventually reduce into "socially sharable" memories (Wang 2008, p. 314) that are transitive as well as spatially and temporally consistent. That is, personal moral memories are distributed according to their factuality which is determined by an intertemporal accounting that "keeps track of past judgements and actions to check how they [the people] can constrain present decisions and plans" (Sutton 2008, p. 42).

Collective moral memories are thus contingent on individuals that managed to *share* their personal moral memories which *de facto* prompts moral standards that are either related to moral propositions or are extracted from non-moral propositions. Collective moral memories then substantiate the veracity of an individual's personal moral memory, making it relevant for delivering judgements for issues such as intentions or conduct. This relevancy is then utilized uniquely by individuals. For instance, individuals may disagree whether to preserve or change modern conditions from past conditions, but both positions originate from the same collective moral memory.

Not only does sharing memory experiences create a collective moral memory, but it also allows for the possibility to create what Wang defines as “norms of remembering” (Wang 2008, p. 309). Norms of remembering usually includes the management and regulation of a society's communitarian ethos by standardizing the appropriate means for assessing recollections, whether it be personal or communal. By understanding and knowing the correct ways of recollecting, one could begin (a) distinguishing between disingenuous and trustworthy memories and (b) distinguishing between apparent and actual moral memories (Cowan 2020, p. 209). This allows citizens to attach themselves to a particular social identity as it becomes clearer and therefore more accessible. The clearness and accessibility of social identity is nothing more than the ability to link impressions sharply and accurately with values. For some would argue that we “first see and then believe” (Huebner and Glazer 2017, p. 286). However, collective memory is predicated on expectations that result from past experiences. Past experiences are primarily driven by emotions and impressions that first develop as beliefs and later on transform into knowledge via long-term evaluations. In this case, those impressions are hallmarks for moral norms and accordingly influence our moral behavior. Amalgamating them leads to the construction of values such as rights, justice, and order which are maintained through informed and coherent intellectual processes and consistently committed socio-cultural practices.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to outline the dynamics and importance of moral memory on both personal and collective levels. The first section outlined what moral memory is and its contributions in contemporary literature for the philosophy of memory. The first half of the second section outlines the ways in which moral memory constitutes the foundations of moral responsibility in relation to the individual's identity. This relationship should allow us to perform further

research and discover more about justificatory analyses pertaining to moral judgements, that is, when and why is it appropriate to justifiably hold someone accountable for their actions. And by accurately recollecting memories and basing moral judgement on such recollections, a moral identity emerges for both the judge and the judged. Finally, the second half of the second section focuses on collective memory from a social and cultural perspective. It aims to argue that a society's culture, norms, and values arise as a result of a collectivized memory which recollects past instances and, as a result, produces future expectations that are supported by corresponding norms and regulations. This social identity then acts as a guideline that justifies the moral groundings of the society, leading to the creation of its norms, values, and other normative features which characterizes its unique 'wisdom'.

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The Complex Nature of Memory in Personal Testimonies from the French Revolution: The Example of Fournier l'Américain

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the complex nature of memory in memoirs written during the Terror by focusing on Fournier l'Américain. An ardent revolutionary, Fournier played a military role in some of the most important events of the Revolution. In addition to having a stormy relationship with many revolutionaries, he was the subject of a police report from 1793 and imprisoned several times between 1793 and 1814. It was during his imprisonment that he commenced writing his memoirs. These memoirs, though valuable because they offer an individual's account of their revolutionary experiences, must be considered in relation to the reliability of memory. This paper will consider the 1890 edition introduced and with notes by F. A. Aulard, which is the first published edition of the work. Firstly, the paper will explore the issue of memory in historical accounts and why this can pose a problem for historians interested in working with personal testimonies such as memoirs, diaries, and letters. Secondly, extracts from Fournier's memoirs pertaining to the broader themes of the creation of a pro-revolutionary, republican identity, personal ambition, and a subversion of the gender order in revolutionary France, will be analysed. The aim of this section is to highlight the complexity of writing during the Terror whilst suffering a crisis in one's identity and how this shaped Fournier's memories of the earliest years of the French Revolution.

Key Words: French Revolution, Memory, Memoirs, Masculinity, Eighteenth Century.

Introduction

In times of revolution one can only say what one has done;
it would be unwise to say that one could not have done otherwise [...]
Men are difficult to understand [...] Do they know themselves?
Do they account for themselves very clearly? [Napoleon Bonaparte, cited in
LeBon, 1913, p.76].

This astute observation by Bonaparte summarises the primary issue that those interested in studying personal testimonies from the French Revolution face: memory. Personal testimonies, including diaries, memoirs, or letters, can offer insight into the collective and individual experiences of men and women living in eighteenth century revolutionary France. Though generally written by one individual, personal testimony feeds into the political and social fabrics of societies across time and space because it is shaped by cultural norms and discourses – in this paper defined by the socially accepted behaviours, actions and languages which are unique to a given society. Within revolutionary France, cultural norms and discourses were shaped primarily by notions of nationalism, republicanism, patriotism, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (Hunt, 1984; Heuer, 2005): they shaped personal and collective identities, which were fluid and subject to change and influence (Tackett, 2018). In the context of the French Revolution, memoirs and letters were amongst the most common forms of personal testimony recorded. For those living through this time, characterised by its fluid political boundaries, memoirs and letters offered the space for personal reflection. They also, since they could be carried out at one's leisure from the confines of one's home, made it possible for men and women to get involved in political debates and this, in turn, shaped the revolutionary narrative (Hesse, 2001). Within a rapidly evolving world, men and women had to keep note of their observations if they wished to keep up with the turn of events. However, as the following sections in this article will demonstrate, this required the recall and interpretation of information.

To offer insight into how the recall and interpretation of memories influenced both the narrative and the accuracy of the memoirs created during the Terror of the French Revolution, this article will consider the memoirs of Fournier l'Américain. Born on 21 December 1745, Claude Fournier l'Héritier was the son of a weaver. Discontented with his humble background, at fifteen years old, Fournier went to the French colonies, most notably Saint Domingue, and spent twenty-one years seeking ways to make a fortune. For sixteen of these years, he served as a soldier in bourgeois militias and founded a successful tafia factory which was, he claimed,

burned to the ground by malevolent neighbours jealous of his accomplishments (Aulard, 1890, pp.i-ii). He returned to France in 1785 to claim justice and was awarded a pension of 500 *livres* per month by the Ministry of the Marine, but never received it. He decided to stay in Paris and was one of the first to throw themselves into revolutionary action by organising an armed force. Fournier's revolutionary career was controversial, and he was arrested several times for various alleged crimes including theft, murder, and his conduct in dealing with the Orleans prisoners who were massacred on 8 September 1792 (Aulard, 1890). It was during one of the several times he was imprisoned between 1793 and 1794, from which he was released, that he documented his revolutionary career in his memoirs as, one could argue, a way of defending himself against these charges.

Though this source has been cited in works such as *Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789-1795* (Levy *et al.*, 1980), few primary or secondary sources, except perhaps for Aulard's introduction to Fournier's memoirs, discuss Fournier and his revolutionary career. Even studies like Soboul & Monnier's *Répertoire du Personnel Sectionnaire Parisien en l'an II* (1985), a list of the Parisian sections and their militant leaders, and Cobb's *The People's Armies* (1987), do not contain details of Fournier. Where he is mentioned, as evidenced by Godechot's *Taking of the Bastille: July 14, 1789* (1970), it is briefly and covers a few pages at most. This is surprising given the claims made by Fournier concerning the central role he played in the *grand journées* of the Revolution – most notably, the fall of the Bastille (July 1789), the October Days (1789), the Champ de Mars massacre (July 1791), and the September Massacres (1792). Such an active revolutionary would have left a lasting impression upon fellow revolutionaries, yet the lack of references to Fournier raises questions concerning how much of a role he truly played in these momentous events. This will be expanded upon when discussing extracts from his memoirs. Before turning to a discussion of the troublesome nature of Fournier's memoirs, this article will briefly consider some theoretical studies of personal testimony and the values and limitations of using these sources when carrying out historical research.

Theories of Personal Testimony

Personal testimonies are both valuable and problematic as demonstrated by the work of Smith & Watson (2010). According to Smith & Watson, memoirs were traditionally defined as recollections by individuals who held publicly prominent positions within society (2010, p.3). They are a form of life-writing that places the individual at the centre of the narrative and are

composed of a plot, setting, characterisation, and are shaped by the writer's need to justify, assert, or interrogate their actions whilst simultaneously convincing their intended audience to believe their version of events (2010, pp.4-10). This style of writing is an art form created through the relationship between memory and one's desires (Brooks, 1985). The types of memory recorded in memoirs vary from text to text and are inseparable from agency and intended audience. Agency in the context of memoirs is connected to authority and authenticity, that is the extent to which the author has the right to tell certain stories and how they insert themselves into the narrative (Smith & Watson, 2010, pp.236-237). The recall of memories is influenced by this because the writer may feel that the stories they are telling are not theirs to tell, so they may omit information or change the narrative to suit their motives for recording their perceptions of their experiences. As a result, the version that appears in the memoirs may not be an accurate representation of what happened. Alternatively, the writer may wish to portray themselves in a particular way, especially if they are trying to appeal to a certain audience, so may alter the stories they are telling to elevate their own self-importance in relation to events or other individuals. This highlights two important points about memoirs.

On the one hand, it illustrates that writers wishing to record their personal and collective experiences always have a specific audience in mind before they begin the writing process. Consequently, what they include in their memoirs and what they omit is determined by their target audience. This suggests that memoirists have a great deal of agency because they have the choice of what to include in their work; they had less agency than one would initially assume due to their need to keep within the accepted social and cultural norms and discourses of their intended audiences. On the other hand, this is indicative of the 'fragility and unreliability of memory' (Campbell *et al.*, 2000, p.3). What one remembers and what one forgets is a choice that is significantly influenced by emotion and bias (Baddeley, 1989, p.53; Petrov, 1989, p.78). As Linton and Biard assert (2021, p.44), every writer has a retrospective narrative they are trying to construct, which is often a bid to assuage any guilt or anxiety they may be experiencing concerning their actions. Hence, the recall of memories relies upon how the author wishes to portray themselves to their intended audience and the context in which the memoirs are being recorded.

There are several values to using memoirs as a historical source. Firstly, memoirs provide detailed insight into the broader workings of society across time and place. They are generally influenced by cultural norms and discourses – that is, the agreed upon beliefs, behaviours and language(s) that are conventional within a given society and are passed down from generation to generation (under '*cultural norm*', *Collins English Dictionary*, 2023). As a result, memoirs

are shaped in a specific way that aligns with socially accepted practices. Moreover, the individual telling the story is influenced by their familial and friendship networks, so memoirs are the sharing of both individual and collective experiences. This addresses the broader historical narratives by highlighting the continuities and changes within a given society and permitting the opportunity, when compared with sources of a similar nature, to track how the priorities of societies changed over time. This is particularly useful for those interested in researching minority and excluded groups such as women because, though they may not be the central focus of memoirs, their actions and participation within society appear to some extent as they are observed and commented upon. Thus, memoirs are invaluable sources for researchers that contain a wealth of detail that would not otherwise be available.

Though true that memoirs are useful sources, there are equally limitations to relying upon this form of personal testimony. First and foremost, memoirs, particularly those from the early modern period, were written by the most prolific members of society, who were literate and could share their stories without relying upon dictation or translation. Consequently, it is unlikely that these accounts are a fair representation of the diverse experiences of most of the population, which are influenced by factors such as age, sex, marital status, religion, and ethnicity, amongst other factors (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This offers a limited view of what everyday life was like. Those who left memoirs were typically well-educated and spoke the dominant language or dialect within the country they inhabited. For instance, many of those who left memoirs in revolutionary France wrote their accounts in Parisian French, which was not the spoken dialect in provincial areas, causing local patois to be overlooked. Furthermore, memoirs were not always published by the person writing them. Often, memoirs from the French Revolution were published posthumously by friends and family of the deceased, and so the memoirs published may not be an accurate representation of the original document. This, as Petrov argues (1989, p.79), means that every time the memoir is republished it is a new version that is created because the text is not reproduced exactly as it first appeared. Therefore, the authentic voice and memories of the author gradually fades over time, especially if their work is translated into other languages and goes through multiple editions. In relation to Fournier, his personal papers were found in carton F⁷ 6504 in the *Archives Nationales*. As someone who played a military role in the streets of revolutionary society, Aulard believed he deserved to have his story told, even if it was posthumously in the nineteenth century (1890, pp.xviii-xix).

Taking this brief evaluation of the values and limitations of memoirs into account, the next section of the article will analyse Fournier's *Mémoires Secrets*. It will draw upon excerpts

from 13 and 14 July 1789 and 5 October 1789, connecting these to discussions around republicanism, ambition, and masculinities to explore the problematic nature of memory in Fournier's memoirs.

The Memoirs of Fournier l'Américain

Published in 1890, *Mémoires Secrets de Fournier l'Américain*, was written at the height of the Terror, when it was fashionable for political prisoners, such as Madame Roland (1754-1793), Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville (1754-1793), and Fournier, to record their experiences. The reason for focusing on the memoirs of Fournier, rather than those of Roland or Brissot, is that these memoirs and the revolutionary experiences of Fournier remain underexplored by researchers in contrast with Roland and Brissot, well-documented figures of the Revolution studied in detail by Walker (2001), Reynolds (2012), and Oliver (2017), amongst others. This paper aims to address this by examining extracts from Fournier's memoirs as a means of bringing him into narratives of the French Revolution, whilst simultaneously exploring the issue of memory in memoirs from the revolutionary period. Like other memoirists from this time, Fournier had a story to tell, and he had a particular set of goals when writing his memoirs. This presents the first problem researchers encounter when examining memoirs from the French Revolution – memories are fashioned in a way that suits the agenda or ambitions of the writer.

Fournier was in his forties when the French Revolution broke out. As such, he had experienced a great deal more than his younger counterparts and one of the motivations behind writing his memoirs was to share his experiences and impart his wisdom to a broader audience. There are snippets from his memoirs that support this claim; for example, according to Fournier (1890, pp.1-2), people like himself, who were present during some of the most momentous events of the French Revolution, were in a stronger position to share the true nature of revolutionary society with future generations. This is a justification for recording his memoirs; it implies that Fournier wished to educate future citizens on revolutionary ideologies and commit to history the legacies of this phase of the revolutionary process. He almost hints, when he compares the value of his memoirs to the coverage of events by journalists, that the only accounts worth reading belonged to those who were at the heart of the action, sacrificing their lives for the Revolution (1890, p.2). The trouble with this, as Godechot notes (1970, pp.214-215), is that there are scores of memoirs and recollections from this time, and their true value is determined by the author and the date on which they were written. Some accounts, and this argument is applicable to the memoirs of Fournier, were written by people who played a

secondary role or were written too long after the events had taken place for them to be of much value (Godechot, 1970, p.215).

Take the date in which Fournier commenced the drafting of his memoirs as a starting point. 1793 was a time when paranoia was rife, denunciations against neighbours and former friends were common, and death was a possibility for anyone deemed suspect, which was broadly defined in the Law of Suspects, published on 17 September 1793, as:

those who, through their conduct, associations, or writings showed themselves to be enemies of liberty; those who, by the standard of the decree of 21 March, could not prove their means of existence or their patriotism through their civic duties; those refused certificates of patriotism; any public functionaries dismissed from their position in the National Assembly and not reinstated; former nobles and relatives or spouses of nobles who emigrated and did not show patriotism; and, finally, anyone who emigrated between the 1 July 1789 and 8 April 1792, even if they had since returned (Baker, 1987, pp.353-354).

Fundamentally, anyone could be labelled suspect, and Fournier had to tread carefully when recalling events for inclusion in his memoirs. This explains his selection of the *grandes journées* of the late 1780s and early 1790s as his focus for the work. These were days that represented true patriotism and support for liberty, equality, and fraternity. In other words, anyone who could prove their participation in these days could not be considered an enemy to the revolutionary efforts because they displayed pro-revolutionary and/or republican sympathies.

The extent to which Fournier was a true republican is debatable because his memoirs were shaped by the context of the Terror and his imprisonment. As a monotonous form of forced incarceration, the prison cell removes individuals from the routine of everyday life and permits them to revisit their life experiences (Smith & Watson, 2010, p.70). Fournier's incarceration provided him with the space to reimagine his revolutionary career by creating a performance in which he cast himself as the lead actor and used his memories as the stage from which he could tell the story that he wanted to tell and not the one that happened. Most memoirs from the French Revolution do this to some extent. Another prime example is Jeanne-Marie Roland, guillotined in November 1793, who teleologically documented her memoirs, making it appear as though she were always destined to be a martyr of the Revolution, despite nothing about the Revolution being predestined (Roland, 1905). This example is relevant to the complexity of memory in memoirs written during the French Revolution because it depicts the

significant relationship between self-image and the recollection of memories. As Reynolds argues (2012, p.9), revolutionary memoirs are performances through which the writer creates and shares the desired version of their self with their audience. Fournier's memoirs followed this tradition of combining imagination with reality when documenting his involvement in revolutionary society; this feeds into the argument presented by Campbell *et al.* (2000, p.6), concerning the interdependency between memory and imagination in the production of identity and one's sense of self.

This is evident in Fournier's memories of 13 and 14 July 1789 and the October Days of 1789. In the days and months preceding the fall of the Bastille on 14 July, tensions grew in Paris. Poor harvests; rising bread prices; the Réveillon riots of April, which resulted from Réveillon, a wealthy, self-made man from a working background, proposing cuts to workers' wages; and the dismissal of Jacques Necker, the popular Finance Minister, on 11 July contributed to this (Godechot, 1970). This combination of economic and political uncertainty that rippled through the country, coupled with the removal of the king's troops from Paris, manifested as a crowd of Parisians attacking the customs posts where goods entering the city were levied (Godechot, 1970, p.192). In Fournier's recollections, he took charge of events:

All the good citizens were in a state of permanent alert. [...] They deliberated on forming a citizens' militia and had to choose a leader. It was on me that this choice fell. [...] We still only had batons, old swords, crescents, forks, spades, et cetera and it was at this moment we began the patrols (1890, pp.11-12).

The inadequacy of the weapons readily available to the citizens is indisputable because this was mentioned in other recollections of this period. In the memoirs of Pitra, one of the electors of Paris, it was emphasised that the people were armed with pikes, swords, sticks, and axes (Flammermont, 1892). When combined with Fournier's memories of the armed crowd, this illustrates that memoirs do contain grains of truth and that they can be useful for offering limited access to the past. These memories are particularly valuable because they provide insight into the mentality of the growing crowd and highlight the resourcefulness of the Parisian population – they armed themselves with whatever materials they could and set out to find guns and cannons, which would be more effective in attacking the Bastille. This indicates that memoirs are not solely valuable for the insight they provide into an individual's memories of historical events; they also offer a window into the collective history of the early revolutionaries as underdogs in their quest for liberty and equality. In defence of Fournier's emphasis of the ill-equipped crowd, in addition to this being confirmed in other sources (Humbert, 1789;

Flammermont, 1892) is that there was no need for Fournier to over-exaggerate this point. Due to his military background, he was aware of how ill-equipped the newly established sectional battalions were. He knew that the men had to have better weaponry if they were to successfully challenge the oppression of the ancien régime and would gain nothing from making it appear as though the crowd were well-prepared and well-organised for this challenge.

By describing the heroic efforts of the poorly equipped battalion of citizens he oversaw, Fournier portrayed himself as pertinent to the success of the crowd in obtaining guns and cannons, which aided them in destroying the fortresses surrounding the Bastille. He near implied that without his leadership this momentous event would not have occurred because he was the one who sounded the tocsin to rally the crowd; who forced Flesselles, the Provost of the Merchants, to deliver to him ten pounds of bullets and six pounds of powder; and who had this ammunition delivered to the Bastille (Fournier, 1890, p.12, p.15). Patriotism, virtue, and transparency, that is one's willingness to sacrifice oneself for the nation and to display an openly honest style of politics, defined true republicanism in 1793 (Linton, 2013, pp.5-6; Hunt, 1984, pp.45-46). By placing himself at the centre of his narrative of the fall of the Bastille, Fournier painted himself as a friend of the Republic, someone who had fought the oppression and tyranny of the ancien régime to allow the Revolution and its principles of liberty and equality to flourish. The primary question that arises from this is to what extent his involvement was for the greater good of society compared to his own personal ambitions. The fact that Fournier was writing during the Terror, when ambition was deemed egoistic and at odds with the virtue displayed by true patriots, explains why he was so keen to highlight his leadership during 14 July: the Bastille symbolised the arbitrary power and tyranny of the absolute monarch (Godechot, 1970, p.1). As someone who had played a principal role in the destruction of a cornerstone symbol of the corruption of the ancien régime, he could not possibly be deemed a traitor to the Revolution. That said, career progression was at the forefront of Fournier's mind when constructing his account of revolutionary society. This extract from July 1789 illustrates that he was interested in casting himself as a revolutionary hero, someone worth idolising. Further evidence for this can be found in his account of the October Days.

On 5 October 1789, an estimated 6,000 Parisian market women marched to Versailles to complain to Louis XVI and the National Assembly about the bread shortages in Paris. As the works of Garrioch (1989) and Jarvis (2019) demonstrate, this food riot was organised and initiated by the women in response to the lack of action taken by their male counterparts. The turmoil of the French Revolution led to many individuals facing an identity crisis. For Fournier, these events threatened his understanding of the gender order, resulting in a need to reassert his

role as a leader. In the ancien régime, masculinity - the umbrella term encompassing the behaviours and actions expected of boys and men - was a multilayered and complex concept because it meant different things to different individuals. There was no universal understanding of what masculinity was. For some men, one's ability to effectively head a household and exert considerable control over one's dependents, including wife, children, journeymen, and servants was a defining characteristic of masculinity (Roper, 1994, p.46). For others, especially where a military background was concerned, masculinity depended upon buying one's position and promotions regardless of whether one possessed the required skills for such positions (Pichichero, 2008). The Revolution replaced this ambition and egoism with patriotism and virtue, prioritising the common good of society over individual success. Men had to navigate this unstable world and create an identity that was compatible with the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and national sovereignty. What rendered this more complex was the active participation of women in the political sphere as they redefined femininity - a multidimensional concept like masculinity often defined as the incomplete version of masculinity or the 'other' (Connell, 1995) - to encompass virtue through loyalty to the nation (Hunt, 1984, p.2). In the case of the market women who led this march, they demonstrated that they were not completely dependent on male relatives to represent them in public, which turned the world on its head for these men because they could no longer base their identity around the perceived inferiority of the female sex (Desan, 2020, p.376). This impacted masculinity because patriotic virtue was supposed to be a masculine characteristic yet women, by displaying dedication to the nation through their obligations to the state such as raising future citizens, illustrated that it was not exclusive to the male sex and raised questions over what unique characteristics defined manhood. The military was one area that remained masculine and glorious, which relied upon praise from others and one's reputation (Linton, 2015). Tackett notes (2018, p.11) that this confusion and anxiety had a significant impact upon the psychology and behaviour of revolutionaries, who struggled to create identities in an environment composed of highly destabilizing events.

Fournier's depiction of his military role during the October Days exemplifies this. According to the first half of Fournier's account, when he heard the tocsin sounding at 7 a.m. on Monday 5 October and the hungry cries of fellow citizens, he raced into town where he was confronted by a crowd who shouted, 'Fournier, lead us to Versailles where we want to go to ask for bread' (1890, p.27). He then describes his efforts to rally citizens into action and the failure of La Fayette's lieutenant, d'Ogny, who was also Fournier's military successor in the sectional battalion of Saint-Eustache, to control the men (1890, p.28). After getting the men

under control, Fournier allegedly obtained permission from La Fayette to lead the crowd to Versailles in search of bread (1890, p.29). When compared to other accounts from this time, few of Fournier's claims can be verified, which makes working with his memoirs complex. In 1790, over a period of seven months, the National Assembly held an official investigation into the events of the October Days at the Châtelet prison in Paris. When a search of the three-hundred-and-eighty-eight testimonies recorded during these inquiries is carried out, Fournier's name yields no results. Had Fournier played such an important role as he claims to have done, his name should have appeared in at least a handful of these testimonies. This signifies the importance of time when recording personal testimonies and how time affects memory. Fournier's recollections are more problematic than those recorded at the Châtelet because they were recorded later. Though true that the witness testimonies were recorded the following year, little time had passed so events were still relatively fresh in the minds of those affected. Fournier, in contrast, initially set down his memories of this event in 1793, but as his memoirs were not published until 1890, it is possible that the account included was not the original draft. According to Petrov (1989, p.79), this is because each time a work is revisited the version created is not an exact reproduction of what has come before. Therefore, one must take caution with Fournier's memoirs because the published work may not be a true reflection of his views, opinions, or feelings on events as they unravelled.

That said, it is important to examine Fournier's memories of the October Days to assess their value. The most relevant testimony to compare Fournier's version of events with is that of Stanislas Maillard, a twenty-six-year-old member of the National Guard, who was also involved in the fall of the Bastille, and whose claim to have led the women to Versailles is confirmed in several testimonies, including those of François-Nicolas Molieue, Jean-Louis Brousse des Fancherets, and Jeanne-Dorothée Délaissement (*Procédure Criminelle*, 1790, Vol.I, p.29, p.60, p.138). Like Fournier, Maillard confirms that the tocsin sounded at 7 a.m. on 5 October (*Procédure Criminelle*, 1790, Vol. I, p.117). This memory is valuable because it highlights the importance of symbols like the tocsin in inspiring action at the local level. To speak of a universally accepted definition of a nation would be a false depiction of eighteenth century France. As Garrioch (1986) argues, most people felt they belonged to a specific neighbourhood or district and did not think in terms of belonging to a nation. That is, as defined by Renan (1882), solidarity based upon common sacrifices, a collective identity founded upon the common needs of the people, and a desire to live together in harmony. The mosaic organisation of the ancien régime with its variations in languages spoken, laws and courts, inconsistencies in the administration of taxation, weights and measures, and privileges of the

church and the nobility diversified France and helped foster this mentality of separateness and loyalty to local communities, which continued to varying degrees throughout the Revolution (McPhee, 2016, pp.1-2). This feeds into Butler's (1989, p.13) argument surrounding the role that collective memory sharing plays on the formation of one's own memories, which are a combination of one's own experiences and generational storytelling. As inhabitants of Paris, Fournier and Maillard undoubtedly felt some solidarity with the starving Parisians. They recognised the tocsin as an alarm for expressing grievances and inciting insurrectionary behaviour, and their memories from the October Days are constructed around cultural expressions ingrained into society.

Another example of this is the emphasis upon the irrational behaviour of the women across the two days. Maillard mentioned instances of violence throughout the march. He stated that the women were armed with broomsticks, lances, forks, swords, pistols, and rifles, and that at Viroflay the women dragged two men from their horses and forcibly removed their black cockades – symbolic of the Hanoverian dynasty – trampling them under their feet and forcing the men to follow them to Versailles so that it could be made known they were traitors to the Revolution (*Procédure Criminelle*, 1790, Vol. I, p.119, p.122). Fournier expanded upon this (1890, p.30), describing an incident between some women and d'Ogny, who was beaten by the women for trying to talk them into returning to Paris and who died shortly after the beating. He also asserted that (1890, p.34), on 6 October, he spoke to five or six of the women in the coarse language used in *le Père Duchesne*, the newspaper edited by Jacques Hébert that spoke directly to the common people, to convince the women not to massacre the Swiss and Royal Guards. The way that Fournier and Maillard describe the violence of the women implies that this behaviour went against the traditional norms associated with the female sex and is further evidence for Hunt's claims (1984, p.2) surrounding women redefining what it meant to be a woman in this period. This paints them as heroes of the October Days, who restored the gender order by taking charge and persuading the women not to massacre the guards. It also portrays them as central to the successes of the women in obtaining a promise of increased grain supplies in Paris and the return of the royal family to the capital city. This connects back to the fragility of manhood during the French Revolution and explains their emphasis upon their own actions, sidelining the agency of the market women.

Maillard, in his late twenties and a member of the National Guard, who had distinguished himself on 14 July, undoubtedly sought promotion. He had demonstrated his willingness to liberate France from the tyranny of the ancien régime and showing his ability in leading the women during the October Days further cemented the success of his military career.

He was one of the first to step up to the mark and offer his services to the women, promising government officials to keep the women under control, which he did to a considerable extent. He displayed patriotism, virtue, and a loyalty to the Revolution, making him an ideal candidate for a military promotion. Fournier, in comparison, feeling let down over the lack of support he had obtained from French authorities for the loss of his income when his tafia factory was burned down, most likely viewed the October Days as a follow-up to the fall of the Bastille and a way of challenging the power of the absolute monarchy more broadly. His decision to convince the women to continue their march after attacking d'Ogny, something Fournier instigated by reminding the women of their starving children and painting d'Ogny as a traitor for ordering them back to Paris (1890, p.30), could be considered an act of revenge and an opportunity to reverse his fortunes. Not only was he attacking the pre-established practices of the ancien régime, but he also showcased his military expertise. Traditionally, positions in the French military were bought, favouritism was rife, and morale was low because military leaders were inexperienced (Pichichero, 2008, pp.554-555). Additionally, issues of insubordination, desertion, and a lack of professionalism plagued the army (Pichichero, 2008, p.555). The establishment of sectional battalions, that Fournier helped forge, had the potential to alter this because they were separate from the official French army, were voluntary, and the leaders elected generally had military experience, so could boost morale. It is possible that Fournier, driven by ambition, stressed his military expertise in his account of the October Days to illustrate that he was a competent, professional soldier who deserved commendation and the pension he had been promised but had never received. Therefore, both Fournier and Maillard's recollections of the October Days were shaped by personal ambitions and the need to reinstate their manhood within revolutionary society.

Conclusion

This article was inspired by my PhD thesis on women's political agency in Paris between 1789 and 1793. It considers the market women of the October Days; the journalism and translation of Louise de Kéralio, Sophie de Condorcet, and Rosalie Jullien; the letters and memoirs of Madame Roland; and the *citoyennes* of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women. Although women's agency drives this research, male reactions to these politically active women uncovers contemporary attitudes towards the variety and complexity of women's real and perceived agency. The extract on the October Days from Fournier's memoirs is incorporated into the first chapter which examines the roles women played in the October Days. When conducting my research for this chapter, I developed an interest in how Fournier granted

himself agency by using his memoirs to create different versions of himself that satisfied his own self-image. This is comparable to the memoirs of Madame Roland, the subject of chapter three of my thesis.

Public figures such as Roland and Fournier told their own stories as a method of self-presentation (Roland, 2012, p.9). How they told their stories depended upon a multitude of social and cultural factors, including gender, social status, marital status, and political sympathies. For Roland, emphasising her role as a wife and mother was an attempt to justify her foray into the political sphere during the first few years of the Revolution. She was aware that women were deemed incapable of carrying out rational political debates; her unofficial role as advisor to her spouse when he served as Minister of the Interior and role in gelling together the Girondins crossed established gender boundaries. This attracted considerable opposition from male revolutionaries such as Chaumette, who labelled her 'haughty' and implied she believed herself capable of governing the republic (Levy *et al.*, 1980, pp.219-20). Roland, acknowledging these criticisms of her character and intentions, used her memoirs to depict herself as a true patriot, republican, and martyr to the Revolution. Fournier, in contrast, as an active male citizen with a military background had greater opportunities than Roland to immerse himself in the political landscape of the Revolution. Whilst doing so, he made several enemies, amongst whom was Jean-Paul Marat – the Friend of the People - who described Fournier as 'ambitious, a spy, a parasite' (Aulard, 1890, p.vii). This resulted in him being expelled from the Cordeliers Club on the grounds that he was a renegade (Aulard, 1890, p.viii). Thus, writing his memoirs was a way for Fournier to try to redeem himself in the eyes of fellow revolutionaries. His focus on the big events of the Revolution and the way he recalled his role in these events demonstrates that memories contained within memoirs from the French Revolution are complex.

As the example of Fournier underscores, the individual recounting their experiences often has personal motivations for doing so, and these shape the way in which events are remembered. This is useful because it allows a snapshot into the individual and collective mentalities and experiences of those living during this time. However, it must be remembered that this is exactly what memoirs are: recollections of moments rather than an entire life span, often selected because of their significance in relation to the author's understanding of their self (Smith & Watson, 2010, pp.3-4). What is the narrative for? Why is it being told? What aims does it manifest and conceal? What does it seek to say and do? As Brooks (1985, p.236) notes, these are the questions one is confronted with when examining memoirs. For Fournier, the selection of his participation during some of the *grandes journées* of the early years of the

French Revolution offered the opportunity to reimagine his military career, making it appear that he played a more crucial role in the success of these days than he perhaps did. The context of the Terror, fraught with emotion, undoubtedly influenced his portrayal of himself as a valorous soldier willing to overthrow the *ancien régime* for the sake of liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty. This cemented him as a patriot willing to sacrifice his life for the Revolution. What this concealed, however, was his ambition, which was at odds with the revolutionary ideals of transparency and virtue. This is a good starting point for analysing the complex nature of memory in personal testimonies from the French Revolution.

However, there remains much work to be carried out on Fournier and his memoirs. Future research could consider studying Fournier's memoirs alongside those of others imprisoned during the Terror to gain a broader understanding of how this state of incarceration influenced the structure and content of revolutionary memoirs. This would permit gendered discourses to be considered by offering a comparison between the techniques employed by male and female prisoners when documenting their revolutionary experiences. Furthermore, it raises questions over how much agency memoirists had over their work, especially given that most revolutionary memoirs were published posthumously, often edited and published by family members or friends. There is a unique relationship between human agency and the revolutionary process, and memoirs from revolutionary periods grant intimate access to this relationship. For anyone wishing to uncover the significance of human agency in relation to the French Revolution, memoirs like Fournier's are an invaluable source. Fournier is an under-researched figure and deserves to have his story told within the broader narrative of the French Revolution. Future works should continue to analyse extracts from Fournier's memoirs and compare these to other sources from the years which he was writing about, to allow his experiences to be situated within contemporary accounts of the revolutionary era. This would tie in with works by scholars such as Tackett (2018), Reynolds (2012), and Parker (2013), which focus on individuals who lived during the French Revolution and their contributions to revolutionary efforts. Individual accounts are as pertinent to understanding the cultural, social, and political impact of the Revolution as collective accounts. Consequently, it is important that scholars continue to tell the stories of those who fought for a more egalitarian society.

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The Aesthetics of Mythical Cityscapes from Cubism to Ultraísmo:

The Metaphysical Quest for National Identity in Joyce's Dublin and Borges' Buenos Aires

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Abstract

While many scholars like Joy M. Doss have compared James Joyce's manifestation of "anti-historicism, relativism, and simultaneity" with that of Picasso (8), his possible encounter with Cubism in 1912 at the United Arts Club in Dublin (Kennedy 16) in an Irish context has been hugely neglected. Considering the history of British invasion in Ireland, it is necessary to identify Joyce's incorporation of Celtic elements into European Cubism in relation to his mythical allusions to Celticism and Catholic medievalism in his portrayal of Dublin. Not long later, young Jorge Luis Borges departed from Argentina to visit Europe in 1923. Along with his reading of Joyce, his immersion in the Spanish art movement of Ultraísmo, particularly the principle of the synthesis of images, gave birth to his project of the creation of a "poetic myth for Buenos Aires" (Williamson 205) and his aesthetics of *mise-en-abyme*. While he borrows Joyce's mythical method in his writing, he also engages with Ultraísmo, the "Spanish iteration of the European avant-garde of the 1920s," to react against European High Modernism (Ochoa 629). Joyce's mythical Dublin lives its afterlife in Borges' postmodern cityscapes as they both draw on mythical elements and incorporate them into their writing to "make the reader aware of the dynamics between two distant things" from different temporality (Christ 4-5) to seek the collective memories of Irish and Argentinean. I argue that just as Joyce appropriates European Cubism into a new form of Cubist aesthetics to recreate a mythical Dublin, Borges' appropriation of Joyce's mythical method and Ultraísmo into an Argentinean context mythologises Buenos Aires to dismantle imperial histories through "manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" (Eliot 177). Through comparing the metaphysical topography of Dublin in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Borges' imaginary versions of Buenos Aires, in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" (1940), I examine how the visual aspects of the two reinvented cities function as allegories to implicate their search for collective national memories as contemporary 'peripheral' writers.

Keywords: Cubism, Ultraísmo, Transatlantic literature, Modernism, Postmodernism

Introduction

Cubism and James Joyce forever changed the definition of arts and marked the early blooming of modernism in the 1900s as they rejected the notion of painting and fiction as merely mimetic

artefacts. While many scholars like Joy M. Doss have compared Joyce's manifestation of 'anti-historicism, relativism, and simultaneity' with Picasso's approach (2013, p. 8), his possible encounter with Cubism in 1912 at the United Arts Club in Dublin (Kennedy, p. 16) has been neglected. Considering the history of British invasion and colonization in Ireland and the context of the twentieth century Celtic revival underway when Joyce first left for Paris in 1902 (Conde-Parilla, p. 14), it is necessary to identify Joyce's incorporation of Celtic elements into European Cubism in relation to his mythical allusions to Celticism and Catholic medievalism in his portrayal of Dublin.

Some two decades later, young Jorge Luis Borges departed from Argentina to visit Europe in 1923. Along with his reading of Joyce, his immersion in the Spanish art movement of Ultraísmo, particularly its principle of the synthesis of images, gave birth to his project of the creation of a 'poetic myth for Buenos Aires' (Williamson 2013, p. 205) and his aesthetics of *mise-en-abyme*. Borges emerged as a postmodernist writer in the 1930s after his phase as an 'anti-modernista' poet (Rice 2000, p. 49). While he borrows Joyce's mythical method in his writing, he also engages with Ultraísmo, the 'Spanish iteration of the European avant-garde of the 1920s,' to react against European High Modernism (Ochoa 2018, p. 629). Borges' interests in Joyce does not contradict his postmodernist style, as Joyce's Cubist aesthetics can be differentiated from European Cubism considering the embodiment of Celtic motifs, which leaves Joyce outside the Eurocentric literary circle. In this sense, they are both 'peripheral' writers under the system of world literature (Moretti 2000, p. 56). Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) parallels Joyce's sense of self-exile on a language level:

I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His [the dramatist Ben Jonson] language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (205)

It is no coincidence that the Celtic motifs in Joyce's topographies exist simultaneously with his expression of Irish self-exile from the Eurocentric culture and specifically the language that dominated modernist literature in both Bloomsbury and Paris at that time, as the plot was set in the wake of the Gaelic Revival in Ireland in the early twentieth century. Joyce's mythical Dublin lives its afterlife in Borges' postmodern cityscapes, as both draw on mythical elements

and incorporate them into their writing to ‘make the reader aware of the dynamics between two distant things’ from different temporality (Christ 1969, pp. 4-5) to seek the collective memories of Irish and Argentinean.

In this paper, I argue that just as Joyce appropriates European Cubism into a new form of Cubist aesthetics to recreate a mythical Dublin, Borges’ appropriation of Joyce’s mythical method and Ultraísmo into an Argentinean context mythologises Buenos Aires to dismantle imperial histories by ‘manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity’ (Eliot 1975 p. 177). Through comparing the metaphysical topography of Dublin in Joyce’s *Portrait* and Borges’ imaginary versions of Buenos Aires, in ‘Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius’ (1940), this paper examines how the visual aspects of the two reinvented cities function as allegories to represent their search for national memories as contemporary ‘peripheral’ writers.

The Dialogue Between Joyce, Borges and the Visual Arts

The art movements of Cubism and Ultraísmo together form an interesting dynamic with Joyce and Borges’ respective topographies. To address Joyce and Borges’ engagements with the visual arts, I must first clarify my interdisciplinary approach, which is fundamental to comparing the ideologies behind artistic creations. Bearing the untranslatability between the visual arts and literature in mind, as Steiner writes, I aim to identify the ‘semiotic concreteness’ of modern artworks and literature that ‘constitutes a line of critical and artistic thinking that runs throughout the twentieth century’ (1949, p. xii).

To connect Joyce’s ideological thinking with Cubism, we should first consider Harry Phelan Gibb’s suggestion that Joyce attended a Cubist exhibition in 1912, which was very likely to be Ellen Duncan’s exhibition at the United Arts Club in Dublin. Even if we dismiss the possibility of him attending the exhibition, the serialised publication of *Portrait* in *The Egoist* links the story and Joyce himself to Cubism, as the issue focuses on reviews of Cubist arts, including John Cournot and Wyndham Lewis’s ‘The Battle of the Cubes’ and ‘The Cubist Room’ as well as book reviews of Rustic Cubist Albert Gleizes (Isaak 1981, p. 62), the mentor of Irish Cubists Evie Hone and Maine Jellett during their studies in Paris. Gleizes’ incorporation of Medievalism and Celticism in his aesthetics of Rustic Cubism that expresses the unidentifiable nature of Irishness parallels Joyce’s inclusion of the mythical medieval castle of Clongowes Wood in *Portrait*, a point I will return to later in the next section on ‘The Archaic Avant-Garde’ (Eagleton 1995, p. 237).

Borges, being a great admirer of Joyce, certainly picks up on his aesthetics of Irish Cubism in his mapping of Dublin in *Ulysses* (1922) and develops his creation of the metaphysical counterparts of Buenos Aires. As he reviews Joyce's mythical method in 'Joyce's *Ulysses*' (1925), he states his eagerness to trace 'its dense texture with the impeccable precision of a mapmaker' and notes that Joyce lends him the inspiration for his storytelling of 'ancients explorers who described lands new to their nomadic amazement and whose stories [...] combined truth and fantasy' (Borges 1925, p. 12). It is clear that Borges' consistent interest in creating 'ancient' imaginary cities through intertextual connections comes from the 'amalgamation of dreams and the real' represented by Joyce's mythical method (Ibid., p. 13). His learning from Joyce's 'duality of existence' and 'ontological anxiety' embodied in the juxtaposition of flesh and streets (Ibid., p. 14) facilitates his employment of Ultraist technique in his topography. Both authors portray 'historical testimonies' as 'vivid' existence 'in the streets,' unveiling 'the consciousness' (Ciugureanu 2017, p. 292) as well as collective memories of the people in Ireland and Argentina. By comparing the two authors' mythical cityscapes, we can understand how the use of the method has transformed in a transatlantic sense across time to re-imagine the collective memory beyond colonial and/or imperial myths (Nagam 2013, p. 188) and thus remap their spaces. This study also contributes to the research in the understanding of Joyce's widespread legacy as a global phenomenon (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 342). By reading into Joyce and Borges' transcultural exchange, I strive to offer a perspective towards Joyce's legacy beyond the lands of Dublin and Europe and thus investigate how the visual aspects of his writing resonate in Latin America in a postcolonial sensibility.

Although the Ultraist movement was led by Spanish poet Guillermo de Torre, Dadaism and the Ultraist movement were inseparable as Torre recalls in *Historia de las literaturas de vanguardia* (1965) that the 'double mask of humour and pathos' drew the Ultraist to Dada 'like a magnet' (Torre 1965, p. 320). Therefore, the semblances of visual representations between Dadaist artworks and Ultraist writing in terms of ideological expressions are important. In 'Ultraísmo' (1921), Borges defines the four principles of the movement: the 'reduction of the lyric to its primordial element,' namely the metaphor; the 'deletion of intervening sentences, of transitions and useless adjectives'; the 'abolition of ornamental devices, confessionalism, circumstantiation, exhortations, and studied nebulosity'; and the 'synthesis of two or more images in one, which will thus increase the images' power of suggestion' (Borges qtd. in Christ 1969, pp. 2-3). These principles serve the style of brevity and the infinite metaphysical layers of dreams/reality in Borges' texts, which explains his creation of allusive mythical typography

as it is ‘the purpose of the paradigmatic allusion to embody those secret but recurrent patterns’ (Christ 1969, pp. 3-5). The salience of these emerging principles sprung from Borges’s avant-gardist impulses, which adhere to ‘the expression of an adolescent poet who passionately embraced the vanguardist impetus that has swept through war-torn Europe’ (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 343). Therefore, the brevity of Borges’ short stories differs from Joyce’s stress on the flow of consciousness as an antithetical response to Joyce’s epic legacy (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 351). While he admires Joyce’s labyrinthine cityscapes, he expresses a postmodernist tendency to eschew Joyce’s epic scope by refusing to perform ‘a linear reading of a seemingly infinite book’ (Novillo-Corvalán 2013, p. 346). Borges’ refusal of a linear epic allows him to simultaneously take after Joyce to appropriate an art movement into a national context to create an unknown mythical city but almost manifest the unstableness of Argentina out of his fear of the invasion of the European forces of fascism. The fear is particularly reflected in ‘Tlön’ as the story creates a disquiet atmosphere that can be read as a reaction towards the political considerations that generate both metaphysical and psychological uneasiness. The time and place in the story parallel a time in which the Fascist forces of Europe were casting a shadow over Borges and his contemporaries’ landscape under the influence of the Monroe doctrine, as they were concerned that their country would bow down to political contagion (Fiddian 2017, p. 90) similar to Joyce’s concern of colonial dependency.

The Hero’s Quests to the Fantastic Peripheral Lands: Joyce’s Portals and Borges’ Mirrors

The majority of present postcolonial studies tends to interpret the destiny of people from a postcolonial nation as singular. However, it is problematic to neglect the multiplicity within a particular population. As Homi Bhabha (1996) notes, the ‘destiny of the post-colonial nation-people is defined not merely by concrete political boundaries, but by a temporality of continuance, the transformation, displacement, even transfiguration of struggle through continuity into something unrecognisable’ (p. 191). The use of the portals in *Portrait* and mirrors in ‘Tlön’ as portals to the fantastic lands dismantles the imperial picture of the entire postcolonial nation through parodying the mythical trope of the hero’s expedition to discover an unknown world such as the Irish and Argentine folk heroes Cú Chulainn and Juan Moreira, and in turn, to re-discover the Irish and Argentinean collective memories.

If we read the multiplicity of the post-colonial nation people into the historical context of *Portrait*, it is clear that Stephen Dedalus' struggle to find the 'beauty which the artist struggles to express from lumps of earth' (Riquelme 2006, p. 307) parallels Joyce's difficulty in defining what Ireland means to him. Although Brian McHale often refers to modernist fiction as *epistemological* and postmodernist fiction as *ontological* (1987, pp. 9-10), the fairy-tale framework of *Portrait* is metaphysical as Joyce begins the novel with the sentence 'Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...' (Joyce 1978, p. 7). This opens a portal for Stephen to 'walk' into the land of fantasy with the moocow. Therefore, Joyce draws 'attention to the book's artifice, to its status as art' and implies an autobiographical dimension (Riquelme 2006, p. 367) although Joyce denies the reading of the novel as entirely autobiographical by stressing the existence of an unknown narrator.

Expanding from the framework of a heroic quest, Joyce further illustrates the mythical aspect of Stephen's Dublin through his metaphysical journeys at the College and in the maze-like city. One of the metaphysical portals is the narrow dark corridor Stephen walks along on his journey to the rector's room to report on injustice. Joyce parodies Stephen's role as a national hero through alluding him to the figure of Hamilton Rowan as he comes out on the landing where Rowan had once passed (Joyce 1978, p. 57). As Stephen's movements stretch to the larger city, he again wanders into 'a maze of narrow and dirty streets' that leads him to awaken in another world 'from a slumber of centuries' (Joyce 1978, p. 103), which distorts the temporality of the present as fragments of the ancient woven into his perception of Dublin. Joyce's juxtaposition of the present and the ancient is thus a form of montage as it functions as a response to the 'two-fold process' of the fragment and its relationships and 'becomes the mightiest means for a really important creative remoulding of nature' (Eisenstein 1977, pp. 75-76).

The technique of passage and montage in Joyce's opening scene coincides or echoes characteristic technique of Cubist paintings to cloud the 'distinction between the elements of the art world and those of the object-world beyond it' (Steiner 1949, p. 181), as when Joyce fuses the world of the fairy-tale with the scene in which Stephen's father tells him the story as he writes 'His father told him that story...He was baby tuckoo' (Joyce 1978, p. 7). While Sypher compares the use of ambiguity and simultaneity in Joyce and Picasso's works in connection to 'the existentialist subject' (1960, p. 267), it is also worth noting that Irish Cubists Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone later also employ the technique of passage through visual

montages in *Decoration* and *Fern Study With Cubist Surround* with an emphasis on a colourful portal in the centre to an alternative world of depth, which is likely the result of their apprenticeship under Gleizes. Comparing to other European Cubists, Gleizes' *Composition* has a specific focus on the central portals like those in Jellett and Hone's works. As mentioned, reviews of Gleizes' books were put together with the installations of *Portrait* even prior to the publication of the novel. As Antliff notes, Gleizes' declaration of his interests in a doctrine of Celtic nationalism comes from his aspiration for the resuscitation of Celtic heritage in France following the domination by the Franks, a German tribe in the 18th century (2008, p. 659). Gleizes' rejection of 18th-century German culture coincides with Joyce's parody of the notion of 18th-century German *bildungsroman*⁶ as he rejects to impose a "national form" to the narrative trajectories' (Boes 2012, p. 3) on Stephen by highlighting his personal quest. Therefore, Gleizes' project of the revival of Celtic France and the alliance between the neo-Symbolist avant-garde and a Celtic nationalist movement (Antliff 2008, pp. 655-6) have possibly contributed not just to the effect of central portals in Irish Cubist paintings to explore Irish identity but also to the emphasis on a single portal in Joyce's writing.

Borges also opens his narrative in 'Tlön' with a 'portal' to a fantastic version of the city with the discovery of a disorienting mirror and an encyclopaedia in a country house in Ramos Mejía (Borges 1962, p. 27) in Buenos Aires. This device derives, I argue, from Joyce's use of passage and appropriation of the *bildungsroman* with the discovery of the curious items in the said country house in Borges' story. The juxtaposition of the two objects hints that while the mirror doubles the image of the narrator, the text itself also creates an intangible counterpart to the real Buenos Aires. As the narrator later calls metaphysics 'a branch of fantastic literature' (Borges 1962, p. 34), the metaphysical nature of both the mirror and the encyclopaedia reflects an autobiographical dimension like *Portrait* by emphasising the artificiality of the texts. Borges

⁶ It is a German genre that is often interpreted as 'novel of formation' or 'education' as German term 'bildung' literally means the 'institutionalization of self-cultivation' (Castle 2006, p. 1). The genre is also commonly referred to coming-of-age narratives. Prior to modernism, authors like Charles Dickens use the tropes of the genre to follow their protagonists' growth from childhood into adulthood. These protagonists often encounter certain spiritual crises that shape their minds, which lead to them figuring out their identities and roles in the society. Joyce and Virginia Woolf both parody the genre into a more experimental form of life writing. In the case of *Portrait*, Joyce integrates his personal experience with the narrative ambiguously, making it difficult to distinguish the stories of Stephen and the author (Engholt 2010, pp. 11-17).

adds another mythical layer to the narrative by paralleling the narrator's perception of monstrous mirrored infinite images (Borges 1962, p. 28) and by the unearthing of stone mirrors by orthodox believers in the thirteenth century in the 'historical works' on the imaginary Uqbar (Borges 1962, p. 29). By noting that the literature of Uqbar is 'one of fantasy and that its epics and legends never referred to reality, but to the two imaginary regions of Mlejnas and Tlön' (Borges 1962, p. 29), Borges opens up the portals to many possible versions of Buenos Aires through the notion of the '*hrönir*' that is represented by the Ultraist principles of the synthesis of images and metaphorical representations as *hrönir* can be understood as 'the proliferation and duplication of ideal physical objects to the proliferation and duplication of concepts,' such as the 'sophism of the coins' (Haug 2009, p. 72).

As noted, the ideologies of Dadaism and the Ultraist movement are interrelated as Ultraist writers regard Dadaism as 'a blueprint to build, a raft to new cultural lands' (Ludington 2018, p. 5), which parallels Borges' implication of the existence of infinite possible worlds. To unearth unexplored cultural lands, the Dadaist preoccupation with primitivism also shares Borges' focus on a mythical return to the ancient age as the primitive does not 'disappear in the Dadaist valorisation of the machine and technology' but returns 'as an archaic' force 'at the core' of what is most modern (Biro 2009, p. 23). This employment of the mythical method is present in leading Dadaist Francis Picabia's work *Nature Mortes, Portrait of Cézanne, Portrait of Renoir, Portrait of Rembrandt*. Dadaist primitive imageries are associated with colonial history and 18th-century Enlightenment philosophy (Folland 2020, p. 804), therefore, the primitive functions as an ironic 'dark mirror' of the classical European tradition (Connelly 1995, p. 9) like Borges' abominable mirrors that 'disseminates the visible universe' (Borges 1962, p. 28) to reveal the other worlds hidden by Eurocentric cultures due to the earlier discussed looming threat of Fascism in Argentina.

Like the *Beowulf* poet, despite the very different ways they 'transport' their protagonists to a fantastic land, Joyce and Borges both draw on the trope of fantastic transgressions in Old Norse myths to fight 'monsters.' Such employment of the mythical method shows that the fantastic displacement of the hero in an unfamiliar realm is particularly important to consider in relation to the sense of disorientation of the two protagonists in postcolonial contexts. By parodying the heroic narratives, Borges follows Joyce's footsteps in using memory as the 'mnemotechnic approach' in which fragments of 'collective,' 'personal,' 'intertextual, as well as body and place' turn into the authors' strategies to build their 'odyssey of (national) memor[ies]' (Rickard 1998, p. 6) and strive to 'find a special Ithaca' (Ciugureanu 2017, p. 284).

Although Borges mainly emphasises on the infiniteness of the possible worlds, Joyce's single Cubist passage and Borges' *Ultraist* mirrors both portray the visuality of depth to blend reality and fantasy together to defamiliarize Dublin and Buenos Aires and break down the illusory vision built upon the legacy of the Enlightenment in the 18th century.

From Modernist Ireland to Postmodern Argentina: 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' in Joyce's Medieval Castle and Borges' Metafictional Geographies

By emphasising the fantastic nature of Joyce's Dublin and Stephen's struggles to describe the fantastic earth of the city, Joyce portrays a certain fluidity as the city strives to move beyond its colonial non-modernity under the growing power of Irish nationalism. The lack of solid national identity is a result of what Eagleton calls 'a dialectic relation between the "archaic" and the "modern"' (1995, p. 287). Eagleton's notion of 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' (1995, p. 273) helps us link Joyce's self-conscious acknowledgement of the artistic work as an artifice to the doubleness of the Irish nation in Irish modernism (Larrissy 2011, p. 33), which is the tension between the return to the pre-modern through the mythical method and its structural place in the middle of political conflicts.

The concept of 'The Archaic Avant-Garde' (Eagleton 1995, p. 273) contributes to the reading of Joyce's medieval castle of Clongowes Wood as a mythical building that alludes to nationalist passions and the fear for civil wars at the same time. According to Conde-Parrilla, the castle was the campus of the oldest Irish Catholic lay school founded in 1814 by Irish Jesuits Daniel O'Connell and Peter Kenny (2020, p. 14). In this sense, the students' love for the school such as their cheering for the rector as the drivers point 'with their whips to Bodenstown' (Ibid., p. 20), where one of the founding fathers of modern Irish republicanism and leaders of Irish Rebellion of 1798 Theobald Wolfe Tone is buried (Conde-Parrilla 2020, p. 14), alludes to nationalist sentiments. On the other hand, Stephen's fear for the 'dark entrance hall of the castle' haunts him as he sees a figure in a white cloak coming up the staircase (Joyce 1978, p. 19) evokes the imagery of the Wild Geese who fought and died as a consequence of the Jacobite War (Connolly 1998, p. 593). The haunting state of the castle is then a 'drama of competing claims to title' as it involves 'some form of anxiety about ownership' (Michaels 1985, p. 89) and the question of the legitimacy of the claiming of that title. In the case of Ireland, the castle represents the unclaimable nature of the land as it struggles between nationalist sentiments and the fear of violence within the nation. The medieval nature of the castle signifies a space from another temporality as fragments of historical events woven

together at the site. In this sense, ‘the artist’s mind’ becomes ‘the receptacle of the past, shaping and evaluating it according to his own needs’ as Eliot elaborates on the mythical method (1997, p. 49). The metaphor of the medieval castle is thus ideologically Cubist because of its ‘reification of time’ (Steiner 1949, p. 190) as the image presents an ‘intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’ (Pound 1913, p. 201). Joyce’s embodiment of Catholic medievalism, Jellett’s recurring motif of the Madonna and Child and Hone’s stained glass for the east window of Eton College Chapel (Gibbons 2014, p. 130) together form a mutual ideology with the mythical ‘return’ to medievalism between various forms of arts to explore Irish identity.

Extending from the previous discussion on Joyce’s parody of the 18th-century German form of the *bildungsroman*, Borges’ historical allusions embedded in the metaphysical topography of metafictional geographies in ‘Tlön’ fuses history and fiction like Joyce’s allusive castle to question imperial history. The narrator’s reading of ‘atlases, catalogues, annuals of geographical societies, travellers’ and historians’ memories’ (Borges 1962, p. 29) at the National Library hints the metaphysical spanning of the geographical and historical framework of the story which leaves the narrator an ‘astonished and airy feeling of vertigo’ (Borges 1962, p. 31). As the narrator starts leafing through a mysterious book left by Ashe in 1937, the ‘secret doors of heaven open wide’ for him and he grasps a ‘vast methodical fragment of an unknown planet’s entire history, with its architecture [...], with the dread of its mythologies [...], with its emperors and its seas, its minerals and its birds and its fish [...], with its theological and metaphysical controversy’ (Borges 1962, p. 31). His realisation of the possible existence of unknown architectural designs and geographical knowledge implies the existence of a Buenos Aires that has never been ‘officially’ recorded under the imposition of imperial history. Unlike the established and real *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Borges 1962, p. 28) first printed in 1771 in Edinburgh and the fictionally ‘well-circulated’ *Anglo-American Cyclopaedia* printed in 1917 that are on sale or even catalogued at the National Library (Borges 1962, p. 29), the mysterious book is of unknown origin. These three fictional encyclopaedias then create a ‘geographical’ map that stretches from Europe to America and eventually to an illusory planet.

Borges’ geographical and temporal trajectory of the story is fundamentally based on the technique of the mythical method as it coincides with that of the real history known to us: Following the rule of the empires of Spain and Portugal, Mignolo distinguished a ‘second phase of world modernity’ in the 1770s. Events including the ‘European Enlightenment, Hegel’s philosophy of history, the French Revolution’ and fights for independence in Anglo- and Latin

America (Fiddian 2017, p. 4) occurred before the rising power of the United States manifested in the 19th century, which contributed to the outbreaks of World War One and World War Two. Borges' alludes to these historical events through the years of publications of the three real or fictional encyclopaedias. In this sense, the abstractness of its topographical features is metaphorical to the censoring of the 'real' history of Buenos Aires by imperial voices. Therefore, his metaphorical and abstract visual representations of Tlön again signifies a 'non-existing' (Borges 1962, p. 31) Buenos Aires in the colonial account of history.

Inspired by Guillermo de Torre like Borges was, Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García painted *Hoy* to portray fragmented window facades, primal signs, clocks marking time, words, numbers, national flags and real stamps to fuse real physical materials with painted images through compiling collages and tempera on cardboard to create metaphysical 'intertexts.' The mixture of national flags of real countries including Latin American and European ones and unidentified ones as well as real stamps parallels with that of Borges' real and fictional encyclopaedias, which criticises the Eurocentric editions of history through a Latin-American perspective. By channelling the ancient through modern metafictional typographies, both Joyce and Borges and their artistic counterparts illustrate different components of national memory that 'emerge at different times after' the historical 'event(s) to be memorized' have taken place (Groes 2016, p. 347).

Directions to the Ultimate Utopias

Flirting with the idea of possible metaphysical utopias through their Cubist and Ultraist topographies, Joyce and Borges hint at a possible liberation from their entrapment in imperial histories through the movements of mythical birds and that of a mythical compass respectively. Near the end of *Portrait*, Stephen encounters 'bird after bird' and asks twice 'what birds were they' (Joyce 1978, p. 228-30), which mythologies their origins. The birds invoke the images of an ancient temple and the 'hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings' like 'an Irish oath' and a 'symbol of departure,' contrasting with Stephen's immobility within the material Dublin represented by 'the culture of Dublin in the stalls' and 'the human dolls framed by the garish lamps of the stage' (Joyce 1978, p. 230). His final decision to leave Dublin (Joyce 1978, p. 257) represents his urge to fly with the birds in search for the ultimate utopian vision of Ireland as 'a sense of fear' of the ancient 'unknown' (229) moves in his heart with the birds in flight.

The motif of mythical birds is also present in many of Irish Cubist Mary Swanzy's paintings. In *Le Cathédrale Engloutie*, the three white doves standing on top of a cage are allegorical to the Celtic knot of the Trinity. In contrast to the ordinary birds held captive like the immobile Stephen, they look at an ancient religious building distanced from the apocalyptic chaos of shipwrecks like Joyce's mythical birds, waiting to depart to the magical land. Swanzy's learning of Gauguin at Gertrude Stein's Salon (Gibbons 2014, p. 129) allows her to embody 'the unstable selfhood that is unconfined by cultural or temporal limitations and that begins to approach the ontological status' (McBryan 2011, p. 193) of what Roland Barthes calls an 'anachronic subject' (1975, p. 14) in her use of mythical materials as Joyce does.

Borges' compass similarly points a direction to the metaphysical utopia as it vibrates 'mysteriously' with its blue needle longing 'for magnetic north' (Borges 1962, p. 41). Along with the alphabets of Tlön carved on its metal case, the slight tremor of the compass (Borges 1962, p. 41) indicates the existence of the fantastic Tlön. The Ultraist and Dadaist mutual technique of the use of the 'archaic force' creates new cultural lands parallels Joyce, Swanzy and Gauguin's motif of the 'anachronic subject' (Barthes 1975, p. 14). Thus, they all give us a historical sense that involves a perception of the presence of the past (Eliot 1997, p. 49) in search for the Utopian Dublin and Buenos Aires in the collective minds of Irish and Argentinean people.

Conclusion

Joyce and Borges' publications of *Portrait* and 'Tlön,' while composed in different national contexts and periods, both reflect the problem with the notion of collective postcolonial identities. Joyce and Borges' Cubist and Ultraist mythical topographies continue to live their afterlives in the age of late capitalism in terms of their search for national and/or cultural memory in conceptual arts as their view of art forms as systems capable of 'infinite variation recurs' in Conceptual artworks (Burnham 1974, p. 79) to generate new cultural landscapes. The legacy of Joyce and Borges' mythical cityscapes then halts 'at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism' (Eliot 49) to pass on the technique of the mythical method to latter artworks and literature to continue the journey of the entire human race to the ideal mythical city.

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Exhibiting War Art:

The Imperial War Museum in 1919 and 2014

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Abstract

The First World War undoubtedly shaped and triggered memories of people across the world. How did society during this historical event choose what has been remembered and what forgotten? How were these events recorded and by whom? One hundred years after the events of the conflict, what has entered the collective memory of the *First World War* and what has been left behind? Analysing two exhibitions of official war art 95 years apart reflects not only on the past but also on modern society's attitudes towards conflict and its commemoration. This paper's focus is on the Imperial War Museum [IWM] and its unparalleled collection of material from this conflict. It will comparatively assess exhibits from 1919 entitled 'The Nation's War Paintings and Other Records' and 2014's 'Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War'. The paper will look at the commission and content of three paintings representing the front lines, women's work, and medical care, which were three of the big themes considered by IWM in their collecting and display. Following this, an analysis of how all three of these paintings had been displayed and curated in both exhibits, as well as consideration about how each audience reacted to the works will be conducted. By comparing these displays and audience reactions, this paper will argue that memory of world changing events such as this conflict is affected not only by life experiences but also by representative art and culture, under certain political, and societal conditions that will have affected the audiences' perception. And further, that as the public becomes distanced from those events by time, that culture becomes more important in shaping and informing our collective ideas about the past.

Keywords: War, art, curation, display, commemoration, memory

In the 105 years since the end of the First World War, the Imperial War Museum [IWM] has displayed the breadth of its unparalleled collection of war art in two major exhibitions. In December 1919 to February 1920, the Royal Academy hosted IWM's first display of over nine hundred war works in the exhibit 'The Nation's War Paintings and Other Records'. Ninety-five years later, many of those same pictures were used in the 2014 exhibition 'Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War'. This was the largest display of art from this conflict to be displayed since 1919, curated as part of the centenary commemoration period. This paper will consider how IWM, as a newly formed institution in 1917, recorded the official artistic interpretations of the First World War. Furthermore, it will explore how that same institution, central to national remembrance during the commemoration period, used those same works of art to shape a collective memory for a public with no personal connections to the conflict. This paper will consider the commission, display, and emphasis on specific artworks across both exhibitions. This paper will also question if and how, being placed under the lens of commemoration reclassified the meaning of some works. Finally, this paper will look at differences in display and curation of both exhibitions and at the language used in reviews to understand how historical and modern audiences responded to war art.

To do this, it will directly compare the exhibitions curated by this organisation almost one hundred years apart. The following will look at three themes in its selection of works: the front-line, using John Singer Sargent's *Gassed*; women's work, using Anna Airy's *Shop for Machining 15-inch Shells: Singer Manufacturing Company, Clydebank, Glasgow*; and healthcare, using Stanley Spencer's *Travoy's Arriving with the Wounded at a Dressing Station at Smol, Macedonia*. These pictures, whilst showcasing a diverse range of artistic styles and content, were also among the most discussed and emphasised in official exhibition documents such as press releases and in reviews. Thus, they provide a good understanding of what IWM wanted to showcase, and what the public thought of the wider show. Through their use in this paper, the paintings act as material traces and as case studies which represent how objects have been used and deployed differently as IWM's mission has changed over time. This paper will first look at these paintings individually, before analysing their display in 1919 and in 2014.



Figure 1: John Singer Sargent, 1919, *Gassed*, Oil on Canvas, IWM Art.IWM ART 1460

John Singer Sargent

John Singer Sargent was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee in 1918 to paint scenes from the front. Sargent had witnessed the aftermath of a mustard gas attack, seeing a line of blinded men lead each other towards a dressing station (Girard 2008). Figure 1 depicts that scene as a side view of a line of soldiers, blinded by gas, being led by a medical orderly. The men's eyes are bandaged and posed to look uncertain. One soldier's foot is placed high as though expecting a step, and another is faced in the wrong direction. Each man's hand is placed on the shoulder of the person in front as they lead each other through a path between groups of injured soldiers in the foreground and the background, all in various stages of the effects of gas exposure. These soldiers all have bandaged eyes. One holds his head as though in pain, another attempts to sit up, and another can be seen drinking from his bottle. The crowd of injured soldiers continues on the right and left sides of the canvas, allowing the viewer to imagine hundreds of bodies across the field. In the background, dressing station tents can be seen, and another group of soldiers in front of the setting sun which lights the entire piece. All three of the works discussed here are large in scale, however *Gassed* is the largest of them all, measuring over 106 inches tall and 255 wide in frame (Imperial War Museum). This was because the painting was commissioned with the intention it become the centrepiece of the Hall of Remembrance: a memorial gallery which would permanently display art from this conflict but was never constructed.

This painting is now considered one of the most famous artistic representations of chemical war (Girard 2008). It has been displayed across the world in IWM exhibitions,

including at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Most recently, the painting was displayed at IWM North for the ‘Making a New World’ season of exhibitions and events about the First World War. The picture, though not permanently on display until November 2023, is extremely familiar to many viewers in part because of its consistent reproduction in historical scholarship, museum material, and popular media. The painting is the cover art for several books including Marion Girard’s *A Strange and Formidable Weapon*, David M. Lubin’s *Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War*, and Roger Tolson’s *Art from the First World War*. It is also the current cover image for IWM’s collections search webpage. This familiarity even provoked art historian M.R.D. Foot to omit the painting from a book about war art, calling it ‘hackneyed’ (Girard 2008, p. 179). Despite its use and reuse as a symbol for First World War suffering, the painting has a complicated history when it comes to review and reception. In 1919, *The Athenaeum* printed an essay about the piece (quoted in Haines 2018):

...Both mental and physical aspects at this scene can scarcely have been more poignant, and of this Mr Sargent has made a picture, a reproduction of which many a young lady will hang up in her boudoir, and in sentimental moments will regard with that taint glitter of a summoned fear and murmur "Poor fellows."

The *Athenaeum* declared *Gassed* as the kind of painting created to be reproduced and displayed by those affected by the atrocities it depicts, and to elicit sympathy in those who had not. In this way, its creation could be considered a tool for shaping collective memories. Its reuse proves its success in this: the painting continues to evoke profound feelings in its audience. In blogposts about its display in 2014, viewers comment on the huge painting more than any other. For example, in the blog entitled ‘cultural capital’, Maryam Philpott (2014) wrote: ‘nowhere is this [themes of redemption, heroism, and sacrifice] more strikingly portrayed than in the enormous John Singer Sargent painting’.



Figure 2: Anna Airy, Shop for Machining 15-inch Shells: Singer Manufacturing Company, Clydebank, Glasgow, 1918, oil on canvas, IWM Art.IWM ART 2271

Anna Airy

In 1918, Airy was commissioned by the IWM committee to paint four pictures ‘representing typical scenes’ in munition factories (Imperial War Museum 1918). The national projectile factory at Hackney, Armstrong Whitworth’s in Openshaw, aircraft manufacturing co. at Hendon, and the national filling factory at Chilwell, which was later changed to the Singer factory in Glasgow were chosen. Airy’s munitions paintings hold an important place in IWM’s First World War collection. She was one of the most discussed female artists in the commemoration period, her name is often the only female artist to be specified in IWM press releases and web pages. Her work was redistributed in various forms to represent not only the

munitions worker as one of the most widely discussed role for women workers, prominent in historiography since the 1960s, but also to represent the woman as a war artist. Her munitions paintings were the subject of an online article on IWM's website and were often shown when commemorative media discussed the role, for example in BBC One's *World War One at Home*. This painting was featured in reviews and articles about IWM, for example in Burlington Magazine's 2014 article 'At the Imperial War Museum' (Shone, 2014).

Figure 2 depicts the inside of Glasgow's Singer Factory, which produced sewing machines. This factory was considered by *The Sewing Machine Gazette* (1884) as 'colossal' and at its peak in 1913 employed over fourteen thousand people. During the First World War, the factory moved from sewing machines to armaments. The painting, whilst depicting the impressive nature of the shells and consequently the development of the war economy, also depicts a disorganised scene. The floor is littered with objects and the shells are lined up haphazardly. The equipment and scenery depicted are rudimentary, notably the wooden trolleys and beams which hold the factory up, and the winches hanging from the ceiling. The contrast between this scene and the smooth metal shells represents the unfitting nature of a factory designed to manufacture singer sewing machines moving to create large naval gun shells. The centre point of the painting is these large shells which take up space in the foreground and lead the eye backwards towards the horizon point. It is only then the viewer notices the figures, somewhat overshadowed by the machinery. This is a common theme among Airy's wartime works: the figures appear to fade into the background, often in a group or huddle, whilst the product of the work itself was the focus of the art. The figures were also painted without detail to appear representative of a typical women worker and not of any individual.



Figure 3: Stanley Spencer, 1919, *Travoyes Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing Station at Smol, Macedonia*, September 1919, Oil on Canvas, IWM. Art IWM ART 2268.

Stanley Spencer

In 1918, Stanley Spencer was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee to complete a painting with religious themes. Alfred Yockney had suggested a religious service at the front, but Spencer wanted to ‘show God in the bare real things’, and so suggested *Travoyes Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing Station at Smol, Macedonia*, which was approved by IWM (Gough 2010, p. 267). In the painting, an old Greek church was being used as a dressing station and operating theatre. During the war, Spencer joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to Macedonia where he served with the 68th field ambulance before volunteering as an infantryman and joining the 7th Royal Berkshires (Whitley 2013, p.100). Spencer lost his brother, who was killed in action in September 1918, and suffered

from malaria in 1919 (Whitley 2013, p.100). It was at this time, in 1919, that Spencer began painting this canvas. Spencer's wartime painting experience was tumultuous; after unsuccessfully attempting to resign from his commission, Spencer finished the painting, but refused to finish any further works, stating he had lost his 'Balkan feelings' (Spalding 2022).

Figure 3 depicts wounded soldiers being transported back from the front to this field hospital by travoys being seen from above. Four travoys carrying wounded soldiers wrapped in coloured blankets are pulled up to a dressing station by horses. Medical orderlies attend to the soldiers, the red cross armbands are painted in a bright white and red to draw the viewers eye to them. The orderlies are posed with their arms spread, and they guide the viewers eye up and down the painting. In the background, the dressing station can be seen in a white glow, and an operation is taking place. In the right foreground, a bandaged soldier can be seen walking away and looking back on the scene. The composition depicts an ordered and calm atmosphere. Unlike Airy's paintings, Spencer was not concerned with accurately depicting the nature of wartime work. In fact, his painting of wounded soldiers in a dressing station is lacking in the blood and mud which would have flooded the horrific scene. Due to this, Spencer himself described the piece as 'not a true war picture' (Benton 2017). The calm nature of the scene can be attributed perhaps to its religious themes and to Spencer's own experience of war, which led to his painting this scene as an act of catharsis (Willsdon 2000, p. 123). In 1938, Spencer wrote of the picture: 'I meant it not a scene of horror but a scene of redemption'.

These three paintings, used as case studies show that IWM had a lot of control over the content and nature of its commissioning works. The museum had a clear objective when commissioning the works and knew what they wanted to do with them: to create memorials for a nation. At the opening ceremony in 1920, King George V stated that the museum would act as 'a memorial which speaks to the heart and to the imagination' (Imperial War Museum 1920). This is reinforced by looking at the way the paintings were constructed: the figures do not show distinguishing or individualised features: they were designed to be representative of many soldiers and workers in order that they facilitate memories for the huge numbers of visitors to the museum. This was the goal that Martin Conway described in a memorandum to Alfred Mond in 1917 (quoted in Kavanagh 1988, 84):

...when they visit the museum in years to come, they should be able by its aid to revive the memory of their work for the war, and, pointing to some exhibit, to say 'This thing I did'...

1919

IWM was founded in 1917, after a proposal by liberal MP Sir Alfred Mond was approved by the war cabinet. At the time of the 1919 exhibit, the museum had not yet opened in its first permanent home in Crystal Palace. The official priority for establishing IWM was to record material of historical significance, and to amass a national collection of war related material before it was lost or broken up into separate collections. Lieutenant Charles Ffoulkes wrote in his autobiography that the intentions of the first committee was 'to make history, or rather to record history' (Cundy 2015, p.254). In 1919, IWM's objects were scattered in various storage locations, and its curators were focused on temporary exhibits. From December 1919 until February 1920, the Royal Academy hosted IWM's exhibition 'The Nation's War Paintings and Other Records'. This was the first exhibit to showcase the breadth of the new art collection, and so the art was being used to depict how widely the museum had collected. To paraphrase Ffoulkes, this exhibit made history by showcasing how it recorded history.

This show was well received by the public and critics: its run was extended one week due to its popularity, and reviews hailed the show 'a miracle' (The Daily Telegraph 1920), 'the arrival of a new artistic movement' (Westminster Gazette, 1919), and 'the promise of something much, richer, more interesting than has been in English painting since the Middle Ages' (The Times 1919). Reviews commented on the display of traditional and modern artists in the same exhibit as one of its major successes. Various newspaper articles referred to changes at the Academy and to the emergence of a progressive element (The Guardian 1920; The Observer 1920, p.10; The Times 1920). Critics were often struck by the younger, modern artists in this exhibit as the most adventurous and interesting. The Guardian (1920) stated:

the public were given an idea of the ideals and methods of the new generation and the welcome evidence that many artists were working for a real public art, for the between public service of art to the state.

Royal Academy shows would often display more than a thousand works, and so had characteristically busy walls with paintings covering any available space and without apparent order to exhibit as many works as possible (Sandby 1862, p. 269-270). The position of paintings usually depended on distinction and influence of the painter, with the best spots being most sought after by artists and less well-regarded artists being hung higher up and in less popular gallery rooms (Sandby 1862, p. 270). Despite this being an exhibition with a theme (albeit a colossal theme of global conflict which had dominated the previous 4 years) the works on this exhibit were also displayed without theme or order. Considering their differing content, tone, and style, it is interesting that the three paintings chosen for this paper were all exhibited in Gallery III (Imperial War Museum 1919). Anna Airy's other paintings, created by the same artist with similar tone, content, and style, were displayed rooms away from each other, perhaps indicating the massive size of many commissioned war works were problematic for displaying at the academy thematically. Gallery III was a large space, which was picked out by some reviewers as a highlight. The Observer (1919) wrote that this gallery showed promise for the hall of remembrance, which was never to be:

The large no. 3 gallery, though lacking in the architectural articulation needed for a decorative scheme of this kind, gives a fair idea of the noble and impressive effect that may thus be achieved.

Some critics picked up on this lack of display narrative. Western Morning News (1919) commented on there being 'some evidence of chronological sequence, so that it is in itself almost an illustrated document of the progress of the war', but The Observer (1919) commented that because many artists documented typical rather than specific incidents, chronology 'supplies no clue'. The theme of this exhibit as the entirety of the war, was perceived by some critics as so vast that the lack of thematic explanation was overwhelming (The Observer 1919). For this audience, whilst a carefully curated narrative would have been beneficial, it was perhaps not as strictly necessary as it would be one hundred years on and was affected by the physical space of the gallery in 1919. Showcasing the vast collection of art, accumulated so quickly, which had never been seen seemed to be IWM's primary objective.

In 1919, these works were praised for their truth-telling nature of the conflict. *The Burlington Magazine* (1920) commented on the lack of ‘bombast and sentiment’ and praised the ‘honest observation’ in the works, *The Observer* (1919) described the tone of the exhibit as ‘serious and thrilling’, and *Western Morning News* (1919) noted that: ‘The very pictures that conjure up the idea of sympathy convey a hideous nightmare. Yet it was no more than the truth’. *Gassed* won Picture of the Year at this exhibit. Reviews such as *Western Daily Press* (1919) hailed the painting as a ‘masterpiece’. Airy was most often the only woman to be mentioned in reviews of this exhibit (only nine women artists exhibited works, of over one hundred and thirty artists). *The Architectural Review* (1920) described her works as ‘great, virile pictures of busy workshops’. Of Spencer’s paintings, *Travoys arriving with wounded at a dressing-station in Macedonia* was most discussed in exhibition reviews. *The Times* (1920) singled it out amongst a few others, and discussed the painting’s incongruousness with the pain and death depicted in other war art. However, the review continues that its careful and calm composition ‘express the eternal charity of mankind better than any chaotic realism could express it’. Even though these reviewers and members of the public did not experience every aspect of the war which this collection of art depicted when displayed together, the paintings were often described as realistic and true. This conclusion could only be reached by drawing upon a knowledge of this conflict built up through a combination of personal experience, interpersonal connections, news, and culture. And so, culture, in this case the nation’s collection of art, had a part to play in affecting what and how an audience remembered and viewed world events.

In 1919 these paintings were being used to showcase the efforts of IWM’s collecting to the nation. In doing this, the museum displayed a great many works – and had to display paintings wherever could accommodate their size. And so, the exhibit does not showcase a thematic or educational curatorial thought process. However, its audience required neither of these, as the effects of the conflict were still being felt and remembered personally. The audience reacted in a positive way to the new war art, and this was considered an excellent beginning for IWM’s future exhibitions.

2014

IWM was the central organisation for First World War remembrance and education during the centenary commemoration period beginning in 2014. The institution, now found at Lambeth

Road, saw a huge increase in visitor engagement, with over one million visitors in its first six months since reopening (UK Parliament & Imperial War Museum 2015). IWM conducted surveys on the public whilst it was reinventing its First World War Galleries. These found that thirty per-cent of those surveyed had ‘little knowledge’ and ten per-cent had ‘very little’ knowledge of the conflict (Cornish 2016, p. 515). Its collection was therefore put to a new use: to educate and shape public knowledge about the conflict. Paintings were being used to educate visitors on real and digital platforms. For example, Airy’s painting *Women Working in a Gas Retort House: South Metropolitan Gas Company, London* was used as the backdrop for a poetry reading created for the Women’s Work 100 project in which people were invited to share contributions on social media. During the commemoration, *Gassed* toured the US in a range of exhibits which celebrated America’s involvement in the conflict (Crux 2016).

The exhibition ‘Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War’ was IWM’s first retrospective on art created in response to the First World War. This exhibit ran in IWM from July 2014 to March 2015, and in York Art Gallery from March to September 2016. The exhibit was curated to two themes: truth and memory. Truth focused on art from soldiers who experienced the front line themselves, it sought to showcase British artists from a range of backgrounds and to showcase how this conflict was ‘era-defining’ and ‘shaped the nation’s perception of ...warfare itself’ (Imperial War Museum). Memory, in which these three paintings were featured, focused on how British art commemorated the First World War whilst it was happening, and in the immediate aftermath using independent and commissioned works. In choosing and emphasising certain art and artists, IWM was also shaping twenty-first century commemoration of the conflict, and the public’s understanding of the conflict with this very exhibit.

In 2014, IWM’s curators had no personal involvement in the creation of the works exhibited. Similarly, the audience was separated from the events depicted by space and time, with no living memory of the events depicted. IWM, like all museums, had evolved throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The museum placed a greater emphasis on the education of its visitors. And so, the 2014 exhibition took on a more educational tone. The works were displayed here because they fit the themes of truth or memory, or because they represented a specific scene or idea IWM wanted to bring to the forefront of public thought. This exhibit showed curatorial thought and increased awareness and concern over public knowledge and engagement by having dedicated rooms and spaces for artists, separating pictures by theme, and creating annotations and labels for context. A

typical audience member was most struck by the scale of the paintings. Most blogposts added size adjectives to the description or title of the painting, for example ‘the enormous John Singer Sargent painting’ (Philpott 2014). Additionally, some blogposts commented on the number of objects in one gallery space which meant that the viewer could not achieve an unimpeded view of some larger pictures including *Gassed*, in their entirety (Kelly 2014). Airy’s four munitions’ paintings were displayed alongside each other, creating a narrative of her painting journey, and showcasing the munitions worker in various places and roles. Spencer’s *Travoy's Arriving with the Wounded at a Dressing Station at Smol, Macedonia* was displayed inside a room dedicated to Spencer’s works. In York Art Gallery, this painting was displayed nearby a sculpture of Doctor Elsie Inglis, showing curatorial thought to display objects thematically (Nott 2017).

Memories of the First World War are now influenced and informed by culture rather than living memory of personal experience. Due to this, some reviews in 2014 saw the same works, which had been heralded in 1919 for their candour, as ‘subdued and solemn’ or ‘poetically bleak’ (London Magazine 2014; Studio International 2014). The paintings were being looked at vastly differently by one audience, who themselves recently experienced the war, and another a century later looking back on a version of events influenced by museums, media outlets, and the sometimes-romanticised popular culture. Some reviews took on a distanced and sometimes romantic tone when reviewing some of the works, particularly regarding those of the front painted by soldiers. This is clear in reviews which discussed *Gassed*. For example, The Evening Standard (2014) wrote: ‘At once it conveys epic, unprecedented suffering and redemption: humanity still standing, even after all the horror’. *Gassed* is the cover photo for a great many articles about this exhibit, including from the Royal Academy and Evening Standard. Again, Airy is often the only woman to be mentioned in press releases and then reviews for the 2014 exhibit. She is often used as the only example of women as war workers and war artists. Her works speak to one of the most well-known roles for women in war, and their use in this exhibit mean the role continues to be at the centre of public thought. The Lancet (2014) wrote of the realism in the Singer factory painting: ‘its grimy and chaotic surroundings – a true representation of how men and women contributed to the war effort’. Interestingly, Marina Vaizey, reviewing for The Arts Desk (2014), after writing about Sargent’s ‘frieze of suffering’ and Spencer’s ‘great painting’, wrote, misspelling her name: ‘There are women artists too, of sensitive gifts: Airey’s superbly done small paintings of women at work’ despite the paintings being an impressive seventy-

two inches in height, and eight-four inches in width. Whilst this was not the author's intention, it illustrates the wider dismissal of women artists inside the remembering of a traditionally male topic such as war. The theme of women's work was popular among blogposts and online reviews written by members of the public. However, it was often singled out as an outsider subject rather than ingrained into the fundamentals of the topic of war, and the vocabulary used reveals an interesting correlation with memory. Gerry (2014) discussed the theme of women's work under the subheading 'forgotten fronts' and used the paintings to educate the audience of the history of women in war work. Meanwhile, other blogs, such as Philpott (2014), discussed Sargent and Spencer's works as pictures which 'reinforces the overall themes of redemption, heroism and sacrifice which unite the "Memory" section'. In the eyes of the public, pictures of the male dominated front lines reinforced fundamental ideas of war in their collective memory, whilst women's roles were forgotten and re-remembered through this display.

In 2014, IWM took on a new role: official institution for the centenary commemoration for the First World War. In its major exhibition 'Truth and Memory' the same pictures which were once used to showcase IWM as an institution. However, the pictures also had a new assignment: to educate. The pictures were displayed in such a way as to maximise knowledge gained on a specific theme. An audience which had been shown huge amounts of First World War content under a lens of commemoration and memory, but without personal connections to the conflict saw those same pictures very differently.

Conclusion

In closing, IWM as the central organisation for recording, collecting, and displaying First World War material has shaped what has been remembered of the conflict through its choice of commissioned art and artists, and then through curation and display of those objects. These have been affected by the museum's overall mission – firstly to record and memorialise and then additionally to educate. The three paintings studied were looked at vastly differently by two audiences: the first in 1919, who recently experienced some of the events depicted in the huge exhibit, and the second looking back on a version of events influenced by the mass of content produced during the commemoration period. In the case of these paintings, which have acted as case studies to represent this change, their content was representative and created to act as memorial. This shows that IWM had clear commemorative intentions for the

works. However, their differing display shows that whilst in 1919 the intention was to showcase, and perhaps justify, IWM as a new museum and collection, in 2014 the intention was to shape the knowledge of a public distanced from the conflict. It did this by emphasising certain art and artists and creating a thematic display. This shows that, whilst art itself does not change, its meaning and use can be reassessed, and can have an important role in shaping memories for people across time.

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