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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

All disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences encounter tensions between perception and reality. In this, the year of the 150th anniversary of the Dialectic Society, it is fitting that the articles in Groundings do not address these issues in isolation, but focus specifically on the dialogues between them.

The articles are drawn from a diverse range of disciplines, encompassing literal, historical and societal dialogues amongst many others. Regardless of subject matter, the common thread is a heightened awareness of and reflexivity towards the dialectic of each topic.

Over the past five years Groundings has developed and established itself as an integral part of the Dialectic Society's activities on campus. This year we publish ten articles, selected from the highest number of submissions ever received. For the first time positions on the editorial board have been open to all students, and as a result the majority of editors have not previously been involved with the society.

Hopefully this widening of Groundings' impact on the student body will continue; allowing an even greater number of students to pursue knowledge, not just through verbal discussion, but in academic writing too.

GROUNDINGS EDITORIAL BOARD

Rural African Women: Misrepresentations, Misconceptions, and Towards a Remedy

Hannah Currie

The history of rural African women has been beset by problems. Traditional academic disciplines, in aspiring to a standard of objectivity and validity, have tended towards broad generalisations which obliterate the experiences of marginalised groups. Scholarly obsession with documentary evidence has inadvertently silenced voices in the non-literate world. Meanwhile the socially ingrained proverbs and folktales of Africa contain flawed representations of women. This situation has given rise to warped perceptions which not only conceal the truth but contribute to the subjugation of women. Oral history offers a remedy: by speaking directly to rural African women about their lives, we can give them a voice, gain insights into their pasts, debunk the myths and fill in the gaps in their history, with a view to changing perceptions in both Africa and the western world.

In Woman with Beads, a poem by the African feminist Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the narrator laments: 'I am Woman / I am African... I do not speak much / but I am not without a voice'.[1] Oduyoye recognises that African women have barely any input into the image of themselves that is projected to the rest of the world. Academic

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[1] M. A. Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995), iii

'awe of writing' is class- and culture- bound, leaving out huge groups of women who are not part of Western European literate culture.[2] Historical generalisations are typically androcentric; the higher levels of abstraction assumed to present a 'true' picture of 'reality' often portray neither truth nor reality for women.[3] Adding insult to injury are the damaging images of African women fostered by the folktales and proverbs of the continent, and the controversial but popular contention amongst African males that feminism is not relevant to, nor necessary for, Africa. Each aspect of rural African women's identity - rurality, Africanness, femaleness - has presented a barrier to a true and fair history. This article will provide an overview of the manifold issues affecting representations of rural African women, show how these have impacted on real life, and discuss the confused, often negative, perceptions that have arisen as a result. The practice of oral history is suggested as the most appropriate way of addressing these issues and providing insight into 'the real Africa'.

(MIS)REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICA AND AFRICAN WOMEN: PAST AND PRESENT

African history is the youngest field in the broad domain of world historical scholarship,[4] only emerging within the past sixty years. Prior to independence, historical writing about Africa was dominated by the works of Europeans whose narratives were clouded by their preconceptions and prejudices. Studies referring to 'primitive societies' and 'savage peoples', popularised by anthropologists such as Robert Lowie, were employed to characterise the outlooks of African communities.[5] Such perceptions fed the fantasies of Europe, depicting

[2] A. Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different' in R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds.) The Oral History Reader, second edition (London: Routledge, 2009), 33; S. N. G. Geiger 'Women's Life Histories: Method and Content' (1986) 11 Signs, 337-8

[3] Geiger, 'Women's Life Histories', 337-8

[4] L. White et al (eds.), African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 2

[5] I. Okpewho, 'Understanding African Marriage: Towards a Convergence of Literature and Sociology' in D. Parkin and D. Nyamwaya (eds.)

Africa as the 'dark continent' that needed to be brought up to date.[6] A. E. Afigbo wrote a scolding rebuke of colonial approaches:

What is often referred to as the colonial historiography of Africa was simply a display on paper of European, or in any case white, racial and cultural arrogance, an ideological legitimisation of Europe's exploitative presence in Africa, in short a chastening display of the inability of a civilisation (no matter how advanced) to transcend itself.[7]

The tendency to portray African people as 'backwards' can be attributed to Eurocentrism, the belief in the superiority and 'normalcy' of European culture. Though this situation spurred the development of a true African historiography - precisely because it angered African intellectuals and caused them to challenge Eurocentric views - it has nevertheless left a damaging legacy. Patrick Chabal writes: 'The general handicap under which we, Western Africanists, labour is our heritage... To us in the West, Africa is that part of the world that remains most deeply endowed with the two central facets of the "other": the mysterious and the exotic'.[8] The element of mystery surrounding Africa, particularly the rural areas, will prevail until these historical 'blind spots' are fully explored and opened up to the world in an honest and non-biased fashion. In order to better acquaint the world with the real Africa, direct dialogue with African people is required. As it stands, African people have very little control over the image of Africa portrayed to the rest of the world. Angene Wilson illustrated this when she noted, 'CNN is on Ghana

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Transformations of African Marriage (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 333

[6] J. K. Adjaye, 'Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography' (2008) 35 History in Africa, 7-8

[7] A. E. Afigbo, quoted in ibid. 8

[8] P. Chabal in J. E. Soothill, Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 22

television three hours a day. Ghana is integrated into a world system of communication, but has no input into that system'.[9]

In March 1957, in 'a blow to colonialism', Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African nation to achieve independence.[10] This led to a new revolutionary generation of African historians determined to rewrite Africa's past. Paradoxically, however, they automatically adopted western methods of historical investigation. They ambitiously sought to produce an overreaching narrative of African history and chose sizeable areas and groups for study; the over-concentration on the southern Ashanti region and the Akan people of Ghana, for instance, has been widely noted.[11] This nationalistic history abandoned non-centralised societies and small tribes, and failed to encompass the experiences of marginalised people, such as the women (and men) of Northern Ghana.[12] The issue remains: Ibrahim Mahama writes, 'Literature on ethnic groups in Northern Ghana is appallingly scarce. And when one is lucky to find a book on any of the tribes, it is invariably found either to be out of date or limited in scope or too superficial'.[13]

With post-national historical approaches, smaller local studies began to emerge, as did gender studies: Christine Oppong's Female and Male in West Africa (1983) was the groundbreaking work in this field. Despite the rapid growth in literature on African women since the mid-1980s, 'women remain largely invisible or misrepresented in mainstream, or rather "malestream", African history'.[14] Furthermore,

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[9] A. H. Wilson 'Oburoni outside the Whale: Reflections on an Experience in Ghana' (1998) 26 Theory and Research in Social Education, 418

[10] D.E. Apter, 'Ghana's Independence: Triumph and Paradox' (2008) 98 Transition, 11

[11] Adjaye, 'Perspectives', 10, 19-20

[12] ibid. 10, 14-15; C. K. Adenaike and J. Vansina, In Pursuit of History: Fieldwork in Africa (Oxford: James Currey,1996), xi

[13] I. Mahama, History and Traditions of the Dagbon (Tamale: Gillbt 2004), i

[14] Zeleza, P. T. 'Gender Biases in African Historiography' in Oyèrónké Oyěwùmi (ed.) African Gender Studies: A Reader (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 207

African gender studies have been set back by the insistence of many African males that 'our women are not oppressed'.[15] These men reject feminism and sexism as concepts relevant to Africa. The issues of classism, racism and poverty are considered more important factors in the oppression of women (that is, when it is admitted that oppression is even a problem). This stance is essentially male propaganda, designed to prevent African women from raising themselves out of their predicament.[16]

The myths, proverbs and folktales of Africa have a similar effect. Much of Africa's history has been passed on through generations orally. As a frequently used form of dialogue, proverbs and folktales have become authoritative sources for describing how life is and prescribing what it ought to be.[17] Stories warn against personal ambition and 'crude' use of power; meanwhile, they emphasise the 'correct' use of women's power, that is, to be hard-working wives, to create life and to look after children.[18] Oduyoye writes:

Folktales are woven with threats that specify gender roles to appropriately prepare men and women for their roles in society. When a girl... shows signs of non-conformity, the telling of a story ensures that she does not become an example to be emulated.[19]

Proverbs are tools of gender socialisation and put women in a subordinate, even subservient, position to men. For instance, 'When a woman makes the giant drum, it is kept in a man's room' and 'Like hens, women wait for cocks to crow announcing the arrival of daylight'. Women are frequently compared to hens and chickens in reference to their mothering role, though it is made clear that the father - 'the cock' - rules the roost. Additionally, Tim Woods highlights the 'persistent debilitating effects of constructing images of

[15] Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa, 13
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid. 20-21
[18] Ibid. 27-28, 43, 49
[19] Ibid. 52

the African mother as Mother Africa' - another common occurrence, particularly in folktales.[20] The reverence of women as wives and mothers downplays their agency in other areas. In the same way that exclusionary generalisations have been made by historians, proverbs and folktales 'create and reinforce the image of an undifferentiated mass of humanity called "woman",' resulting in 'a composite picture that militates against an individual woman's personhood'.[21] By encouraging conformity and warning against too much ambition, they preserve patriarchal oppression. Meanwhile, in literature, the myth of the naive rural woman is used 'to buoy up [the African male's] conservatism and his yearning for that pre-colonial and patriarchal past where he was definitely king as father, husband and ruler'.[22]

SCHOLARLY PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN WOMEN

Africa's recent and blemished historiography, complicated by the deep-rooted myths of the continent, has resulted in a sense of scholarly confusion about the status of women in rural Africa. There is a common perception that rural African women are permanently oppressed by patriarchy, first falling under the rule of their fathers and then their husbands.[23] This school of thought draws upon the repressive effects of colonialism, which was both racist and sexist in its ideologies and practices. Though male domination was a feature of precolonial societies, women's position relative to men deteriorated under the foreign structures of domination introduced by colonialism.[24] Their predicament is succinctly summed up in the words of Tambudzai, a character in the African novel Nervous Conditions, set in postcolonial Rhodesia: 'Easy! As if it is ever easy.

[20] T. Woods, African Pasts: Memory and History in African Literatures (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 100
[21] Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa, 60-61
[22] O. Ogundipe-Leslie in Woods, African Pasts, 104
[23] N. Sudarkasa, 'The "Status of Women" in Indigenous African Societies' in Andrea Cornwall (ed.) Readings in Gender in Africa (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 25
[24] Florence Stratton in Woods, African Pasts, 103-4

And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other'.[25] Other features of African life are also deemed responsible for the subjugation of women: Elsbeth Robson claims that 'language, culture and the church very much legitimate, validate, and reinforce sexism to the detriment of African women'.[26] Here, Robson implicitly refers to the damaging effects of proverbs and folktales, acknowledging that they not only influence perceptions, but impinge on reality. Oduyoye comments that binding a woman's sense of being to marriage and child-bearing has been a traditional means of marginalising women from power.[27] Akosua Ampofo convincingly argues that gender socialisation within families, beginning from childhood, limits women's access to autonomy, mobility, opportunity and power later in life. Then, 'during adolescence the world expands for boys but contracts for girls. Boys enjoy new privileges reserved for men, and girls endure new restrictions reserved for women'.[28]

A second, oppositional, view claims that rural African women are not victims of patriarchal oppression and stresses their independence and control over their own lives and resources. The loudest voices in this line of argument are those men mentioned earlier who seek to render feminism a non-issue for Africa.[29] However, the concept of male domination has also been challenged by scholars without an agenda. Christine Obbo has argued that the myth of male control goes hand in hand with the myth of female submission in Africa.[30] Sjaak Van Der Geest agrees: 'Outward male dominance appears perhaps to be a cloak to cover the lack of real male power, and female deference is often nothing more than a sop thrown to the men to satisfy their

[25] Ibid. 113
[26] E. Robson, 'Review [untitled]' (1998) 28 Journal of Religion in Africa, 251-252
[27] Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa, 153
[28] A. Ampofo, '"When Men Speak Women Listen": Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents' Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues' (2001) 5 African Journal of Reproductive Health, 198
[29] Oduyoye, Daughters of Anowa, 13
[30] Ibid. 101-102

pride while the women carry on the handling of their own affairs.'.[31] Susan Carol Rogers, who has studied the myth of male dominance in detail, writes, 'The assumption of universal male dominance... is belied by evidence that women wield considerable power within the context of the peasant household and community'.[32] Men's monopoly over positions of authority and prestige contribute to the illusion of male control; meanwhile women's power, though present, does not usually involve official authority or legitimisation. Women are often primarily associated with the domestic; even if that is the case, the domestic sphere is central to rural societies and has important implications for life beyond the home.[33] However it is incorrect to assume that the female social world is exclusively associated with the domestic, especially in rural areas where women are so visible and active in the church, the town, the market, and the farm. Furthermore, Niara Sudarkasa has labelled it 'inappropriate' that women and men in Africa are 'everywhere related to each other in a hierarchical fashion'.[34] Oppong, while noting the segregation of the sexes, simultaneously draws attention to the 'sense of connection and complementarity of the roles of women and men' apparent in several spheres of traditional West African life.[35]

In recent years, a third idea has emerged that African women embody a dichotomy of power and submission. Sarah LeVine explains:

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[31] S. van der Geest, 'Role Relationships Between Husband and Wife in Rural Ghana' (1976) 38 Journal of Marriage and Family, 557

[32] S. C. Rogers, 'Female forms of power and the myth of male dominance: a model of female/male interaction in peasant society' (1975) 2 American Ethnologist, 727; It is important to note that African rural settlements are not, strictly, peasant societies, but links can (and have been) drawn between the two - see, for example, J. M. Cohen, 'Peasants and Feudalism in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia' (1974) 8 Canadian Journal of African Studies, 155-157

[33] Rogers, 'The myth of male dominance', 730

[34] Sudarkasa, 'Status of Women', 25

[35] C. Oppong, (ed.) Female and Male in West Africa (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 72

African women... bear a subsistence burden unique among women of the world. As the wives of polygynists on this most polygynous of continents, they share marital rights to a degree that is rare in other places. Yet their relative freedom of movement and independence of activity and spirit have long attracted the interests of outside observers.[36]

LeVine raises an interesting point. Rurality demands resilience: as mentioned, women are outside the home as well as in it, and necessity often forces women to take on the the powerful roles of protector and provider. Despite this apparent equality with men, Sub-Saharan Africa is the only major region where polygyny, a plural marriage arrangement whereby the man has more than one wife, is still widely practiced. Due to Westernisation, it is generally no longer accepted in urban areas (though it is still visible in Muslim communities, and unofficial polygynous practices such as 'outside wives' - basically extramarital affairs - have replaced outright polygyny), but remains a prominent feature of rural life. Scholars have highlighted the inherent asymmetry of the polygynous arrangement: Miriam Zeitzen, in her extensive cross-cultural study of polygamy, writes, 'Issues of gender and power run like undercurrents through the whole discussion on polygyny, because to most women it implies unequal relations between men and women, as reflected in men's ability to take several wives versus women's one husband'.[37] However African feminists have criticised western feminists for their overemphasis on gender oppression in their discussions of the institution. Indeed, the debate about the pros and cons of polygyny is often undermined by the argument that it is tied to a western/non-western agenda. It is said that western commentators, in their outspoken disapproval of the custom, have failed to properly understand the conditions and concerns of African women.[38]

[36] S. LeVine (with R. A. Levine), Mothers and Wives: Gusii Women of East Africa (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1
[37] M. K. Zeitzen, Polygamy: A Cross-Cultural Analysis (Oxford: Berg, 2008), 125
[38] Ibid.

Sangeetha Madhavan emphasises the potentially collaborative nature of polygynous unions, arguing that co-wives often develop co-operative strategies and can gain freedom, mobility and autonomy from sharing productive, reproductive and domestic responsibilities.[39] Their unity empowers them against male hegemony. Others have indicated the potential economic advantages of polygynous marriages, especially in terms of human resources, since more wives produce more children and thus provide a broader productive base. However this argument is becoming less significant in areas where education has been introduced and become the main priority. Laurie DeRose observes, 'Children and wives used to impart wealth, but now men must be wealthy to have many of them'.[40] Polygyny is a hotly contested issue, but negative perceptions inevitably come to the fore in the western mind, and its continued existence contributes to the view of rural African women as subservient and 'backwards'. However we must avoid slipping into the Eurocentric mindset; women's experiences with polygyny vary widely within sociocultural and personal contexts, and extensive and in-depth examination of individuals is necessary before coming to a conclusion on the practice and its impact on women's agency.[41] Only by including the voices of African women in the debate can we hope to develop an understanding of the rural reality. LeVine calls for a move beyond the abstractions of ethnographic description to actual individuals and how they think and feel about their lives, in order to 'help eliminate the misrepresentations of Africans that still abound in Western thought'.[42]

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH

African women's literature has been instrumental in banishing stereotypes and illuminating reality, albeit through fictional characters.

[39] S. Madhavan, 'Best of Friends and Worst of Enemies: Competition and Collaboration in Polygyny' (2002) 41 Ethnology, 69
[40] L. F. DeRose, 'Marriage Type and Relative Spousal Power in Ghana: Changing Effects of Monogamy During Early Fertility Decline' (2007) 38 Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 136
[41] Zeitzen, Polygamy, 130
[42] LeVine, Mothers and Wives, 2

Female authors on the continent have used methods of 'memory work' to encourage a shift in the position of the African woman from the passive object of patriarchal ideology to the assertive subject of her own narrative. As the female protagonist in Zimbabwean novel Nehandra, says, 'Hope for the nation is born out of the intensity of newly created memory'.[43] While the social behaviour of African women is well-documented, their patterns of personal experience and private feelings have rarely been explored,[44] except through literature:

Scholarly studies of society can be compared to aerial photographs: they may locate a church within a general layout of a town, but they cannot show us what the church is really like. A work of literature, on the other hand, presents something like a personal portrait, etched sharply... the life studies which they provide open up wider insights than are possible when a whole society is herded together.[45]

Oral histories can do the same, only more effectively, since the voices they produce are real and direct. In recent years, the western obsession with documentary evidence has been renounced and the validity of oral history acknowledged. According to Luis White, Stephan Miescher and David Cohen, three prominent historians of Africa, 'No element has served as a clearer signature of and for African historiography than the development of a central position for the oral source and oral history within the programmes of recovering the African past'.[46] Indeed, Alessandro Portelli stresses the importance of oral sources in giving us information about those whose written history is either missing or distorted.[47] Paul Thompson says that oral history 'can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place'.[48] It seems only natural that oral history has a significant role in the discovery of

[43] Woods, African Pasts, 105; 116-117
[44] LeVine, Mothers and Wives, 2
[45] Okpewho, 'Understanding African Marriage', 337
[46] Author's italics. White et al, African Words, 2
[47] Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', 34
[48] P. Thompson, 'The Voice of the Past' in Perks and Thompson, The Oral History Reader, 22

African past: not only does Africa have an inherently vibrant oral tradition, but illiteracy, especially in rural areas, has meant that written historical documents are sparse. Hampate Ba argues that the written word has not yet adequately encroached on the spoken word as the chief means of communicating knowledge in most African countries.[49] Oral history is even more significant where women are concerned, given that 70 percent of the illiterate population of the world is female.[50] Through interview, the historian can facilitate respondents in speaking for themselves, giving them greater control over the view of rural African women that is projected to the world and an opportunity to contest - or confirm - perceptions held by both westerners and African males.

Oral history is not a flawless dialogue. It is impossible to exhaust the entire memory of a single informant, therefore oral sources are inherently incomplete. The data extracted from interviews may differ depending on factors such as time, place, and interaction between interviewer and respondent.[51] Furthermore Thompson highlights the downsides of a relationship 'in which a middle-class professional determines who is to be interviewed and what is to be discussed and then disappears with a tape of somebody's life which they never hear about again - and if they did, might be indignant at the unintended meanings imposed on their words'.[52] This problem is intensified when the researcher is in foreign territory. Daphne Patai points to the inherent inequalities that exist between 'First World' researchers and 'Third World' respondents.[53] Indeed one of the most prominent challenges when interviewing rural African respondents is an ethical one, encapsulated by the concerns of Patai:

[49] As referenced in K. M. Phiri, 'Orature and the written word in African history' (Public lecture delivered to the Humanities Advanced Technology & Information Institute, University of Glasgow, 24-11-2010)
[50] Geiger, 'Women's Life Histories', 335
[51] Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', 39
[52] Thompson, 'The Voice of the Past', 30
[53] D. Patai, 'US Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?' in S. B. Gluck and Patai (eds.) Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History (London: Routledge, 1991), 137-154

I was troubled by the sheer poverty of some of the people whom I interviewed, by my limited ability to give practical assistance, and by the problems attendant even upon offering of such assistance which clearly signals patronage and reintroduces a hierarchy that was at times absent in the intense intimacy of the interview situation.[54]

Even if a level of equality can be established, it is rendered insignificant when the researcher goes home at the end of the project, reflecting her privileged ability to leave.[55] Calvin Pryluck comments on this matter, 'Ultimately, we are all outsiders in the lives of others. We can take our gear and go home; they have to continue their lives where they are'.[56] However, Marjory Wolf says that if it wasn't for these differences, we would not be there doing research in the first place. Furthermore, an outsider's position can be favourable, since 'the foreigner... casts a fresh eye on a scene that to the native-born is so familiar that it is invisible'.[57] There are two possible reassurances which may ease the concerns of the interviewer: first, women are hopefully validated and empowered by the interview process; second, their stories can at the very least highlight existing problems and raise consciousness, and at the most create potential for positive change. The Popular Memory Group believe that oral history is 'a necessary aspect of the struggle for a better world'.[58]

David Dunaway questions how much a few isolated historical examples can account for the whole culture[59] - but the Personal Narratives Group contend that generalisation without attention to the

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[54] Patai, 'Ethical Problems of Personal Narratives, or, Who Should Eat the Last Piece of Cake?' (1987) 8 International Journal of Oral History, 8-9
[55] D. Wolf, 'Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork' in D. L. Wolf (ed.) Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork (Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), 35
[56] C. Pryluck in Patai, 'Who Should Eat the Last Piece of Cake?', 9
[57] M. Wolf, 'Afterword: Musings from an Old Gray Wolf' in Wolf, Feminist Dilemmas, 219
[58] Popular Memory Group, 'Popular Memory: Theory, politics, method' in Perks and Thompson, *The Oral History Reader*, 47
[59] D. K. Dunaway, 'Transcription: Shadow or Reality?' (1984) 12 Oral History Review, 113-114

truths of experience is fruitless.[60] Subjectivity can be a good thing: oral history rejects the privileging of one story over another and accepts the multiplicity of voices. Interviews provide valuable personal perspectives, and subtle and complex historical insights may be gained from the intertwining of individual lives. Since we cannot transcribe an entire culture, we must interview in order to piece it together and illuminate it.[61] By looking at the links between women's experiences and the truths that they reveal, historians can avoid 'deceptive generalisations' and develop 'knowledge that admits the fact and value of difference into its definition'.[62]

While the status of women in rural Africa will remain a matter for scholarly debate, since degrees of power and agency will inevitably vary widely depending on personal factors, that debate will be better informed by the inclusion of female African voices. As Portelli points out, 'Historical work using oral sources is unfinished because of the nature of the sources; historical work excluding oral sources is incomplete by definition'.[63] Only once we are familiar with the 'smaller picture' through oral history can we hope to fill in the omissions of Africa's history and achieve a 'true' account which is inclusive of the experiences of rural African women. Oral history can break down barriers: while rurality, Africanness and femaleness may be obstacles to fair representation in traditional historical research and writing, they thrive in the oral history setting. Africa's strong oral tradition, coupled with the ultimate aim of the oral historian to give marginalised groups a voice, makes the interview the ideal means for gathering information about rural African women. It is the only form of dialogue with the potential to bridge the gap between perceptions of rural African women and the often wildly different reality.

[60] Personal Narratives Group, Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989) 262
[61] Dunaway, 'Transcription', 113-114
[62] Personal Narratives Group, Interpreting Women's Lives, 262-264
[63] Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', 40

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Dialogues of Desolate Men: Narrating the Conflicted Self in the Dialogical Poetry of David Lyndsay and William Lithgow

Lorna MacBean

Literature in early modern Scotland was a medium for education which stemmed from the king and court to the wider community. Historically, Scotland's literature conveys a penchant for moral and social reform in which the king acted as a spiritual figurehead used to represent the self and society as a whole, enabling the literature to centre around an identifiable exemplar. The parallels between David Lyndsay and William Lithgow are few – they wrote in very different times and were very different men – however, their poetry displays the unease they both felt in their kingless Scotland. The monarchical void forced both poets to identify themselves outwith the influence of the King and Court and to resituate their voices within the new political and cultural landscapes. This paper explores the way in which both poets used the form of dialogue to restructure the method of didactic transmission from taking the monarch as the spiritual moorings, to looking to reason and, as they believed to be the moral epitome, God.

Dialogues are prevalent in all studies of life, from the scientific study of interaction between subject and stimuli to prove life, to the existential consideration of the interactions between people to prove

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existence. The structure of dialogue presents two (or more) speakers and the communication and interaction between them, i.e. the conversation. By interacting, by conversing, the speakers mutually create a form which exists in a separate space, creating a platform on which the pluralities of existence can be explored. Mapped onto the self, dialogue turns inward and allows the different facets of an individual's existence to be considered as independent speakers, thus provoking an examination of the interaction exhibited in the individual's internal dialogue. It is this plurality of self-awareness which causes the individual to recognise the independent forces operating within the self and which expands the dimensions of the self, enabling the internal dialogue to reconcile disruptions in the authority of the individual's fundamental perspective.

Writing enables a certain kind of dialogue to come into play by superimposing the metaphor of dialogue onto the self, allowing internal voices to be separated into characters and their interactions to be dramatised. In David Lyndsay's *Ane Dialog Betwix Experience and ane Courteour*, 1554, and William Lithgow's *A Conflict Betweene the Pilgrime and his Muse,* c.1607, dialogue is used as a method to externalise these internal voices and use their conversation to exhibit a deliberation within the self. Experience and the Muse, respectively, are allegorical characters, a particularly medieval poetic device which intended the character to be interpreted as an embodiment of the particular quality they were named after. The nature of this technique, used to "represent what is immaterial in picturable terms",[1] is most relevant when applied to inner dialogues as it allows these abstract voices to be personified and perform the internal dialogue of the persona for the reader in recognisable terms of rhetoric. The literarification of these voices allows them to operate in a reading space where abstract concepts can be examined outwith the immediacy and consequences of reality. This practice of reading allegory and symbolism made a connection between the writer and

[1] C.S Lewis, 'Allegory' in *The Allegory of Love*, (Oxford, 1936), pp. 44 – 111, pg 44.

their audience, providing established methods which used literature as a conduit for moral and social education.

The Pilgrime and the Courteour are respectively the personas who narrate the poems. By using the first person narrative, the audience is invited to 'wear the mask' and adopt the role of the persona in the poem. By expanding the 'I' into two voices, the writer amplifies the model of dialogue and uses it as a cathartic and provocative mode of expression. The internal disruption in the self is impossible to talk about without using some form of metaphor, and "as the conflict becomes more and more important, it is inevitable that these metaphors should expand and coalesce, and finally turn into a fully-fledged allegorical poem".[2] Where the character of the king, with whom a Scottish audience would readily identify, is lacking Lyndsay and Lithgow use characters who are in search of something, immediately casting them into the role of the student who will learn to relocate their moral moorings within themselves and God.

Lyndsay wrote in pre-Reformation Scotland through the courts of James V, Mary of Guise, Mary, queen of Scots and James VI. As an educator of James V, Lyndsay was well practiced in the art of propagating reform through allegorical literature. His poetry spans the genres of *specula principum* to chivalric romance, always with king and country in mind. It is clear from Lyndsay's poetry that he aligned good governance with moral virtue. This was a tenet of the humanist reformers who believed that the King, as governor of men on earth, should strive to perform his duty with Christian judiciousness:

> ...it is pretty well agreed among the philosophers that the most healthy form [of rule] is monarchy; not surprisingly, for, by analogy with the deity, when the totality of things is in one person's power, then indeed, in so far as he is in this respect in the image of God, he excels everyone else in wisdom and

[2] Ibid, pg 60.

> goodness, and, being quite independent, concentrates exclusively on helping the state.[3]

Situating himself securely within these humanist parameters, Lyndsay's "regicentric verse develops the figure of an archetypal Christian king, a just monarch whose sound moral judgement would ensure the temporal and spiritual welfare of all three estates".[4] It is this figure which is lacking in the perceived audience at the time *Ane Dialog* was written. In 1554 the government of Scotland was in a state of flux. King James V died in 1542, leaving the throne to his infant daughter, Mary. The role of moral figurehead was traditionally assigned the male ruler, so one can empathise with a poet who has educated and fashioned his king to a model of this archetype, and who has then been denied the longevity of his rule. Without this archetype, Scotland had been left in "ane cairfull cace".[5] Where Lyndsay had once directed his attention to educating the monarch in self-governance, he now needed to produce a work which would address the lay, as well as the learned, soul of the country, shifting his "implied audience from that of king to the kingdom, his reforming agenda extending beyond the court to the country".[6]

In the epistle and prologue to *Ane Dialog,* Lyndsay sets up structural patterns sympathetic to his didactic intent. The persona conjures images from scripture where God has cleansed the earth to rid man of his sin. Highlighting the causal pattern between man's sin and God's wrath, the persona aligns the punishment of God with the absence of virtue:

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[3] Desiderius Erasmus, 'The birth and upbringing of a Christian prince' in Lisa Jardine (trans. and ed), *The Education of A Christian Prince*, (Cambridge, 1997), 37.

[4] Alexander J. Cuthbert, 'Reforming rhetoric: the immodest proposals of David Lyndsay' (2009) *eSharp: Special Issue: Spinning Scotland: Exploring Literary and Cultural Perspectives*, pp. 18 – 33, 19.

[5] David Lyndsay, *Ane Dialog Betwix Experience and ane Courteour*, in Fitzedward Hall (ed.), *The Monarch and other poems of Sir David Lyndsay*, (London) pp. 1 – 206, l. 11.

[6] Cuthbert, 22.

And cause thame clearly for tyll understand
That, for the brekyng of the Lordis command,
His thrinfald wande of flagellatioun
Hes scurgit this pure realme of Scotland
Be mortall weris, baith be sey and land,
With mony terrabyll tribulation,
Tharefore mak to tham trew narratioun
That al thir weris, this derth, hunger, and pest,
Was nocht bot for our synnis manifest.[7]

This parallel suggests that Lyndsay was highlighting the peril of having no moral guidance, paralleling Scotland's vulnerable situation as a country without a spiritual figurehead and therefore in danger of falling into sin. The "apocalyptic"[8] setting here is much more pronounced than in Lyndsay's other verse. His morality play *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* used a pantomimical satire of bad governance to create laughter in the reading space to provoke reflection and reform. However, there is no room in *Ane Dialog* for humour, as "sad sentence sulde have ane sad indyte".[9] The anticipated reader is not one who laughs, but one who listens.

As discussed by Cuthbert, "the opening stanzas of the prologue form an inverted *locus amoenus*, with the descriptions of the transmutability of the natural world acting as a pathetic fallacy to express the moribund and restless state of the mind of the persona".[10] The persona's mind is plagued by the misery which "from day to day in earth... dois increas",[11] the passage of time being particularly relevant to Lyndsay who, nearing the end of his life, had seen the rise and fall the estates but would not live to the see the success of the Reformers. The persona does not meditate on this too long,

[7] Lyndsay, ll. 46 – 54.
[8] Cuthbert, 25.
[9] Lyndsay, l. 210.
[10] Cuthbert, 23.
[11] Lyndsay, l. 119.

however, and proceeds into the traditional courtly love setting of a May morning in the following lines:

> Bot tumlyng in my bed I mycht not lye
> Quhairfore I fuir furth in ane Maye morning.[12]

If the poet had stayed in this metaphoric bed of misery, the persona could not proceed from the ruminative patterns of thought and would be trapped in a depressive state of silence. By writing, by participating in a particular kind of conversation, the opposing voices of the self can be externalised and thus distanced from the individual. This expansion creates a critical and reflective metafictional dimension which exists in the reading space, allowing the self to be examined and furthered, breaking the ruminative pattern of anxiety and self-doubt. The cathartic effect of writing is reinforced by the "medicinall"[13] influence that describing the Eden-like garden of the *locus amoenus* has on the persona. However here, too, Lyndsay exercises restraint and prudence over being distracted by the beauty of nature. The description focuses on the behaviour of Phebus, the god of the sun and the classical figure who portrayed God and the king. Phebus' departure from the sky, the state of "his regioun"[14] in his absence and his return to his "throne imperiall"[15] present a soteriological parallel between the landscape waiting for the return of the sun and Scotland waiting for the return of her king. When Phebus does return the poet is awakened by an insincere and decorative "suggurit sang"[16] which betrays the seriousness of the poem's subject. The poet awakes enlightened, but, paradoxically, this has happened through the rejection of the Eden-like garden which distracts the reader from his moral lesson and the poet from his sombre matter.

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[12] Ibid, ll. 124 – 125.
[13] Ibid, l. 134.
[14] Ibid, l. 148.
[15] Ibid, l. 141.
[16] Ibid, l. 161.

The format of *Ane Dialog* echoes the Catholic teaching method of catechism whereby scripture was taught and learned by rote in a series of questions and answers. This method was also used by Luther in his sermons recorded in *The Large Catechism*:

> In such reading, conversation, and meditation the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and fervour, so that day by day we relish and appreciate the Catechism more greatly. This is according to Christ's promise in Matt 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them".[17]

By invoking this conversation, Luther intended to dispel the elitist nature of biblical study by "presumptuous saints"[18] who asserted their knowledge of the scripture. In Luther's model, the student of scripture would never be finished studying because the goal was not the possession of such knowledge, but the actual act of acquiring the knowledge. By reading and rereading, the voice of scripture would be established in the reader's mind, emphasising the permanence of the lessons and consolidating the faith of the student:

> Let [all Christians] continue to read and teach, to learn and meditate and ponder. Let them never stop until they have proved by experience that they have taught the devil to death and have become wiser than God himself.[19]

It is in this fashion that Experience belies the vain hope of the Courteour for contentment and rest. In the initial meeting the "ageit

[17] Martin Luther, 'Preface' in Robert H. Fisher (trans.) *The Large Catechism*, (Philadelphia, 1959), 3.
[18] Ibid, 5.
[19] Ibid, 7.

man"[20], who is described in Christ-like imagery, beckons the persona to sit underneath a tree with him. The Courteour is glad of this rest being "tyrit of travelling"[21] and, on finding the man's name is Experience, bestows upon him all his woes in the hope of being consoled. The Courteour describes his experience at court which alludes to the voice of Lyndsay whose experience tells him "everilk court bene variant".[22] The Courteour is idealising that Experience can provide the salvation he seeks, becoming Luther's idea of the Christian who thinks he has learnt everything and should be rewarded. His weariness causes him to think in contrarealist, contrafactual terms; causing him to undermine his lifelong quest for salvation by idealising that there could be a more immediately gratifying solution. The Courteour describes the despondence that sometimes comes with philosophy: "Quhen I belief to be best easit/ Most suddenlye I am displeasit".[23] The tone is reflective of a man who has troubled with virtue all his life and now, at his age, feels he deserves some reward. This lost state of wonder and joy at finally achieving salvation is immediately denounced by Experience in his third utterance: "Thow art an egret fuill, soune".[24]

Experience is the spiritual conscience of the persona, acting to dispel the presumption of deserved salvation. When this is found on earth in "ryches, dignitie and rentis"[25] it may please the body, but it poisons the mind. The burden of virtue, Experience says, has to be held by all living beings as they maintain their morality in life to gain passage to heaven. The Courteour's questions form the perfect pupil – he demands to be taught by Experience how God will save man from sin. By playing out the role of student and teacher, Lyndsay constructs the perfect scene to model stories from scripture in to an accessible didactic poetic:

[20] Lyndsay, l. 301.
[21] Ibid, l. 349.
[22] Ibid, l. 354.
[23] Ibid, ll. 342 – 3.
[24] Ibid, l. 358.
[25] Ibid, l. 395

> Bot I sall do the best I can
> Schortlie to schaw that cairfull cace,
> With the support of Goddis grace.[26]

The importance of the accessibility of scripture to every level of society was an important Reformist principle. Luther's translation of the Bible from Latin was printed in Germany in 1534, however, the Geneva Bible in English was not published until 1560 and not circulated in Scotland until 1579.[27] In the absence of a Bible in the Scots vernacular, Lyndsay is "establishing his 'lytil quhair' as a Christian handbook as well as a source for social reform."[28] Lyndsay's aim is to evolve the elaboration of Scots to communicate theological and religious thought to the common man as well as the learned. As Cuthbert discusses:

> For this national reform to happen the lay community must have, as the Courteour suggests, the 'bukis necessare' in the Scots 'toung vulgare'.[29]

The didactic intent is to attain a justly governed kingdom through teaching self-governance to all. The lack of a governing figure is a catalyst for this response which bypasses the monarch and looks directly to God for guidance.

The absence of male rule was ended by the infant King James VI (1566 – 1625) after Mary's abdication in 1567. James VI was a dominating figure in Scottish culture and politics. As the Renaissance dawned he made sure Scotland was in the European literary vanguard, merging the penchant for moral investigation with a renaissance aesthetic of artistic expression and linguistic experimentation. James VI successfully negotiated his monarchy with

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[26] Ibid, ll. 335 – 7.
[27] http://www.genevabible.com/introduction.html (04/02/11).
[28] Cuthbert, 26.
[29] Cuthbert, 28.

the clergy by advocating the Bodinian theory of the divine right of kings, re-establishing connections between the kirk, culture and court which had been somewhat lost during his mother's reign. However, after the Union of the Crowns in 1603, which saw the departure of king from his country and his influence from her culture, his voice was muffled by the miles between his English throne and the kirk. Despite the aims of the king, the distinctively independent legal, clerical and linguistic practices in either country prevented the proper integration of economy, culture and society. The carpet had been pulled from under Scotland's feet and now, after sustaining herself through decades of monarchical and governmental uncertainty, her once strong and centred cultural infrastructure had been undone.

As has been seen in Lyndsay, literature in Scotland was a vehicle for moral, religious and political education which emphasised reading as a tool for provoking reflective self-education. Continued into and throughout James VI's reign, the established channel of literature as communication and unification between king and people remained strong. With the departure of the monarch, an absence was created in the identity of the people. As Theo van Heijnsbergen explains:

> …the sovereign provided the most important secular template for virtue, through which individuality could be absorbed in to the community, and for both individual and public identity. Such identities were, moreover, disseminated particularly through textual representation. The collective image that elsewhere neutralised divisions within the nation and the individual (the monarch as both political body and model for an integrated self) in Scotland instead generated faultlines between past and present, Catholics and Protestants, male and female, and Scotland and Britain. Both individual and collective identities were thus left in a decentred condition of displaced or deferred identity, which has appealed to

> other cultures especially in times when certainties are challenged.[30]

And so it is a broken soil from which William Lithgow departs. Continuing in the vein of assessing the effect of the monarch's absence on the writer, William Lithgow's poetry displays a deliberative character who also turns to his faith in God for guidance.

In his most studied work, *The Totall Discourse of the Rare Adventures, and Painefull Peregrinations of Long Nineteene Yeares Trauailes from Scotland to the Most Famous Kingdomes in Europe, Asia and Affrka*, a prose text which documents his travels from Scotland across the world, William Lithgow presents himself as a "provokative controversialist"[31] who writes with a single-mindedness and unwavering arrogance that has caused his critics to question the "professed theocentric focus of his writing".[32] In his encounters with foreign lands and cultures, Lithgow asserts his protestant ethics not without a degree of showmanship, such as when he protects a Dalmatian widow from the Catholic Frenchman's "luxurious lust",[33] constructing the narrative around his self-made chivalry. Constantly superimposing his own moral map turns his experiences, from the open-minded observance one may think modern travel writing provokes, into Lithgow's paradoxical education that he uses to reinforce his self, not reassess his position.

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[30] Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'Early Modern Literature in Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation' (2007) in Bob Harris Alan MacDonald (eds) *Volume 2: Early Modern Scotland, c. 1500 – 1707*, pp. 225 – 242, 241.

[31] James Burns, 'William Lithgow's dalida: a seventeenth-century traveller's departure from Scotland' (1996) in *Scottish Literary Journal*, pp. 1-15, 9.

[32] Theo van Heijnsbergen, the phrase is taken from an earlier unpublished version of ' William Lithgow's "Fierce Castalian Vein": travel-writing and the re-location of identity' (2010) in K. J. McGinley and N. Royan (eds), *The Apparelling of Truth: Literature and Literary Culture in the Reign of James VI* (Cambridge) pp. 223 – 240.

[33] William Lithgow, *The Totall Discourse*, ed. I Okes (London, 1640).

However, Lithgow makes a convincing case for the man who travels with an already formulated view of the world. The traveller with an "unconstant disposition, to whom every accident is a constellation by which best thoughts are diversified"[34] is at a disadvantage. To Lithgow, being too open and changeable breeds the inability to distinguish the true constellations from the false, the latter of which are conceived by passion as "the heart of man is insatiable being set upon whatsoever object, his predominant affection listeth".[35] Lithgow has no anchor in a monarchical or domestic sense, only constellations to guide him. His physical home is unsteady, but this serves him well to his own aims: allowing him to become the "self-justifying Protestant of superior understanding who can travel among the faithless and keep his inner self intact".[36] In the absence of his king, Lithgow turns to his kirk for identity, anchoring himself in his belief in God's plan:

> I never find affliction fall on me
> Without desert, for God is true and just:
> Nor shal it come, and without profit be,
> For God is good, as mercifull I trust.
> Then welcome all afflictions sent from God,
> He whom he loves he chastneth with his rod.[37]

In *A Conflict Between the Pilgrime and his Muse*[38] Lithgow presents a deliberative character without the hitherto single-minded disposition portrayed in his prose. Turning away from the considerations of the external world and his self, Lithgow is exploring the internal conflicts of that self and his conscience. As Reid notes:

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[34] Lithgow, *TD,* 342.
[35] Ibid, 342.
[36] van Heijnsbergen, published version of 'William's Lithgow's "Fierce Castalian Vein": travel-writing and the re-location of identity', 228.
[37] Lithgow, *TD*, 8.
[38] A poem dedicated to Lord Graham, Earle of Montrose, found in *The Pilgrime's Farewell,* Lithgow's first volume of poetry. All references to the poem are taken from *The Poetical Remains of William Lithgow MDCXVIII – MDCLX,* ed. J. Maidment (1863).

> Moreover this inner life, such as it is, seems to have a way of detaching him from the world he travels through. I should not wish to exaggerate the personal mark on him of what was after all a highly conventional form of spirituality. Still one feels his experience of faith when he was tortured by the Inquisition brings to a head a sort of religious feeling that turned inwards away from the world around him to God, who is always the same everywhere, annihilating the accidents of geography that travel is concerned with. Equally his occasional stoic meditations draw him away from taking in the circumstantiality of the world. The mind is its own place.[39]

Lithgow's distinction between body and mind parallel the effects of travel on the transmutable physical life and of the Christian view of the resilient eternal soul. This internalisation of a dual existence brings into being the internal dialogue which allows Lithgow to exercise reason over his self-doubt and anxieties about travelling. Where he may be injured in the physical, he is able to "triumph in minde, a figge for care".[40] The Pilgrime always refutes the Muse's worry about the physical pains, threats of homelessness, disease and corruption, emphasising that "to liue below my minde, I cannot bow". [41]This distinction shows that as well as prioritising his spiritual existence over the physical, Lithgow is aware of the internal duality of the mind and body, which at times operate independently of each other, and the control that the mind can exercise over bodily constraints. This recognition further depicts the internal narration of the traveller, indeed of all conscious beings, which is inevitably distinct from the

[39] David Reid, 'What William Lithgow was doing abroad: the rare adventures and painfull peregrinations' in Caie, Lyall, Mapstone and Simpson (eds) *The European Sun*, (East Lothian, 2001) pp. 520 – 533, 528.
[40] Lithgow, *A Conflict*, l. 108.
[41] Ibid, l. 7.

person we portray in external reality. The internal narration can never be truly externalised and what Lithgow presents in his poetry, and sometimes unconsciously in his prose, is a fascinating dissection of what it means to exist, to always and inescapably be with another which is at the same time your own self.

In questioning the Pilgrime's intentions, the Muse is guarding against the Pilgrime's mind mimicking the wandering of his feet:

> I graunt it's true, and more esteem'd abroade
> But zeale growes colde, and thou forgetst the way:
> Better it were at home to serue thy GOD,
> Than wandring still, to wander quite astray:
> Thou canst not trauaile, keepe they conscience too,
> For that is more, than Pilgrimes well can doe.[42]

This alludes to Lithgow's internal struggle between his need to keep travelling and his thoughts of home. Through conversing between will and reason, the Pilgrime is able to overcome his anxieties and sustain a confidence in being able to exist outwith the parameters of his homeland. This practice of self-challenge and self-confirmation is what Lithgow thrives on, led by the belief in God that he will prevail over the "Perrill, Paines, in Trauaile, and in VVandring".[43] In committing the wanderings of his mind to paper, Lithgow is able to create a reinforced role, "realising in a specially intense way one's identity (in a sense) with someone who (in another sense) one is not".[44] By externalising the construction of this 'role' in dialogue, Lithgow is proving and reiterating himself to himself and to his audience, thereby asserting his identity through narrating his reality and thus characterising himself as the spiritual and literary protagonist,

[42] Ibid, ll. 222 – 228.
[43] Ibid, l. 226.
[44] Walter J. Ong, 'Voice as Summons for Belief: Literature, Faith and the Divided Self' in Giles B Gunn (ed) *Literature and Religion*, (London, 1971), pp. 68 – 86, 71.

substituting this for, by analogy, the authorial narrative which was historically centred around the king.

By exploring the structure of the soul of an individual, these poems sought to enlighten their audience by providing an exemplar of faith, in God and in reason. By layering the pluralities within the persona, the poets combine different facets of narrative and open up the space in which the voices operate, inviting the reader to re-enact the dialogue in their reading. This act of conversing, between characters in the poem, the writer and reader, and the intertextuality of the ideas expressed, creates the 'conversation' which breaks the destructive patterning of the individual's perspective and refocuses the fundamental voice. In answer to a crisis of self (and society), both Lyndsay and Lithgow literarified the polarisations within their selves, using the dialogue to mediate between the extremities of their discontent. The social role of their writing and the interpretative traditions in early modern literature meant that these polarisations could be mapped onto their country's decentred identity, providing a didactic model of reason in times of much needed moral authority.

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Back to the Drawing Board: The Effect of Digital Animation Within the Realm of Live-action Cinema

James Opfer

Animation has long occupied the sidelines of cinema. As its essence resides not in the ability to capture the world as it really is but in an artistic representation of reality, conventional animation has often been discarded as an outdated by-product of cinema's early technological development. However, with advances in digital animation, live-action film is becoming increasingly reliant on computer-generated images as a tool to manipulate the on-screen image, whether to subtly tweak aesthetics or to create entire scenes. The relationship between animation and live-action cinema is therefore changing. Some fear that, as a result, cinema will lose its credibility as an authoritative medium; that the hand of the digital animator will detract from cinema's ability to effectively showcase the 'real'. With reference to films containing varying degrees of digital manipulation, this paper will look at the effect that this hybridisation has on both animation and live-action cinema, and will show that, although it may detract from cinema's authoritative nature, it also frees filmmakers from the constraints of conventional cinematic apparatus, allowing for the creation of new and exciting styles.

This paper analyses the impact that digital animation has had within the realm of live-action cinema. It explores how cinema, an art form

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often seen to be grounded in its ability to capture the 'real', has changed as advances in digital technology have allowed computer generated images (CGI) to become another tool in the filmmaker's repertoire. It also investigates how digitalisation has altered animation by looking at the relationship between animation, live-action cinema and 'realism', addressing whether or not this new hybrid can possess a 'realist' quality, examining its effects on cinema's ability to display the 'real'.[1]

Until recently, cinema has been a medium reliant on the use of cameras, dark rooms and processing labs to capture live-action images on celluloid film. It was an art form grounded in analogue technology and mechanical processes.[2] Due to its automatic nature, cinema has been seen as the medium with the ability to represent 'realism' in its truest form, possessing a superior quality over other artistic representations of life. As Andre Bazin once wrote, "For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man."[3]

While 'realism' is a relative term, the films deemed to possess the highest degree of 'realism' are those that discard cinematic conventions in an attempt to capture the world as it is seen on a day-to-day basis. This excludes animation from the debate as its essence lies in its blatant appeal to its man-made construction. As cinema's "bastard relative", twentieth-century animation relied on hand-painted, man-made images and loops; techniques once used in the production of the pre-twentieth century moving image but surpassed and discarded by cinema as it developed. Animation was unable to provide the sought-after realist qualities that cinema could produce.

[1] 'Realism': The cinematic styles that are deemed to hold the greatest degree of realism are those which attempt to transcend the viewer's awareness of the cinematic apparatus and capture reality as it really is.
[2] Prince, S., 'The Emergence of Filmic Artefacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era' (2004) 57 (3) *Film Quarterly,* 25
[3] Bazin, A. (trans. Grey, H.), *What is Cinema?* 1 vols. (University of California Press, 2004), 13

As a result, twentieth-century animation was often viewed as a by-product of cinema's technological advances. [4]

However, in recent years the relationship between cinema and animation has changed as new digital technology and techniques have engulfed every aspect of the filmmaking practice. Digital cameras record directly onto a digital format that can be manipulated, pixel-by-pixel, with the use of computer editing software in postproduction, giving filmmakers greater artistic control over the filmmaking process.[5] CGI and green-screen technology allows for any degree of manipulation of the pro-filmic event, from digitally tweaking colour and saturation to the creation of digital worlds where whole scenes, props and extras are digitally animated and blended with digital live-action footage.[6] These images, although never actually filmed, have flawless photographic integrity, thus casting a shadow over the authority that cinema holds.[7]

The ability to create photo-realistic images with the use of computer animation software brings the evolution of cinema back to its point of origin. Cinema, the medium that had discarded manual techniques as inferior, has become reliant on digital animation as part of the filmmaking process, bringing animation back to the foreground of the on-screen moving image. Cinema and animation can no longer be distinguished, as they both exist in pixelated, digital form. This means that every scene becomes like a painting. Cinema becomes animation.[8]

Such difficulty in distinguishing live-action footage from digital animation means that, in theory, it is possible for any degree of

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[4] Manovich, L., *The Language of New Media* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2001), 298

[5] Prince, S., 'The Emergence of Filmic Artefacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era' (2004) 57 (3) *Film Quarterly,* 27

[6] 'Pro-filmic event': The on-screen event.

[7] Manovich, L., *The Language of New Media* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2001), 295

[8] Ibid

manipulation of the pro-filmic event. Films such as *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (Coen, 2000) and *Sin City* (Miller & Rodriguez, 2005) both used digital animation, but they are two completely different cinematic styles. It is therefore important to distinguish between the use of 'covert' and 'overt' digital animation within live-action cinema.

O Brother used 'covert' digital grading during postproduction to subtly dull the recorded image, producing a 'dustbowl' feel whilst maintaining emphasis on the pro-filmic event.[9] This use of digital animation replaces conventional postproduction lab processes as a means to attain a specific pictorial design, passing it off as the 'real' – something that in the digital age has the potential to cause problems for cinema's 'realist' nature.

On the other hand, films like *Sin City* and *300* (Snyder, 2006) use 'overt' digital animation to appeal to the aesthetic of the graphic novels they are adapted from. They use explicit CGI effects as a means to recreate the images and intensity of Frank Miller's original work, reinventing the surreal and twisted world of the comic book for the big screen. Filmed against green screens the only live-action elements are the actors (with the exception of three real sets in *Sin City* – Shellie's flat, Kadie's bar and the hospital in the epilogue). However, as their newly animated aesthetic does not *fully* coincide with their real world appearance, due to digital manipulation, they are effectively transformed into cartoon characters.

Such 'overt' digitalisation places emphasis on *animation*, not live action. It generates an animated aesthetic, using actors as props that become part of the animated mise-en-scène.[10] Although animation can never achieve 'realism', the use of live-action footage as a blank canvas allows for a degree of 'hyper-realism', a term that according to

[9] Prince, S., 'The Emergence of Filmic Artefacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era' (2004) 57 (3) *Film Quarterly,* 28
[10] Tudor, D., 'Through The Eye of The Frog: Questions of Space in Films Using Digital Processes' (2008) 48 (1) *Cinema Journal,* 93

Paul Wells, describes "animation which aspires to the creation of a realistic image system which echoes the realism of the live-action film(s)".[11]

This new digitalised hybrid allows for this whilst embracing its capability to *resist* realism, spawning a new and exciting form of animation, distinct from any other – a form constantly oscillating between meta-realism, realism and over-the-top, epically 'cartoonesque' environments. In the past, films like *Bambi* (Disney Studios, 1942) were seen to reach the ultimate level of 'hyper-realism' due to the way that the characters and their environment were represented. The characters' design corresponded with their real-life counterparts. They were subject to real-world physical laws, sound and movement matched reality and characters held a rounded psychological depth.[12]

Alternatively, cartoons like *Roadrunner* (1949 - Present) did the opposite from reality, portraying outrageous and often violent worlds with inhabitants that held 'squash-n-stretch' characteristics, able to defy the laws of physics.[13] Although *Roadrunner's* defiance of 'realism' allows for a strong creative vision and form of expression, it does so at the expense of character development.[14] Viewers came to know Wiley E. Coyote from his doomed-to-fail run-ins with the roadrunner. It is all he was.[15] Aware of their environment, these characters were constantly at war with the animated effects.

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[11] Wells, P., *Understanding Animation* (London, 1998), 25.

[12] Ibid.

[13] 'Squash-n-stretch': A technique used by animators in which an object's ability to squash and stretch is accentuated in an attempt to generate fluidity and achieve an overly-elasticised aesthetic.

[14] Thompson, R., 'Meep, Meep', in B. Nichols (eds.), *Movies and Methods: An Anthology* (University of California Press, 1976), 128

[15] Ibid. 132

By merging digital animation with live-action, films like *Sin City* and *300* hold a hyper-realistic fluctuation. The characters possess a greater physical resemblance to real-life humans when compared to that of Bambi and real-life deer, creating an intense 'hyper-realism' in terms of design. However, digital animation is used to simultaneously oppose realism and escape from the boundaries of conventional live-action cinema, granting the characters a cartoon-like quality. Like Coyote from *Roadrunner*, they are free to defy physical laws within an environment that holds little cause-and-effect.

Sin City's controversial narrative centres on sex and extreme violence, telling stories of pain, suffering and the rise and fall of characters within their miserable and grimy setting, 'Basin City'. Digital animation allows for an over-the-top portrayal of sex and violence that is unhampered by realism, toning-down the impact of the scenes whilst maintaining the characters' psychological depth. Marv can jump down four flights of stairs whilst dodging bullets, leap feet-first through the windscreen of a moving police car, throw one of the officers fifteen-feet from inside before ploughing the vehicle nose-first into a river. He can do all of this, only to appear in the next scene, covered in comically-applied, criss-cross sticky plasters, stating "Don't worry Lucille, I'm just grazed. You got any beers around this place?"

The live-action, combined with the photo-realistic quality of the digital animation, permits a greater identification with the characters. The spectator is in-effect viewing animated human beings and their struggles within a strange world. Emotional identification with Marv is reinforced by the viewer's relationship with the actor behind the character, Mickey Rourke. Viewers can relate to the character's human qualities on a level that was only possible to achieve in live-action cinema, until now.

Like *Sin City, 300* centres on violence. Depicting the battle of Thermopylae, it illustrates a lone, historically epic and violent event. Although the battle of Thermopylae was an actual event, it is a story that has been passed down through the ages and has become

enmeshed in ancient Greek mythology. The Spartans fought with the help of the Gods riding behind them. It is therefore a tale that merges the real and the unreal, the mythological and the logical. It is an ideal story to be brought back to life, on-screen, through the use of live-action and digital animation, set in an animated world in which anything can happen. It depicts the story as it is has been passed down, one of epic proportions and of fantasy. 'Overt' digitalisation creates an awareness of the animated fantasy world in which the characters operate, allowing for over-the-top spectacle and sensationally violent scenes.

Live-action films with 'epic' narratives often adopt 'covert' digital animation as a means to generate visual impact. However, while animated features like *300* deliberately make viewers aware of the illusion and the creation of the moving image, such fictional live-action cinema attempts to hide its manmade creation. An example of this is *Gladiator* (Scott, 2000) that tells the story of betrayed Roman general, Maximus, condemned to fight for survival in gladiatorial games. Although a live-action feature, it relies on a huge amount of digital animation and CGI to bring the most epic and violent scenes to life. The main fight scenes were filmed within a two-story replica of Rome's Colosseum before digital animators were drafted in to digitally re-build the rest of the Colosseum and the vast crowd within it, in an attempt to carry a 'real' and convincing adaptation of the 'once-was'.
CGI and green screens were used to merge digital footage of tigers with scenes containing live-actors, allowing the ferocious beast to interact with the main character without any fear for the actor's safety. Maximus can plunge his sword through the heart of the tiger without any cost to the reality before the camera.[16] Digital animation used as a cinematic technique permits a more believable portrayal of these violent encounters. The most impressive and violent scenes can be seamlessly brought to fruition in a 'realistic' way by using digital animation in postproduction.

[16] Prince, S., 'The Emergence of Filmic Artefacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era' (2004) 57 (3) *Film Quarterly,* 27

However, *Gladiator* takes digital animation one-step further. The most difficult and perhaps most controversial task for digital animators came after Oliver Reed (Proximo) died halfway through filming. As some of Proximo's scenes were un-filmed, digital animators used digital cut-and-paste techniques to bring the late actor back to life, enabling him to complete a final scene from beyond the grave.[17] Unlike the CGI effects that we expect to find in blockbuster features, such as the digitalised rebirth of the Colosseum, the digital creation of Reed's 'performance' is *completely* covert. It is passed off as just another scene within the narrative; not grand or spectacular. Like the 'digital grading' used in *O Brother*, it is subtle and made to go un-noticed. However, unlike digital grading, digitally animated posthumous 'performances' deduct from the integrity of acting and performance - something that, not only distinguishes live-action cinema from animation but also *defines* it.[18]

Since *Gladiator's* release, digital animation has became commonplace within live-action cinema, with more filmmakers choosing to bypass celluloid film and record digitally. Performance is changing as films like *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (Fincher, 2008) and *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010) use techniques such as 'performance capture technology' to digitally de-age actors, allowing a middle-aged Brad Pitt to play a young boy or an elderly Jeff Bridges to play a character in his thirties. This overlap of performance and digital manipulation raises the question, "How much of the performance is the actor's and how much of it is created by the hand of the digital animator?" Thus, undermining the humanistic pro-filmic performances upon which live-action film is grounded. In an era when acting holds the status of the last defender of the 'real', such drastic manipulation may lead to the conclusion that 'live-action' can no longer truly exist within the digital realm.[19]

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[17] Ibid. 25
[18] Bode, L., 'No Longer Themselves: Framing Digitally Enabled Posthumous "performance"' (2010) 49 (4) *Cinema Journal,* 47
[19] Ibid. 49

Nevertheless, it is not that the hybrid *itself* ruins cinema or deducts from cinema's 'realist' nature. It is that such a hybrid has the *potential* to when used in a covertly deceiving manner within a live-action feature. Over its one-hundred-and-ten-year history filmmaking has always been a process that has relied on more than just photography to produce moving images, often resorting to matte paintings and animation to change the pro-filmic event.[20] In the brothel shoot-out scene from *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976), colours were de-saturated in the postproduction lab to detract from the violent impact of the scene. When comparing this de-saturation to the digital grading seen in *O Brother*, it is evident that nothing has changed except the process itself and the ease of which it can be done; the effect remains the same.

The digitalisation of cinema has been, by and large, a positive move for cinema and animation. The use of special effects has lead to the creation of epic live-action cinema, providing filmmakers with endless expressive opportunities. While filmmakers of the past faced restrictions in terms of location, safety and practicality, today's filmmakers can use digital technology as a way to transcend the boundaries of conventional cinema. In terms of animation, digital technology has allowed for new and exciting forms. Animators can create environments that possess the best qualities from both traditional animation and live-action cinema. It allows animators to capture a character's in-depth personality while still allowing for the creation of complex worlds that are free from limitation, leading to an expressive yet psychologically grounded form of animation.

However, when digital animation interferes with the theatrics that rest at the centre of live-action cinema, through the use of technologies like performance capture to bring a dead actor back to life or to tweak an actor's performance, the 'realist' essence that cinema intrinsically possesses gradually evaporates. We have to ask the question, "How important is 'realism' to cinema after all?"

[20] Ibid. 50

In an age when blockbusters are free to wow audiences through the use of CGI effects and when new forms of radical animation have the ability to draw the audience in both visually and emotionally, in a way never before possible thanks to digital technology, I am forced to look at what cinema actually is – entertainment. It is an art form that tells stories, one that has relied on the manipulation of the pro-filmic ever since Georges Méliès' special effects driven films, dating back to cinema's early years.[21] The digital manipulation of live-action cinema is just the contemporary continuation of an outdated analogue means of manipulation. According to Rudolf Arnheim, film is an art form only once it transcends the camera's inclination to capture a mere resemblance of the world.[22] It can be argued that digital animation therefore allows film to transcend the limitations of the camera and become a stronger art form. Nevertheless, cinema is a medium that is constantly adapting as it is grounded in technology. As society moves into the digital age cinema must follow. Will such a move symbolise the fall of cinema's essence?

It seems to me that this new hybrid is only the beginning of a radical shake-up in the way cinema is created and viewed. It is certain that cinema's essence will change, as it always has, as digital technology progresses. Cinema is founded in evolution and in order to preserve its substance, technological changes must be embraced. Digital animation has earned its place alongside live-action cinema and can therefore be seen as a positive progression, contributing to cinema's identity as an evolutionary medium. Therefore, digital animation should not be viewed as a threat but as a positive stepping stone in the progression of the cinematic form.

[21] Ibid

[22] Prince, S., 'The Emergence of Filmic Artefacts: Cinema and Cinematography in the Digital Era' (2004) 57 (3) *Film Quarterly,* 26

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Humanistic Geography: Can scientific endeavour alone capture all of the complexities of the human condition?

Jonathan Bradley

Science is adequate in describing the phenomena that we experience on a daily basis, however it fails to adequately capture or even understand the human agent in all its perceptions, illogicality, emotions and feelings. Humanistic geography is a strand of human Geography that endeavours to disclose the complexity and ambiguity of human interactions with, and perceptions of, space and place.

"Scientific approaches to the study of man tend to minimize the role of human awareness and knowledge. Humanistic geography, by contrast, specifically tries to understand how geographical activities and phenomena reveal the quality of human awareness."[1] By the end of the 1960s objections surfaced regarding the usefulness of scientific methods within human geography.[2] Consequently, the quantitative revolution and spatial science waned due to critique by humanistic geographers such a Tuan, Ley, Buttimer, Relph and Entrikin, who claimed that a logical positivism was "overly objective, narrow, mechanistic and deterministic"[3] to gain a sophisticated understanding

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[1] Y. Tuan, 'Humanistic Geography' (1976) 66 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 267.
[2] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[3] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992), 146.

of human life. Such a struggle to legitimise knowledge within geography has centred on the science-beyond-science binary, with humanistic geographers recognising the importance of human emotions, values and beliefs in altering how people perceive and act in the world. Generally, humanistic perspectives are grounded on certain philosophies including existentialism, phenomenology, idealism, pragmatism or realism, which attempt to provide alternative methodologies than logical positivism.[4] Furthermore, humanistic and scientific geographers hold differing ontological and epistemological notions about 'reality', with humanists suggesting that reality is a human construct; essentially an imagined/internal conception, whereas scientists believe that reality is tangible, and able to be studied rationally and objectively.[5] This article will critically assess both scientific and humanistic ideologies in geography, suggesting that alongside scientific inquiry, human emotions, values and beliefs are, too, crucially important to human geography.

Firstly, it is important to assess the continuous struggle within geography, between idiographic/descriptive and nomothetic/scientific research methods, for example the chorography of Strabo versus the 'proper' geography of Ptolemy. Strabo's geographies were essentially vast, sprawling, anecdotal accounts of 'regional geographies' across the globe, whereas Ptolemy is regarded for his sophisticated, spatial scientific approach to geography remaining heavily influenced by his astronomy and mathematics background. "Geography according to Hartshorne is essentially idiographic. Whenever laws are discovered or applied one is no longer in the area of geography. All it contributes is facts."[6] The belief that geography should become more scientific, in methodology, theory, and practice emerged during the quantitative revolution, when many geographers wished to heighten the

[4] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[5] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992).
[6] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991), 10.

reputation of geography within academic circles by aligning the discipline with the natural sciences. Abler et al. suggest that science has its foundations within the empirical world, answering the 'how' questions about life, in turn producing no variations of science/geography.[7] However, logical positivism alone cannot successfully explain the nuances, complexities, ambivalence and ambiguity of the human experience; phenomena which humanists so celebrate.[8] Mathematic, geometric and scientific methods of research within logical positivism cause 'scientific geographers' to leave out important social, political, emotional and economic aspects of life; therefore failing to consider other crucial geographical aspects of the human experience.[9] Spatial scientists' conquest to utilize scientific methods/theories, arguably, failed to explore serious or useful matters relating to the human experience. Instead, they became concerned with smaller micro-geographies, for example, optimum location for supermarkets, which in hindsight can be regarded as trivial, revealing very little about the overall human experience.[10]

Reaction to the shortcomings of logical positivism and spatial science marked the emergence of 'behavioural geography' from the mid-1960s, which stepped away from science by giving more recognition to human agency in the understanding of spatial behaviour.[11] Similar to spatial science, behavioural geography, sought to uncover overarching laws and patterns of human behaviour. By scrutinising the cognitive aspects of the human being, particularly perception, the geographer attempted to uncover how people react to the places and

[7] R. Abler et al., *Spatial Organisation: The Geographer's View of the World* (London, 1972).
[8] S. Daniels 'Arguments for a Humanistic Geography' (1985) in T. Barnes & D. Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Enquiry* (London, 1997), 364-375.
[9] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[10] N. Castree et al., *Questioning Geography* (Oxford, 2005).
[11] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992).

spaces around them.[12] Such geography is exemplified in the development of 'mental mapping', which resulted due to a concern for the measurement of these human spatial perceptions, and to gain an understanding of resultant human actions.[13] However, lack of accepted mental map analysis techniques, and the assumption that human spatial behaviour could be generalised under nomothetic approaches has led to strong criticism of such an approach.[14] Circumventing the many weaknesses of behavioural geography for a moment can reveal its significant impact on future generations of human geographical thought, as it "helped demolish the myth of the economic man, and led geographers to a more realistic search for factors influencing environmental decision making"[15]; eventually leading to more sophisticated forms of humanistic geography.

Development of a humanistic geography heavily critiqued scientific inquiry, although many influential figures, such a Tuan, did not totally disregard its usefulness, but justly highlighted its inadequacies and shortcomings in relation to human geography. "The humanist today does not deny scientific perspectives on man; he just builds upon them."[16] Humanistic geographers appreciate the application of scientific methods, practices, and theories to phenomena within the material world, such as hydrology, plate tectonics, and climatology. Nevertheless, humanists highlight science's limited applicability in understanding all aspects of humanity, such as emotions, creativity, beliefs, and values. "Humanistic geography took the view that the aim of research should be to understand the diverse thoughts, values and feelings of capable human actors rather than try to seek general laws, models or theories to explain (let alone predict) their

[12] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[13] P. Gould & R. White, *Mental Maps* (London, 1974).
[14] R.J. Johnston & J.D. Sidaway *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Human Geography since 1945* 6th edn., (London, 2004).
[15] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992), 143.
[16] Y. Tuan, 'Humanistic Geography' (1976) 66 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 267.

behaviour."[17] Humanistic geography, therefore, stepped further away from logical positivism than behavioural geography, considering human emotions, values and beliefs to be of utmost importance to provide a mature geographical understanding of the world. In doing so emerged the (re)assertion of the importance of the human agent, aiming to recentralise the human as the primary concern within human geography; echoing the descriptive, in depth approaches of early regional geographers. Daniels suggests that, within a humanistic perspective, the ambiguity and allusiveness of the human experience should be celebrated, as human feelings are beyond rational scrutiny, but contribute highly to individual human spatial choices, actions and behaviours.[18] Cloke et al. importantly assert that people are more that just numbers, dots and flows; that is to say unthinking 'automata' who conform to general patterns of behaviour, and overarching laws proposed by science.[19] In contrast to science, humanism takes seriously the 'internal worlds' of humans; cognition, perception and representation, utilising such phenomena to acquire a more accurate, albeit abstract, understandings of humanity.

Existing within humanistic geography is a focus on how issues of emotion, belief and value affect individuals' views on 'space', 'place', and 'sense of place'. Processes involved within the internal worlds of the human agent, of how spaces are transformed to become 'places', are of particular interest to the humanistic geographer.[20] Although not inherently scientific, issues of emotional attachment to space/place, and the role of symbols, icons, emblems and concepts in the formation of a 'sense of place', uncover much about the human experience; hence they cannot be regarded as ambiguous

[17] N. Castree et al., *Questioning Geography* (Oxford, 2005), 72.
[18] S. Daniels 'Arguments for a Humanistic Geography' (1985) in T. Barnes & D. Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Enquiry* (London, 1997), 364-375.
[19] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[20] Y. Tuan, 'Humanistic Geography' (1976) 66 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

distractions.[21] David Ley in the 1970s, for example, embarked upon in-depth analysis of various social groupings to unravel their 'sense of place'; their 'turfs', their graffiti etc.[22] In addition, relationships to space prove more important to human geography than scientific approaches, which divulge little about the human experience, such as geometry, land use planning and geology. Views on relationship with place are often regarded as anti-theoretical, purporting that geography is not wholly about regions, environments and space, but rather about 'place'. The claim, then, is that human geographical inquiry should concern itself with how the world perceived to be within internal worlds, not how it actually is within the tangible world.[23]

In addition to the critical assessment of logical positivism, one must note that scientists' apparent separation of 'self' (personal geographies, preconceptions, prejudices, values, emotions and past experiences) from their research is impossible. No individual can be truly objective due to the subjectivity of human nature, an aspect so inherently linked with how people function within, contend with and understand the world around them. Humanistic geographers recognise that the humanity of the researcher is equally important to that of their subject, in turn acknowledging that no human being can be truly objective, as their internal worlds of cognition, perception and representation simply cannot be turned on and off.[24] Philosophical foundations underpinning humanistic geography, such as phenomenology and existentialism, reject such "assumptions of objectivity, which enabled logical positivists to ignore the preconceptions and subjectivity upon which their laws and models

[21] S. Daniels 'Arguments for a Humanistic Geography' (1985) in T. Barnes & D. Gregory (eds.), *Reading Human Geography: The Poetics and Politics of Enquiry* (London, 1997), 364-375.
[22] D. Ley, 'The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost: Images and Behavior of a Philadelphia Neighborhood' (1974) *Association of American Geographers Monograph Series No. 7*, 282.
[23] N. Castree et al., *Questioning Geography* (Oxford, 2005).
[24] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).

were based."[25] Phenomenology is the "understanding of essence"[26], an approach which attempts to gain an original understanding of the world by suspending the normal conventions of academic thought. It offers an alternative methodology to the hypothesis testing and theory building of logical positivism, recognising that unscientific methods provide a useful tool in conducting serious geographical/scientific research. Additionally, existentialism is another important philosophical stance within humanistic geography, which, similar to phenomenology, critiques nomothetic approaches in geography. As previously mentioned existential geography emphasises human individuals as free agents who interpret and put meaning on the spaces and environments surrounding them, resulting in the formation of 'place.'[27] In order to gain a more enlightened appreciation of humanity within human geography one must recognise the importance, especially in an increasingly interconnected world, of recognising the motives behind the creation of 'place'.

It is evident that the human experience was over simplified by logical positivism and scientific approaches to geography, and the recognition for human values, emotions, prejudices, beliefs and the like is necessary to attain a fuller, more effective human geography. The promotion of humans as living, acting, creative, thinking and capable beings is integral to the humanistic critique of a geography solely based of science and quantification.[28] It is important to note that humanistic approaches are not without their flaws too, as they can, and often do give the human agent too much credit in the ability to consciously choose ones personal geographies. Ideas of the preconscious and subconscious realms of the human mind problematize humanistic epistemologies.[29] Political, social, economic and environmental determinism mechanisms may also affect

[25] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992), 147.
[26] T. Unwin, *The Place of Geography* (London, 1992), 146.
[27] P. Cloke et al., *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (London, 1991).
[28] R.J. Johnston & J.D. Sidaway, *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Human Geography since 1945* 6th edn., (London, 2004).
[29] C. Philo, *Geographical Thought Course* (Glasgow, 2010).

individuals, in turn constricting, restricting and channelling actions and spatial behaviour. However, humanistic geography makes use of non-scientific ontologies and epistemologies to provide a more sophisticated understanding of human life. Essentially the approach calls for geography to be something more than the formulation of spatial laws and patterns, something equally as 'serious' as scientific inquiry, but providing more a useful analysis of human individuals. Tuan illustrates this when he states: "Humanistic geography contributes to science by drawing attention to facts hitherto beyond the scientific purview."[30]

[30] Y. Tuan, 'Humanistic Geography' (1976) 66 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 266.

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Altered States: Performance and Perception in Form – A Kristján Guðmundsson Retrospective

David Winfield Norman

This retrospective of the art of Kristján Guðmundsson will address how by refining the elements of painting and drawing, while simultaneously engaging the viewer in new and more thorough ways, the artists broadens the capacity to interact with art by confusing the viewer's own immediate perception. Through unconventional, visual ways of measuring time and altering audio perception, the realm of the art becomes ours as well. By requiring us as viewers to relinquish our senses to fully participate in the work, it broadens one's perception of art to the essential level of how one perceives the world.

White and Black Paintings in Grey and White Frames (fig. 1) are four thin panels painted in shades of white and grey, framed in painted steel. They are backed with engineer's sound-insulating material, which absorbs the surrounding noise, effectively deadening the space before the paintings. Here Kristján Guðmundsson's ideas of spatial emptiness converge with the question of how one views painting. These pieces won him the 2010 Carnegie Art Award.

Kristján Guðmundsson arose out of a wave of Fluxus ideas and practices coinciding with Dieter Roth's temporary residency in

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Iceland in the 1950s and '60s, which culminated in the formation of SÚM – a collective of young artists, and later a gallery, that opposed the conservative Association of Icelandic Artists. Fluxus, often termed 'neo-Dada,' is a movement motivated by interdisciplinary approaches to non-retinal art, with importance placed as well on the elevation of the mundane and repulsion of academic art. But while Kristján's interest in approaching art beyond the academic mainstream grew stronger and more complex, his work soon departed from the rhetoric of Fluxus: interdisciplinary approaches became focused on the critical analysis of painting and drawing, his visual language and mode of exhibiting became minimal while still experiential, and he turned senses and perceptions into raw material. His work is characterized by extreme economy; Kristján isolates the most essential elements of a medium, and then brings them back further by relating them to the senses – through sound alteration, mathematically accurate representations of time, performative creation – thereby asking the viewer to consider the experience of viewing and interacting with that medium. In this way his work can also be viewed as realism, relating painting more acutely to the viewer beyond the visual, while remaining structurally only visual. This paradox of perception countering material has unified Kristján's varied projects, working as he says, "within the tension between something and nothing."[1]

His earliest installations toyed with the notions of mass and emptiness with environmental concerns; that is to say, in the alteration of a spatial environment. A work titled *Environmental Sculpture*, 1969 consists of a room filled with massive amounts of empty or unused materials: discarded bottles, loose coat hangers, boxes. But the focal point is an ironing board with a haphazardly constructed neon bulb resting on it, which in its small size and quickly-formed shape can be looked at as a sketch.[2] This construction confuses the nature of space

[1] B. Nordal, 'The Hour of the North' exhibition catalogue, *Nordic Council of Ministers* (Barcelona, 1995).
[2] C. Schoen and H.B. Runólfsson, *Icelandic Art Today* (Ostfildern, 2009), 18.

– by emptying everyday items of their usefulness their identity is obscured, and by imposing a 'drawn' element the discussion becomes one of two/three dimensionality and media. Removing these objects of their purpose, making them holders of vacant space, in this context relieves them of their position as objects of function and they become, dually, symbols of banality in a mass-produced culture and basic, structural forms, interchangeable with raw sculptural material. If the light itself is to be considered a drawing, then everywhere the light falls is drawn upon as well, completing the examination of how art affects its whole surroundings by transforming an otherwise banal environment into a pure, structured artwork. Discussions of dimensionality and modes of construction within space simultaneously become discussions of the material of art, and of the broader issue of perception. In this early work the former is only the means to reach the latter, but coinciding with Kristján's relocation to Amsterdam in 1970 – the beginning of his direct involvement in the avant-garde – his work's formal and experiential qualities began to unite.

Kristján began to actively challenge the concept of time in this period while bringing material inspection into the spotlight. In this period he developed what he called "Equal Time-Lines, lines drawn slowly with a fountain pen on blotting paper, each one representing both a length of time and a length on the page."[3] Though pure drawings, they are performative – imbued with and dependent on time – to the point where time becomes a medium in itself, and then becomes interchangeable with drawing. Here Kristján iterates a truism: art is as much made of time as material. It is also key to examine the concept of measurement in these drawings – measurement being a means to define reality, whether in a literal sense in the measurement of time and space or in an illusionistic sense as in Renaissance-era linear perspective. Here Kristján only employs measurement as it pertains to reality, showing the emergence of literalism in his work, the desire to

[3] J. Proppé, 'Kristján Guðmundsson Makes More with Less' The Center for Icelandic Art (Reykjavík, 2009) 9 Feb. 2011.
<http://www.artnews.is/artnews_article.php?no=23_11&is=23>.

portray only what is apparent, while searching for "the essence of drawing."[4] With these drawings Kristján's work deepens; now the 'alternative medium' is non-tangible (unlike light), thus conceptual, and he has begun to focus on examining the internal structures of art – how the essential, physical principles of art relates to the experiences it evokes in the viewer. These rapid developments came at a critical time; in 1977, Kristján Guðmundsson along with his brother Sigurður, Hreinn Friðfinnsson and Þórður Ben Sveinsson were invited to contribute to one of the first exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.[5] Two years later, he began to experiment with large rolls of industrial paper on graphite blocks, realizing his examination of purity in drawing, and expanding his exploration of emptiness into a minimalist approach of total spatial emptiness. This same year he returned to Iceland.[6]

From this time on Kristján rapidly challenged himself to examine the themes of drawing, painting and measurement from the purest approaches possible. He began arranging sticks of graphite against a surface into pure, geometric shapes, titling them as drawings. The effect is not unlike the uniform purity in some of Donald Judd's grainy steel stacked works. Significantly, Kristján exhibited with the leading Minimalist artists Donald Judd and Richard Long in 1988 at the Living Art Museum, which evolved out of Galleri SÚM. In these works Kristján approaches the theme of drawing with wit and matter-of-factness, and indeed they enhance his "connection with reality" by way of "sheer frankness."[7] Another such project was *Blue Transmission* (fig. 2), which periodically moved in and out of exhibition from 1988-2006. Originally exhibited in Gallery Strandkasernen in Helsinki, it consists of five massive industrial rolls of paper below two bottles filled with blue ink, which slowly release single drops onto the paper. By the end of the installation the rolls of

[4] 'Kristján Guðmundsson' I8 Gallery, 6 Feb. 2011. <http://www.i8.is/?s=8&aID=17

[5] Proppé, 'Kristján Guðmundsson Makes More with Less.'

[6] Schoen and Runólfsson, *Icelandic Art Today*, 20.

[7] H.B. Runólfsson 'Kristján Guðmundsson's Poetics' Listasafn Íslands, 8 Feb. 2011. <http://www.listasafn.is/?i=171>.

paper are saturated with blue ink, the entire work being as much about time as media, since the completion of *Blue Transmission* can be measured by the paper's saturation and the bottles' emptiness. These works show Kristján's most austere and accurate examinations of media so far, having "eliminated everything that is unnecessary."[8] What else defines a drawing besides graphite or ink and a surface? And all this within a medium often only considered preparatory, between the act of making and the final artwork. But in the case of *Blue Transmission*, the work is created before the viewer in real time, and as such can be looked at as a performance as well, akin to live drawing similar to Ragnar Kjartansson's lengthy performance *The End* which he exhibited at the 2009 Venice Biennale. As such, *Blue Transmission* is the first instance where Kristján simultaneously examines spatial alteration, the essentials of artistic media and the ways in which the viewer experiences art.

And it is this expanded idea that Kristján's *Black and White Paintings* emerge from. On top of this refined method of production and conveying experience, Kristján integrates a performative element, as seen in *Blue Transmission*, in that the viewer's actual experience with the work is both cause and effect of the specific use of material and the notion of experiencing time. This altered audio/spatial experience cannot be divorced from the form as it is not something that can be conceived of without viewing; the experience of the viewer is necessary for these works to be considered complete. In these paintings, Kristján's aims become fully synthesized, addressing perception, time or performance, and form – it is this last area that Kristján uses most inventively. By using a formal painting to alter the experience of the viewer, instead of passively being reliant on the viewer's more subconscious reaction to a static, non-interactive space, all while remaining within the structural realm of painting, Kristján reflects on the experience of art as an act that addresses all of

[8] 'Paintings in White and Gray Frames' Galerie Anhava (Helsinki, 2010) 9 Feb. 2011.
<http://www.anhava.com/?http://www.anhava.com/exhibitions/gudmundsson/index.html>.

the senses and the mind, "the aesthetic dimension in painting."[9] Transcending the exhibition space by eliminating outside sound, these paintings exist staunchly in their own physical realm while confusing that of the viewer, and thereby time in the time isolated from audio stimuli, reaching out to and toying with the viewer's perception. Conceptions of space and time are enhanced upon viewing these drawings and paintings, and yet Kristján makes no demands of the media or the viewer; his art is exactly as it appears, for his "works deal in many ways with the material as the essence of all art"[10], and in this way Kristján seeks to engage viewers more thoroughly and actively in art of all media.

[9] 'Kristján Guðmundsson' Carnegie Art Award (Stockholm, 2009) 7 Feb. 2011. <http://www.carnegie.se/sv/ArtAward/artists-2010/Kristjan-Gudmundsson/>.
[10] H.B. Runólfsson, 'Kristján Guðmundsson's Poetics.'

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Perceptions of an Icon: The Realistic Depiction of Holy Death in Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*

Ksenija Pegaseva

Death of a Virgin is arguably Caravaggio's most renowned work, and is one of the most celebrated and recognisable paintings in the world, being one of the main attractions at the Louvre in Paris. The painting was also welcomed by contemporary artists who thought it radical in its naturalism. The painting was rejected, however, by the Carmelites that commissioned it. Catholic perceptions of the Virgin were of monumental perfectionism, an image that was not produced by Caravaggio in his pursuit of a realistic depiction of the holy scene.

Death of the Virgin (fig. 3), Caravaggio's largest Roman altarpiece, was commissioned in 1601 by the famous jurist, Laerzio Cherubini of Norcia, for his chapel in the Carmelite church of Santa Maria della Scala, Rome. When the picture was finally completed, a public scandal occurred. The friars (or at least the Church) took strong exception to the painting, and refused to accept the final work. Caravaggio's naturalistic, corporeal depiction of the Virgin did not correlate well with the conventions of her representation that were dogmatically pursued by the Catholic Church who preferred to imagine the Virgin as a pure, aesthetically perfect being that transcended the earthly body on her way to heaven. Nonetheless, *Death of the Virgin* was extremely well thought of by contemporary

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artists such as, notably, Rubens and high-profile collectors like Kings Charles I of England and Louis XIV of France. This split of perception of the painting seem to correlate to the different ways the Virgin, as an Icon, was perceived. Even nowadays, as Pamela Askew reports, there is no definitive way of looking at this hugely acclaimed work of art: "in 1951 Lionello Venturi called it the most profoundly religious painting of Italian *seicento* art, whereas more recent critics have chosen to see it as a work virtually empty of any religious content."[1] The painting has a complex relationship with its religious content, and one which acts as a dialectic between realism and religious convention.

To start any serious discussion of *Death of the Virgin,* it is important to consider the liturgical context of Caravaggio's commission. According to Friedlaender, "Almost all of Caravaggio's religious works, beginning with the San Luigi series, were altarpieces designed for the worship of the Christian community and its members."[2] It follows that Caravaggio was a very much the product of the Counter Reformation, as his altarpieces were intended to help worshippers to meditate while they attended mass. Moreover, *Death of the Virgin* is very close in spirit and purpose to the philosophy of both Neri and Loyola, two great reformers of the late 16th and early 17th centuries who both emphasized a great simplification of devotion, while putting the main stress on the individual and his contact with God. In Loyola's writings, for instance, there is little or no mention of visions and of miracles of the saints – such as the Assumption of the Virgin, for example. On the contrary, "When the Virgin is mentioned … it is more with regard to her earthly life as the Mother of Christ than as Queen of Heaven."[3] This conception of the Virgin, with its lack of idealization, can definitely be seen in Caravaggio's work. Moreover, his realistic depiction of the Apostles as people from the humble backgrounds of poverty, as well as the unassuming setting of a dim,

[1] P. Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin* (Princeton, 1990), xi.
[2] J. Chorpenning, 'Another look at Caravaggio and Religion' (1987), 16 *Artibus et Historiae,* 154.
[3] W. Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies* (Princeton, 1974), 122.

Spartan room in which the swollen body of the Virgin has been laid out are in full harmony with St. Ignatius' and St. Philip's principal demands for humility and simplicity.

Death of the Virgin, so in harmony with Counter-Reformation meditative practices and liturgical piety, was rejected by its patrons in the Church. Among the reasons for this rejection was the title of the painting itself, which led to misconceptions about the actual moment that Caravaggio was portraying. In earlier paintings of the subject, the designation *Death of the Virgin* has been used for the whole scope of the scenes related to "the end of the Virgin's earthly life, including her farewell to the apostles, lying in state, funeral procession, entombment, and *assumptio animae* or assumption of the soul."[4] Even though there was no fixed iconographical type for the representation of the Virgin's death, it is upon her Assumption and her Coronation, and not upon her Dormition, that the Western artists preferred to dwell.[5] Thus, traditionally both Italian and Northern artists tended to show the Virgin Mary as dying rather than dead – like in the works of such masters as Annibale Carracci, Pieter Bruegel, or Carlo Saraceni (fig. 4). Caravaggio, on the contrary, has portrayed the Virgin, as Robert Hinks so accurately puts it, "not as *dying to* this world, but as *dead in* this world"[6]. Caravaggio's Virgin does not conform to the perceptions of her death that were held by the Church. He rejects them in favour of the reality of a shockingly mortal woman; a lifeless corpse in a dirty room, rather than an Icon, radiant on her death-bed.

According to the initial commission, Caravaggio was asked "to paint the death or *transitus* of the blessed Virgin Mary."[7] Therefore, it is significant to consider what the word *transitus* actually means. The term *transitus* (*transito* in Italian) simply means a passage over or a journey. Thus, in reference to the Virgin's death, the title *Transito*

[4] Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin*, 19.
[5] R. Hinks, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin* (Oxford, 1953), 11.
[6] Ibid, 13.
[7] Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin*, 6.

della Madonna has tended to emphasize not the end of her earthly life, but rather her transition from one state of being to another or, in other words, her passage from earth to heaven. This is something Caravaggio refused to depict: "we ask for bread, and are given a stone; we expected to see the Mother of God poised on her flight from time to eternity, and we are shown a dead woman."[8] Caravaggio's image is in conflict with how his patrons imagined the Virgin, since nothing "transitional" appears in this *transitus* of the Virgin.

Caravaggio further abandons previous iconographical conventions by not showing Mary as the Queen of Heaven. This seems to violate the traditional image of the Madonna revered by the Carmelite Order, who preferred the Virgin to be called Queen (*Regina*), as the crown, symbol of ruling power, elevated the Virgin to the throne of Christ, associating her with his eternal reign in heaven. Omitting any physical manifestation of the supernatural (except the Virgin's halo), the realism inherent in *Death of a Virgin* was in direct rebuttal of the conventions expected by the Church in a painting of the Virgin, and "could have been seen by Carmelite *padri* as playing into the hands of the "heretical" (Protestant) reformers"[9] who in their attack of the cult of the Madonna, had sought to deny the divine nature of her being. According to them, she was not a deity, but a simple woman, and certainly not a queen. In telling contrast to Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, Saraceni's altarpiece, commissioned to replace the original work, represents the Virgin as a true Queen of Heaven, surrounded by an aureole of light and with attendant angels in the moment of receiving her floral crown. Saraceni's work thus shows those methods in which the Discalced Carmelites preferred to visualize the Virgin's *transitus* - instead of the image of a dead woman, they wanted a heavenly glory of cherubs that appears in the version they finally accepted.

[8] Hinks, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin*, 15.
[9] Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin*, 62.

Caravaggio's image of the Virgin did not constitute an adequate and respectful pictorial praise of the Mother of God in the opinion of his patrons, the religious order of Discalced Carmelites. They were offended by her bare feet and swollen, dead body; characteristics which were emblematic of Caravaggio's pursuit of realism when executing the painting. To his patrons, this was completely unacceptable, stripping "the most sacred beings of their deserved majestic raiments."[10] Indeed, instead of the triumphant Mother of God, Caravaggio evoked an image of a simple peasant woman, and possibly, as some critics and contemporaries believed, the image of "some dirty prostitute from the Ortaccio."[11] It was, in fact, rumoured that the model for Caravaggio's painting was a prostitute, and so, to the patrons that viewed the female figure as such, this constituted very much less than a perfect and pure rendition of the Virgin when compared to the conventions Western ideology and Church doctrine prescribed to her image.

According to Puglisi, the early critics especially praised the radically new artistic practises of Caravaggio – his strongly contrasted lighting, his manipulation of colour, and above all his painting directly from the model.[12] Seventeenth-century accounts of Caravaggio's mature methods of working describe that "he never brought his figures out into the daylight, but placed them in the dark brown atmosphere of a closed room, using a high light that descended vertically over the principal parts of the bodies while leaving the remainder in shadow in order to give force through a strong contrast of light and dark."[13] These stylistic approaches to painting, more from nature than from the imagination, were not conducive to the divine, supernatural results that religious patrons would expect. In *Death of the Virgin* the literal source of the light is not given, but its elevated point of origin in relation to the interior space suggests a window high up on the

[10] C. Puglisi, *Caravaggio* (London, 2002), 195.
[11] H. Langdon, *Lives of Caravaggio by Giorgio Mancini, Giovanni Baglione and Giovanni Pietro Bellori* (London, 2006), 34.
[12] Ibid, 369.
[13] Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 247.

left. This directed lighting, creating a sharp contrast between the lit forms and shadows, not only lends three-dimensionality to Caravaggio's figures, but also penetrates a surrounding darkness with such intensity and force that it nearly becomes a manifestation of the divine.[14] Hence, as the apostles convene around the Virgin, it is her body that assumes primacy as the culminating focal point of the composition of the light.

Another hint at divinity that does not require an explicit manifestation of the supernatural is the rendering of the magnificent red curtain in the painting. There is a very powerful relationship established by Caravaggio between the red of the Virgin's dress and the red of the immense curtain, "whose deep folds continue the flowing shapes of the brown mantle over the corpse, and suggest a soaring upward movement, filling the spectator with awe."[15] In his own unique, naturalistic way, Caravaggio may be depicting the Assumption of the Virgin. Rather than show this process explicitly and according to Roman Catholic convention, with the body of the Virgin between heaven and earth, Caravaggio is depicting the moment with the more naturalistic movement of the curtain, which seems to soar upwards. A physical progression can be seen from the body of the Virgin to the curtain, which itself seems propelled upwards from the body. Rather than showing a visible spirit ascending, Caravaggio represents the assumption of the Virgin's soul to Heaven through the upward movement in the scene surrounding her body.

In addition, by refusing to describe space and reducing architecture to the ceiling beams, Caravaggio was able to concentrate his efforts on to the naturalistic depiction of the model alone. The common humanity and poverty of Caravaggio's Virgin, as well as the artist's emphasis on the inward-turned, restrained, yet compelling heartfelt grief for a "mere person", resulted in the reversal of the observer's role in the picture. When we are looking at Caravaggio's *Death of*

[14] Langdon *Caravaggio: A Life*, 250.
[15] Ibid, 249.

the Virgin, we don't feel ourselves as external spectators faced with a painted image, but rather as eyewitnesses to a real event that is taking place right in front of our eyes. Again, Caravaggio's representation of the scene is more based in an earthly realism than supernatural doctrine, as is the case even for the holy Icons in the painting. The Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen are viewed as secular figures living in the present instead of the historical past, the effect being that "the immediate event becomes readable as a young woman mourning the death of … her mother."[16] In order to achieve this humanisation of the supernatural, the artist not only disregarded decorum, ignoring conventional rules of representation of the sacred episodes, but also denied the spiritual content of the scene in favour of how it would look more realistically.

When discussing Caravaggio's naturalistic perception of the Virgin, it is important to note that his depiction of the Icon as noticeably mortally dead, as opposed to being in a transitory state between life and death, was not completely unprecedented. Indeed, the official contemporary view of the Catholic Church, advocated by Cardinal Baronio, admitted that Mary had, without a doubt, died the mortal death of a mortal human. *Death of the Virgin* was criticized and rejected by the Church not because it depicted the Virgin as a dead woman, but because it depicted her as *only* a dead woman, and not as physically monumental, aesthetically perfect, and already on her way to Heaven. At the time the idea of the Virgin's resurrection and the assumption of her body and soul was still being dogmatically propagated by the Church, and it was these supernatural conventions of the story that Caravaggio rejected, favouring a scene that could have featured any subjects from the Iconic Virgin to a lowly prostitute. However, the picture had by no means been discredited on that account among other contemporary painters. On the contrary, the young artists then in Rome were greatly impressed by Caravaggio's novelty and praised him as "the only true imitator of nature."[17] It was this imitation of nature which placed *Death of a*

[16] Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin*, 100.
[17] Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 247.

Virgin in direct conflict with the conventional depictions of the holy scene. Making the subject of the scene universal, Caravaggio depicted the assumption of the Virgin almost entirely in realist visual terms. There is a definite feeling of significance, holiness, and even assumption in the painting, but that feeling is realised through aesthetically imperfect, naturalistic, and secular imagery.

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'The price we had to pay': Perception and Reality in the Memories of a Veteran of the Malayan Emergency

Dan Murtagh

Memory is never a static snapshot of a past reality, but an organic process of recall; as much contingent on the demands of the present as the prism of each narrator's perception of the past. A veteran's perception of the Malayan Emergency sees acceptance of British involvement in Malaysia's affairs as 'what we had to do to give them freedom, otherwise they'd be wearing jackboots now'. The testimony a narrator produces is a window into their process of recall; what is remembered, what is forgotten and what is left unsaid: 'People, whether young or old, remember what is important to *them*'. Ultimately, memory is a fallible tool subject to mutations over time; the weight of collective and cultural memories limit individual recollection. Personal narrative is a product of subjectivity.

Memory is never a fixed picture of the past, but an organic reconstruction of previous events, often 'driven by the needs of the present'[1], with ambiguity in the reality remembered and the reality narrated. The oral testimony of Bryn Jones, a seventy-three year old veteran of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) – a bitter conflict for natural resources between British and Commonwealth troops and communist guerrillas in the Malayan jungle – shows the gaps and overlaps between his perception of events and experiences in Malaysia with the realities of the period. In addition, the interplay between the

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[1] G. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes* (London , 1994), 241

personal memories of the individual, the collective memory of a group, the popular memory of wider society, 'the social production of memory'[2], and the official memory promoted by successive Governments through monuments and military parades, gives a glimpse into the power of received cultural representations, and the influence the socially-produced memory of a group, or society at large, can exert over the perceptions of the individual. Indeed, there are myriad external factors: from the interviewer and interview situation, to cultural norms and the media, which exert a huge influence over the perceptions and memories of any narrator. What Alistair Thomson has termed the 'composure'[3] of memory from all of these disparate elements is a deeply congested, and contested, area of research. Lummis argues that 'It must be accepted that we [Oral Historians] never have direct access to memory'[4]. Nevertheless, memories are an invaluable resource which helps us not only to understand the narrators and the realities they lived through, but also the societal 'system of common life'[5] which frames the perceptions and recollections they offer. Bryn Jones' testimony is a battleground between these competing pressures and priorities. There exists a dynamic flux between his personal memories and the collective memory of soldier colleagues; the popular memory of the culture lived in and the official memory of parades; memorials and statues, all of which colour and shade his own experiences. The cultural pressures of everyday society, the expectations of the interviewer, real or imagined, and the desires and goals of the veteran himself may taint any oral testimony.

The interview situation and the interviewer have a huge impact on the reality evoked and the perceptions offered. Brown has argued:

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[2] Popular Memory Group (Richard Johnson et al), 'Popular Memory: Theory Politics Method' in *The Oral History Reader*, (eds.) R. Perks & A. Thomson (London, 2006), 76

[3] A. Thomson, 'The A.N.Z.A.C. Legend' in *The Myths We Live By*, (eds.) R. Samuel & P. Thompson (London, 1990), 78

[4] T. Lummis, *Listening to History* (New Jersey, 1987), 118

[5] R. Williams, *Keywords* (London, 1983), 294

> The interviewer presents a subjectivity, composed of his/her sex, age, dress, manner of deportment and, of course, the way of asking questions, and this constitutes a culture of signs and discourses that is understood by the interviewee. The interviewee will be responsive in his/her testimony to this presence in all sorts of ways.[6]

The reality Bryn Jones re-creates from his memories is framed within the context presented. Indeed, the variance of influences can be astounding; an unobtrusive object like the recorder can be influential in its own way if a narrator is unnerved by its presence. The impact of these different factors on the narrative produced cannot be underestimated, as Abrams has argued: 'Neutrality is not an option because we are part of the story'[7]. Assumptions were made by Bryn Jones about how much I, as interviewer, would understand, whether military jargon or Welsh; he sought to ground his narrative in a variety of cultural markers, including landmarks of Holyhead – our shared home town – and gestures, and through referencing film and television. This resulted in a narrative an outsider or an interviewer unfamiliar with the man and his community would struggle to understand. He clearly relished the opportunity to be interviewed and subsequently treated the interview as an important event, devoting an entire evening to it.

The purpose of the interview was not to collect a rigid account of facts and dates, but a perspective of personal experience. As Terkel states, 'I'm not looking for some such abstraction as the *truth*, because it doesn't exist. What I'm looking for is what the truth is for *them*'[8]. Evaluating Bryn Jones' reality provided an excellent opportunity to understand his perspectives and preoccupations, yet, the conjection is that my own presence fundamentally stained his testimony. Portelli has expanded this point, arguing that 'Oral testimony, in fact, is never

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[6] C. Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians* (Edinburgh, 2005), 131
[7] L. Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London, 2010), 58
[8] S. Terkel, quoted in T. Parker article, 'Interviewing an Interviewer', *The Oral History Reader*, 125

the same twice'[9], due to the innumerable factors which contribute to the production of the narrative reality; from the phrasing of a question, to the time an interview takes place. Every oral testimony is a window to the priorities, values and experiences of the narrator, and this interview was designed to open up a dialogic process; between interviewer as researcher and interviewee as narrator. Through this dialogue the discordances and harmonies between historical reality and narrative perception arise. The taints and turmoils in Bryn Jones' narrative are witnessed at several key points: in his self-representation as a dutiful son and a masculine, drinking-and-fighting man's man simultaneously; in the representation of his initial conscription into national service; how he rationalised his involvement in the Malayan Emergency; how he described the exotic people he encountered, most notably the Gurkha soldiers and the indigenous people of Sarawak, and, finally, his struggle to articulate the traumatic realities of jungle warfare in Malaysia. Each of these aspects of narrative reveals an uneasy alliance between the reality of the situation and the recollections offered. Portelli has argued that 'The life story as a full, coherent oral narrative does not exist in nature; it is a synthetic product of social science – but no less precious for that'[10]. The artifices of the oral narrative betray the hidden motives and purposes of its composure, whether the narrator wants to be the hero of his narrative or through the subtle impact of collective memory on personal recall. If memories are common creations of the human mind, designed to rationalise and justify the worlds around us, then, by analysing memories, oral historians may gain a more human picture of historical realities, whilst also constructing a window into the perceptions and views of narrators and the culture they live in.

A complex representation of identity is produced by Bryn Jones; on one side, the loyal son eager to appease his father, 'for his sake'[11], and on the other, a fun-loving character drinking, fighting and gambling:

[9] A. Portelli, 'What makes Oral History Different?' in *The Oral History Reader*, 39
[10] A. Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia* (Madison, 1997), 4
[11] Bryn Jones Interview, 30/1/2011, Transcribed 02/02/2011, extract 1

> … in Singapore we used to have a good time go to the nightlife to the clubs the Britannia Hotel and the Union Jack Club they used to have er karaoke and er oh yeah er dance with women in the service we er got into a fight with fellers from the R.A.F.[12]

This may partly be due to the fact that he left military service aged twenty-one and, subsequently, as a mature, older man, his memories of national service are dominated by his youth rather than promotions or other events. However, the death of his father in 1959 was the event which caused him to leave the army in order to support his mother and younger sister: 'I says after my father I'd be the only breadwinner'[13]. There appears to be a reluctance to stress any sort of conflict with his father in the narrative; an attempt, consciously or not, to play down any conflicting realities in order to present a harmonious family unit, with a smooth transition from man's man to model son. In a bid to maintain his reputation as a storyteller and retain excitement in his narrative, Bryn Jones may have selected the most thrilling events he can remember, accentuating his role; not only to please his ego by becoming the hero of his narrative, but also affirming his masculinity in light of his capitulation to the demands of his family. Through a narration of the fights, the drinking, the gambling and the general adventures, he fashioned an identity where loyalty to his family is unquestioned; his masculinity and his narrative are re-affirmed through his anecdotes of young manhood. As Abrams has observed, '… men's conversation with other men is often characterised by boasting'[14], and some of Bryn Jones' anecdotes – entertaining as they are – may fall into that category.

A similar conflict may be observed in the narratives constructed by Bryn Jones, of his initial conscription into national service and his later assessments of the event. The narrative swings from the original

[12] Ibid, extract 2
[13] Ibid, extract 3
[14] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 119

dread and resignation: 'Get it over and done with'; 'I'll do my time'; 'I wanted to go and yet I didn't want to go anywhere'[15], towards a much more positive tone: 'I would go through it again … you just get on and you can make it fun, but I definitely would go back again'[16]. Whilst this may be attributable to the experiences and fellowship encountered in the army creating a sentimental attachment, the spectre of collective memory also hangs over the narrative. The individualism of the earlier testimony, around the personal 'I', is counterbalanced by the more distant second person 'you' in the later narrative. It is arguable that the collective memory of Bryn Jones' fellow ex-servicemen coloured the narrative reality, subtly shifting his perceptions to be in greater accordance with the group reality; personal perceptions are faded in order to promote a group reality. It is apparent that he was influenced by the powers of collective and official memory; the contact of fellow ex-servicemen and reunions adulterate his personal testimony the most: 'We talk about the old times have a beer and tell some jokes and it is y-y'know a really good gathering'[17]. Chatting about the old times over a beer would clearly present as collective memory placing a huge pressure over individual memory, so might explain why his memory seems most adept at recalling small anecdotal episodes, which can be threaded into a narrative and told well.

The external pressure to conform to the reputation of a storyteller leads Bryn Jones to recall the most vivid images; the fantastic and the oriental, such as seeing Gurkha soldiers:

> The Gurkha officer had these knives at the back called the Kukri but the sheath was covered in aw precious stones y'know aw y'know it was a beautiful thing it was and they were talking their language but as they were goin' I says to the officer 'How is er thing the Kukri is it sharp' I says 'can I see?' 'No you can't' he says 'you can't see' y'see if they draw

[15] Bryn Jones Interview, extract 4
[16] Ibid, extract 5
[17] Ibid, extract 6

it it's got to be for blood.[18]

The fascination and infectious enthusiasm for the Gurkhas is a combination of awe and curiosity. The brutality and opulence in the Kukri clearly left a mark in the memory and affected his narrative. Understandably so, since he was demonstrably proud at having served alongside the Gurkhas in the Malayan jungle: 'I'd serve alongside them any day'[19]. This episode underlines both his own prowess as a soldier, capable of holding his own against these renowned troops, and his position as a raconteur with an engaging story to tell. The pressure to make the testimony interesting leads to a more ruthless editing of his testimony: 'They [the Gurkhas] told us it'd get hotter by the time we got to Singapore and we said "Aw thank you very much" [laughs] I knew four of them fellers gurkhas very very nice fellers but y'know there was some Nepalese that didn't mix much'[20]. Those Gurkhas who do not conform to his narrative of the 'very very nice fellers', who are polite yet deadly, are demoted from Gurkhas to Nepalese; an example of narrative utilised as an editing of memory. The contradictory realities in the narrative are marginalised.

The deployment of Bryn Jones' cultural markers help frame his perceptions: 'Y'know they made a film of it erm oh Rourke's Drift oh urm Zulu there like that … they won nine but it was actually eleven VCs'[21]. The film 'Zulu' is used to explain the collective pride the South Wales Borderers – the regiment he served in – have in their history. Popular historical memory, in this case, serves to augment the collective identity of the regiment, witnessed in correction of eleven, not nine, Victoria Crosses won by his regiment. Thomson has reinforced this point, arguing that film studios are 'the most important myth-makers of our time'[22], and these myths, popular and official, present a powerful influence on an individual's

[18] Ibid, extract 7
[19] Ibid, extract 8
[20] Ibid, extract 9
[21] Ibid, extract 10
[22] Thomson, 'The A.N.Z.A.C. Legend' in *The Myths we live by*, 74

perception of reality. As a soldier, Bryn Jones accepted the official perspective of British involvement in Malaysia's affairs as 'what we had to do to give them freedom, otherwise they'd be wearing jackboots now'[23]. The use of 'jackboots' here is to denote totalitarian regimes, yet, there is a failure to see the contradiction in being a conscripted soldier sent to fight Malaysian people, to secure Malaysian resources for a British Government which denies a conscript his own freedom. Yet, the creation of a narrative which grants the opportunity to be, in some small way, a hero in his own life story, is an understandable development; 'Narrative is a way of making sense of experience'[24]. Acceptance of the official perspective of the conflict is an example of a narrative providing comfort, as well as a justification to the narrator who produces it. Dawson has argued that 'Britain's wars have always been fought in other people's countries'[25], therefore, military service overseas was the unquestioned norm for military service.

The tumultuous realities of Bryn Jones' era are pushed to the margins of his own story. Melvyn Bragg also noticed this trend: 'A man will talk of the Second World War, not in terms of Rommel or Montgomery or Eisenhower, but in a way in which everyone who served under those generals would understand'[26]. Tangentially, the Suez crisis is described as 'The whole Suez canal business yeah so erm if we went out of the barracks we had to tell them where we were going'[27]. A momentous event is brought down to human scale; the annoying inconvenience of having tabs kept on your every movement. The narrative used is a humble perspective of turbulent events and, like many of the conscripted soldiers involved, he was more concerned with having "a good laugh"[28] and getting home in one piece than anything else, and his account reflects this. As a

[23] Bryn Jones Interview, extract 11
[24] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 121
[25] Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 235
[26] P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1982), 132
[27] Bryn Jones Interview, extract 12
[28] Ibid, extract 13

member of the infantry 'footsloggers'[29], his recollection concerns the average soldier. Although affectionate for the army – joined through compulsion as part of the Government's program of national service – Bryn Jones was sent along with thousands of other 'raw recruits – virgin soldiers'[30] to Malaysia, a jungle warzone. It is astonishing that he is so accepting of these developments; he displays an institutional narrative[31] to deal with the events imposed upon him and thousands of other national service conscripts: 'Get it over and done with', 'Unfortunately a few that didn't come back [home] … but that I'm sorry to say is the price we had to pay'[32]. This acceptance of the conditions of conflict is dismissed as a reality to be endured; the casualties of national service a mere occupational hazard. Growing up during the Second World War, in an era of militarisation and massive state intervention in citizen's lives, national conscription was accepted as a normal event in life; '… the price we had to pay'. The use of 'we' implies not only Bryn Jones' generation, but a collective memory which still operates in his narrative.

The horrific memories of jungle fighting, against Communist guerrillas, are still his own personal experience:

> When I came back [to the base] I landed a job erm … because … erm getting nightmares yeah because we had to kill fellers yeah aw the bandits well that's what we'd know them as and erm getting nightmares could see it and everything anyway I had a job in the Officers Mess which was cushdie'[33].

Here, there is a real struggle to express the horror of the jungle fights and the subsequent nightmares suffered. There is a break with the official discourse of the guerrillas as 'bandits', instead acknowledging

[29] Ibid, extract 14
[30] P. Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997* (London, 2008), 454
[31] Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 20
[32] Bryn Jones Interview, extract 15
[33] Ibid, extract 16

their status as human beings, as another group of 'fellers'. Rejection of the official memory of 'bandits', 'that's what we'd known them as', brings no comfort and no resolution, as the traumatic experience 'blocks narrative expression'[34]. Instead,the narrative hastily shifts towards his time in the Officers Mess. Anecdotes follow, of the first taste of curry and gambling adventures. Safe, oft-told tales which allow him to 'impose some control on a memory which could not otherwise be borne'[35], without providing any of the final closure of resolution, help him to deal with some of the more disturbing memories from his national service. The perspective is moved from outdoors to the domestic indoors, in order to obscure the violent realities witnessed.

Rejection of the official memory of resisting evil "guerrillas" brought no closure and, whilst collective memory through Bryn Jones' circle of ex-servicemen friends has provided some comfort, there has been no solace. These painful memories are negotiated by surrounding the bad with the good: his escapades with the Malay cooks and waiters; his attempts to gamble his way to riches, and his novel experiences with Asian beer and curry suffocate the memories of jungle fighting. As Ben-Amos has argued, 'Memory, collective and individual, transforms our social and material surroundings into a language that tells us about the past.'[36] Whilst remembering always occurs in the present, the recollections offered by each narrator provide vital glimpses into a different era, supplying clues to the circumstances of both the past and the present. Memory is never a static snapshot of a past reality, but an organic process of recall, as much contingent on the demands of the present as the prism of each narrator's perception of the past. The testimony a narrator produces is a window into their process of recall; what is remembered; what is forgotten and what is left unsaid: 'People, whether young or old, remember what is

[34] P. Riano-Alcala, 'Seeing the past, visions of the future' in *Oral History and Public Memorie*s, (eds.) P. Hamilton & L. Shopes (Philadelphia, 2008), 285

[35] M. Roseman, 'Surviving Memory' in *The Oral History Reader*, 238

[36] D. Ben-Amos, 'Afterword' in *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, (eds.) D. Ben-Amos & L. Weissberg (Detroit, 1999), 298

important to *them*'[37]. Attempts are made to create a narrative reality which can rationalise experiences and memories: the conflict in Bryn Jones' role as a son; his masculinity; his military service; his involvement in the Malayan Emergency; the exotic ethnicities encountered, and, most poignantly, his struggle to come to terms with the traumatic realities of jungle warfare fifty years on. The descriptions of jungle warfare found in history books are rendered pale comparisons to Bryn's reality of fretful, snatched minutes of sleep in the dark, or the harsh marches through hostile jungle, or the continued abhorrence at the brutal fighting witnessed.

Oral history contains the power and capacity to bring all of the grand and sweeping elements of history books down to the humble, human level of the ordinary men and women who endured and survived. Personal narrative is a product of subjectivity; in this case, a window into a veteran's perception of the Malayan Emergency, in conjunction with a reflection on the culture and era the narrative was produced in. Ultimately, memory is a fallible tool subject to mutations over time; the weight of collective and cultural memories limits individual recollection. The added complication of traumatic memories strains the establishment of a coherent narrative. Tonkin has characterised memory as

> … part of cognitive empowering and a means to being; it is developed through social interaction; it is medium as well as message. The contents or evoked messages of memory are also ineluctably social insofar as they are acquired in the social world and can be coded in symbolic systems which are culturally familiar.[38]

For Tonkin, memory is imprisoned in the social world it is used within. Indeed, the collective memory of the soldier colleagues and the popular memory of society's received representations of events, such as the plethora of war films, coupled with the official memory

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[37] V. R. Yow, *Recording Oral History* (2nd Edition) (Oxford, 2005), 39
[38] E. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts* (Cambridge, 1992), 112

promoted through memorials and parades, plays a large role in the formulation, formatting and composition of personal memories. Oral testimony is, like other sources, a flawed account of the past. There is potential for misrepresentation, omission, mistakes and lies, alongside the influences of the interviewer, the interview situation, memory – collective, popular and official – as well as the priorities of the narrator and the demands of cultural conventions. These peculiarities of oral history may also be, with careful consideration, some of its greatest resources. The mutations and marks in the narrative provide a fleeting glance of the people who lived through momentous historical events, the culture they lived in and the culture they lived through; not just collations of facts and figures.

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Stories Which Transfix Society: A Sociological Analysis of the Cultural Practice of Remembrance Sunday

Hannah Mackenzie

For the sociologist there is rarely any fixed 'reality' which can be uncovered. All theoretical or methodological attempts to understand the social world are recognised as just one of many possible interpretations. However a sociological reading of Remembrance Sunday does have the capacity to highlight the misleading features of the common cultural perception of the practice. Offering in contrast, not necessarily a 'reality' to replace these views, but simply an alternative and critical perception.

"All the mourning's veiled the truth. It's not "lest we forget", it's "lest we remember". That's what all this is about – the memorials, the Cenotaph, the two minutes' silence. Because there is no better way of forgetting something than by commemorating it"

(Tom Irwin in *The History Boys*, Bennett, 2006)

Does Remembrance Sunday actually remember the events which produced it and the subsequent dead of war which it commemorates or, as Irwin suggests in *The History Boys,* is it a way of forgetting the moral ambiguities of the past? An initial reading reveals the concept of the 'nation' as an unquestioned silence underpinning the ceremony. Further investigation using Halbwach's theory of collective memory

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reveals the more subtle ways in which, in the context of 'remembering', Remembrance Sunday does not constitute 'remembering' in a conventional sense. If we analyse the specific construction of remembering within the ceremony in three different ways: as habitually ritualistic rather than cognitive; as isolating rather than interactionist; and as imagined, not truly remembered; we uncover the true way in which it functions regarding collective memory. It alienates two key components of societal remembering from one another; individual lived experience and collective frameworks of memory. In doing this, it closes off the creation of alternative frameworks of memory through social discourses and stagnates remembrance. So, whilst Remembrance Sunday does not actively make us forget its topic of commemoration; neither does it prompt a 'remembering' that is useful for society: "The more it hides, the more it gives the illusion of revealing".[1] Remembrance Sunday is cultural practice which embodies the aspects of modern society which led to its creation. However, its construction reflects them back to society in such a way that they are exempt from discussion.

Both in purpose and in execution, Remembrance Sunday (RS) is concerned with the idea of nationhood. However, at the heart of the commemoration, lies a silent, unquestioned notion: that of the nation itself. Anderson proposes in 'Imagined Communities' that: "nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of the word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind".[2] He later describes the nation as "an imagined political community".[3] All societies can be considered 'imagined' to an extent: every individual within a community will not directly know all other members but their knowledge that they exist and the imagining of their existence is foundational to each member considering him/herself to be part of that community. The 'nation' can be considered cultural in this anthropological sense and it is this idea which goes unmentioned and yet underpins RS.

[1] F. Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders* (London, 1988), 108.
[2] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 2006), 4.
[3] Ibid., 6.

Anderson goes on to question "why these particular cultural artefacts have aroused such deep attachments".[4] The wearing of poppies, the two minutes silence and the cenotaph of RS demonstrate the extent to which the nation is embedded within modern British society and how it commands such loyalty. All three of these aspects of the ceremony involve a removal of identity and a style of engagement with society which subsumes the individual into the greater whole of the 'nation'. Whilst the wearing of poppies initially appears to be the choice of individuals to commemorate the dead of war; it is in fact socially coerced in two ways: primarily by the fact that the majority of the public and public figures wear them and also because the usual economic barriers which exist to owning things are removed when all that is sought is an unspecified donation. Though it is not compulsory to wear a poppy; this is an incredibly easily facilitated adherence to a social norm. As a result, wearing one is less the choice of an agent actively engaging with society and more an acquiescence to the whole and disengagement with the self. The two minutes of silence is an even more visceral demonstration of this, where the social coercion is heightened. Furthermore, the cenotaph can be analysed in a similar manner. While a particular emphasis is placed on the individual naming of ordinary soldiers; it is justified to ask if, considering the sheer volume of names, there is any true recognition of individual identity enshrined within our war memorials. These aspects of the ceremony serve to instil a sense of 'nationhood' into society, immersing the individual in a communal identity. The British Legion describe RS as a day when "people across the nation pause to reflect on the sacrifices made by our brave Service men and women". The very use of 'our' presupposes a community: in this case, the 'nation'.

RS also embodies the idea of continuity necessary for the 'nation'; what Anderson describes as transforming "fatality into continuity".[5] For, in the imagining of community, it is not only vital that we conceive of ourselves as part of a present whole, but also as part of a

[4] Ibid., 4.
[5] Ibid., 11.

group whose existence continues throughout time. The content of RS, the specified activity of remembering past members of the community, provides a vital link with the past. In fact, those with no real memories of the war dead are literally imagining a past community. Imagining this past in the context of the 'nation' links present individuals' identities to the 'nation' and its future. Your death is not your own, it is that of your 'nation'. If we accept that past lives were lost for us as a member of the 'nation' and commemorate them then we are tacitly accepting that our current lives are silently pledged also on behalf of the 'nation'. Anderson argues that "Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings".[6] Thus, RS contributes towards the very thing that it results from.

Whilst understanding that RS is infused with and reproduces the conditions from which it arose is interesting, this is not a critique of the 'nation' or of RS for embodying it. Indeed, it is not surprising that RS is underpinned by these deep social foundations. Nor is it surprising that RS perpetuates itself: it is understandable that a relatively naturally evolving cultural practice would embody its own purpose for existence also. What is more intriguing and sociologically pertinent is the way in which RS exists within itself as a cultural text or artefact. As Anderson comments, it is useful to think of communities as distinguished, not "by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined".[7] It is to this style of remembering and imagining which we now turn.

It is possible to conceive of social remembering in a way which goes "beyond Durkheim's notion of a periodic 'collective effervescence': the intensified force of sentiments and creativity which emerges from great conferences, demonstrations and gatherings".[8] To understand in more detail the style of remembrance and commemoration it is useful to look at theories of collective memory, most notably expounded by

[6] Ibid., 7.
[7] Ibid., 6.
[8] B. Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory* (New York, 2007), 27.

Maurice Halbwachs, for "it is, of course, individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past".[9]

Halbwachs seeks to understand remembering not just as an individual and personal act but as one intricately connected to our wider existence in society: "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognise, and localise their memories...We place ourselves in their perspective and we consider ourselves as being part of the same group or groups as they." Memories "are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them... it is in this sense that there exists a collective memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection".[10] For example, if a person were to recall memories of their wedding day, those memories would obviously be particular to their own personal experience. However the fact that they occurred within society means they are structured by the concepts and customs of that society (at a very basic level the idea of marriage is a social framework through which you recall those events). Furthermore, those recollections themselves are also conducted within society for particular purposes (perhaps to recount to someone for a particular reason or to compare with something in your own reminiscences) and are structured by these frameworks also.

Halbwachs is criticised for attributing too much power to the needs of the present in shaping the past and, with reference to mass remembering of the type typified in RS, "Osiel contends that vis-a-vis the wars and mass atrocities which make up the grand narratives of history, we cannot simply let a 'hundred interpretative flowers bloom'".[11] However there is still room for movement within

[9] M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, 1992), 22.
[10] Ibid., 38.
[11] Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory,* 38.

collective remembering. It is not entirely constrained by the needs of the present, nor is it entirely without room for interpretation. In fact, in discussing collective memory of mass atrocities in reference to show trials, Osiel states that "by highlighting official brutality and public complicity, these trials often make people willing to reassess their foundational beliefs and constitutive commitments as few events in political life can do." He emphasises the opportunities inherent in these styles of remembering "Specifically, they present moments of transformative opportunity in the lives of individuals and societies".[12] And at the basis of the theory lies the possibility for different interpretations through the prism of collective memory: "Memory is life. It is always carried by groups of living people, and therefore it is in permanent evolution".[13] Let us return to the example of marriage. While this is recalled through frameworks, it is also referring to a real lived memory and it is through the lives of individuals with agency that social frameworks can be transformed. The real life experiences of different people are continually changing and subverting the structure of marriage (registry/church/civil partnership etc) in society today. For although "it is only in coming together to repeat and reaffirm the past that a group survives",[14] it is also in reacting to and engaging with the past that a group evolves.

However, for RS this malleability does not exist. The specific way in which remembering is constructed in this cultural artefact does not allow the space for change which exists in other forms of collective memory. This can be uncovered if we analyse the specific construction of remembering within RS as habitually ritualistic rather than cognitive; as isolating rather than interactionist; and as imagined not truly remembered.

The first aspect of RS which removes the possibility of discourse in

[12] M. Osiel, *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory and the Law* (New Jersey, 2000), 2.
[13] P. Nora, 'Between Memory and History' in P. Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory Vol 1* (New York, 2003), 14.
[14] Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory,* 11.

collective memory is its ritualistic nature. The enactments of RS, whether the official ceremony on Whitehall in London or more local versions, all observe roughly the same order of service and all contain the crucial elements of the two minutes silence, attendants wearing poppies and the laying of wreaths at war memorials. Inherent in all these acts is their bodily nature and their annual repetition and habituation: "Habit is a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which 'understands'".[15] Connerton argues for the importance of this aspect of memorial style ceremonies, "If the ceremonies are to work for their participants, if they are to be persuasive to them, then those participants must be not simply cognitively competent to execute the performance; they must be habituated to those performances. This habituation is to be found...in the bodily substrate of the performance".[16] RS encapsulates these aspects within its performance and it is not merely our minds which are coerced to remember but, more importantly, our bodies which remember the cultural act itself, year on year. Ceremonies are already "formalised acts, and tend to be stylised, stereotyped and repetitive. Because they are deliberately stylised, they are not subject to spontaneous variation".[17] RS goes further, we ourselves enact and uphold RS and our bodies are intrinsic to its continuance. Because of our direct participation in RS (at the very least the vast majority of people will be involved in the two minutes of silence), we are less likely to question or change it in any way. The interaction of our minds with remembering is not even particularly important when we understand the ceremony in this way, because our bodies are coerced into involvement and so the ritual already has the level of cooperation necessary to make us complicit in its enactment. And, once complicit, our capacity to question is severely reduced. Thus, "both commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices therefore contain a measure of insurance against the process of cumulative questioning entailed in all discourse practices".[18]

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[15] P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989), 95.
[16] Ibid., 71.
[17] Ibid., 44.
[18] Ibid., 102.

Similarly, the opportunity for multiple recollections of the past is reduced by the isolating way in which we remember. The most widely observed feature of RS, the two minutes of silence, observed as "a rare moment when the nation can stand together and reflect on the price of freedom" (as described by the Royal British Legion), is one of the greatest obstacles to the discursive and reformative aspects of collective memory. Whilst appearing communal, this ritual is in fact an incredibly solitary form of remembering because everyone must be silent and remember at a single, set time. It depends precisely on not sharing your internal experience with those remembering with you. It is similar in nature, if not in content, with what Berger describes in relation to modern advertising: "In this respect the envied are like bureaucrats; the more impersonal they are, the greater the illusion (for themselves and for others) of their power. The power of the glamorous resides in their supposed happiness: the power of the bureaucrat in his supposed authority".[19] Each individual's act of remembering is sustained only by the presumption that everyone else is also remembering. Because of this isolating aspect of RS it wouldn't matter if no-one actually 'remembered' or if everyone just randomly thought of, say, eggs; it would still serve its function because everyone would presume all others to be 'remembering' and we would never know otherwise. The communal act of 'remembrance' in the two minutes of silence we observe every year is so solitary and dependent on an assumption of its own existence that it removes the possibility of any present day societal interaction with past memories. In removing this interaction of society with the past there is no space for possible changes to collective memory to occur because the collective nature of the 'remembering' is one that precludes interaction with frameworks of memory.

The obstacle that RS represents to changes in collective memory is, finally, a result of the fact that it resides much more in imagination than in actual, real, lived memory. Whilst some involved will have real recollections of having lost people in wars, even they are still

[19] J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London, 1972), 134.

'remembering' and commemorating more an idea than anything else. The "brave Service men and women" whom the Royal British Legion calls us to commemorate are an imagined group of people, in Anderson's sense of imagined communities, rather than individuals who we know and are asked to remember. As a result we are not reflecting upon our own lived experience on RS but, rather, we are imagining a group of people from, but no longer present in, our society. If we return to the previous example of recollections of marriage through collective memory; the catalyst for changes to the collective framework of memory are the lived experiences of the individuals remembering through these frameworks. If we remove the individual experience from the memory, then we remove the catalyst for change: all that is left are the frameworks, which cannot change because there is nothing interacting with them to bring about any change.

All three of these aspects of RS result in a lack of space for alternative recollections of the past; specifically, of death in war. Benjamin described a need for common frames of reference in remembering events and experiences: "For this reason, soldiers returning from the First World War could not tell stories to communicate the qualities of war, so unimaginable was the nature of the social reality that greeted them. Virtually all were condemned to silence".[20] In past instances there have been no social frames through which individuals can recollect the atrocities of war, and in RS there are no individuals actually, actively being allowed to remember through the sparse frames which have subsequently been constructed.

Rather than being an object of culture, which establishes the possibility of discourses,[21] RS cuts off the possibility of alternative discourses. Perhaps it is the complex and morally questionable nature of war which causes such a reaction from society: "Memory, as has been pointed out by Foucault, is also a control over those whose

[20] Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory,* 30.
[21] M. Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in C. Mukerji & M. Schudson (eds.), *Rethinking Popular Culture* (London, 1991), 457.

practices and knowledges do not fit taken for granted historical assumptions: Memory is...a very important factor in struggle...if one controls people's memory one controls their dynamism...its vital to have possession of this memory, to control it, to administer it, tell it what it must contain".[22] If memory is controlled or stifled, then the possibility of raising complex questions about the moral ambiguity of both specific wars and war in general is cut off. Orwell claims: "in these ways organised forgetting creates an indifference to reality, or an ease in negotiating inconvenient facts".[23] This, however, suggests the somewhat questionable idea that there are devious forces at play hiding the truth of the past from us. But the solution can possibly be discovered by looking at Foucault's description of the power that creates subjects. He states: "This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to".[24] This still implies power, but perhaps in focusing on the internalisation of identity and existence as a subject we can deploy a more insightful interpretation. For the unquestioned concept of the 'nation' at the heart of RS and also the existence of RS are upheld by individuals within society. These social forces cannot shape our lives if we do not ourselves find meaning in them. Perhaps we are co-conspirators in the continuation of these forces but are unwilling to recognise this reality and so we tell ourselves stories.

It is in Geertz work on the Balinese cockfight that we find the initial reading of a cultural text as societal storytelling: "To regard such forms

[22] Fowler, *The Obituary as Collective Memory,* 34.
[23] Ibid., 35.
[24] M. Foucault, 'Afterword: The Subject and Power' in H. Dreyfus & P. Rabonow (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, 1982), 212.

as "saying something of something," and saying it to somebody is at least to open up the possibility of analysis which attends to their substance rather than to reductive formulas professing to account for them".[25] In attending to the substance of the cockfight he states: "The cockfight, too, in this colloquial sense, makes nothing happen...The cockfight renders ordinary, everyday experience comprehensible by presenting it in terms of acts and objects which have had their practical consequences removed and been reduced (or if you prefer, raised) to the level of sheer appearances, where their meaning can be more powerfully articulated and more exactly perceived".[26] However, Geertz's analysis is not without its flaws: the presentation and reflection of lived experience through culture, if it makes nothing happen, does not necessarily allow us "a particular view of their essential nature".[27] Rather, and especially in the case of RS, it obscures their essential nature. It may well be "a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves",[28] as RS may be a story we tell about ourselves, but the style of storytelling is the key.

In the case of RS, the style of storytelling is such that it cannot be questioned. In the field in which the culture is produced, there is no space of possibilities[29] in which to question the story being told. As life becomes a cultural story in RS, the habitual, solitary and imagined nature of that story makes it unquestionable; our frameworks of collective memory cannot be transformed. As Benjamin noted, there exist individual accounts of war and a collective memory but the two are alienated from one another and do not interact through RS. This lack of interaction results in stagnation of social responses to the very topic we are supposed to be recollecting each year on RS. In telling a story to itself through a mirror of culture in RS society becomes

[25] C. Geertz, 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight' in C. Mukerji &M. Schudson (eds.), *Rethinking Popular Culture* (London, 1991), 269.
[26] Ibid., 262.
[27] Ibid., 263.
[28] Ibid., 266.
[29] P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Cambridge, 1996), 236.

transfixed by its own gaze and unable to question the values underpinning the yarn it is spinning.

Connerton argues that "Certainly it is possible to imagine a future in which ceremonies at the cenotaph no longer take place because there is no generation still alive who can pass on the living memory it recalls; we can envisage a day when such commemorations will have become as meaningless as it already now is for us to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo" whereas "The passover and the last supper have for long been remembered without there being any living generation who can, in the above implied sense, remember their original historical context".[30] Yet, this begs further analysis. Part of the reason these religious ceremonies have been maintained lies in the fact that the social sphere which generated and underpins them still exists and allows them to be sustained. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, the concept of the 'nation' which generated and underpins Remembrance Sunday will still exist as a social form and, therefore, it will be sustained. Furthermore, the fact that it is habitual, solitary and more imagined than remembered, rules it out as a site for discourse concerning the transformation of collective memory. As an item of culture it is clearly a product of the society which generated it and, intriguingly, embodies within its very self the conditions for its own reproduction.

[30] Connerton, *How Societies Remember,* 103.

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A Transtheoretical Understanding of the Emotions: On the importance of dialogue between Robert Solomon's cognitive and William James' non-cognitive theories of emotions to create a satisfying and applicable theory

Rory E. Fairweather

Individual theories of the emotions tend to isolate themselves from others and in doing so they necessarily lack the strengths of the other theories. The dogmatic spat between cognitive and non-cognitive theories of the emotions, which I explore here, is symptomatic of this insularity. To have a satisfying understanding of the emotions we must acknowledge the strengths and discard the weaknesses of each theory. As such, I argue that it is only through dialogue between theories that we can achieve a strong conceptualisation of the emotions.

The intention of this article is to advocate a dialogue between two differing yet historically influential theories of emotions advocated by Robert C. Solomon and William James. Solomon's theory, explicated in his 'Emotions and Choice'[1], is known as the cognitive theory of emotions. James' theory is a non-cognitive theory of emotions, and is

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[1] R. C. Solomon, 'Emotions and Choice' in R. C. Solomon (ed.) *What is an Emotion?* (Oxford, 2003), 224-235.

advocated in his article from 1884, 'What is an Emotion?'.[2] Both theories have large followings and exponents including Martha Nussbaum, Antonio Damasio, Nico Frijda, Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman, and both theories offer important insight into our understanding of emotions. However they both have significant shortcomings which can largely be resolved by looking to the other for answers. As such I advocate a dialogue between theories to go beyond their isolated and unsatisfactory theories in an effort to come closer to a full understanding of emotions; as I call it, a transtheoretical understanding.

Put simply, the cognitive account regards the emotion to be a result of a mental belief on a certain stimulus. Thus the emotion is itself directed at something. The presence of this cognitive process of judgement is what gives the theory its name. This concept of the emotions is found as far back as in Aristotle who likewise uses the term 'judgement'.[3] The non-cognitive account instead considers the emotion to be perception of a bodily feeling, for example an elevated heart rate may tell us we are anxious. For non-cognitive theorists, there is no place for belief, or cognition, in the definition of an emotion. Martin Seligman argues that despite being significantly different, cognitive and non-cognitive theories are not incompatible.[4] Though she favours a mitigated cognitive theory,[5] Martha Nussbaum claims that there is scope for dialogue between both sides; one does not rule out the other.[6] With this basic understanding of each theory and the scope for dialogue and synthesis we must now consider the theories individually.

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[2] W. James, 'What is an Emotion?' in R. C. Solomon (ed.) *What is an Emotion?* (Oxford, 2003), 65-76.
[3] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* (London, 2004), 141.
[4] M. Seligman, *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death* (New York, 1975), 62-65.
[5] M. Nussbaum, 'An Interview with Martha Nussbaum' (2004) 11:1 *The Dualist*, 69.
[6] M. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2003), 105.

James, who worked in the late 19th Century and collaborated with his contemporary Carl Lange to create the James-Lange theory, argues that emotions are the feeling of physiological changes that are caused by a certain stimulus. He says that 'bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and [...] our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion'.[7] James considered the influence of all bodily changes on the emotion 'including among them visceral, muscular, and cutaneous effects'.[8]

Thus the process goes

1) Stimulus
2) Physiological response
3) Emotions resulting from awareness of physiological response

James sees the cognitive aspect as additional to, but separate from, the emotion. Cognition allows us to judge how best to respond to a situation but in itself cognition is 'pale, colourless, destitute of emotional warmth'.[9] James writes that 'we might see the bear, and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike' but these cognitive processes are, for James, non-emotional.[10] James' claim is that a cognitive evaluation is not the emotion because it is without feeling. To demonstrate this James conducted a thought experiment with his readers. He asked:

> What would be left of fear or love or embarrassment, or any emotion if you took away the physiological sensations such as the heart palpitations, trembling,

[7] James, 'What is an Emotion?', 67.
[8] P. Adelman & R. Zajonc 'Facial Efference and the Experience of Emotion' (1989) 40 *Annual Review of Psychology*, 252.
[9] James, 'What is an Emotion?', 67.
[10] Ibid., 67.

> muscle tensions, feelings of warmth or coldness in the skin, churning of the stomach?[11]

In an attempt to demonstrate that physiology composes emotion, James suggests we try to eliminate an unwanted emotion by behaving with 'the *outward motions* of those contrary dispositions we prefer to cultivate'.[12] For example:

> Smooth the brow, brighten the eye, contract the dorsal rather than the ventral aspect of the frame, and speak in a major key, pass the genial compliment, and your heart must be frigid indeed if it does not gradually thaw.[13]

By controlling bodily changes we can control emotions and this causal relationship demonstrates the link between physiology and emotions as well as the independence of emotions and external stimuli. However this point is contentious and perhaps not representative of James' theory; we do not experience emotions because we act like we would if we were having this emotion. For example we still feel fear even if we act as though we do not: remaining still rather than running from a bear does not entail that we will not be afraid. Some research has been done in this area that may support James here.[14] Likewise, research on the facial feedback hypothesis has shown some effectiveness in changing our emotions by

[11] James, cited in K. Oatley et al (eds.) *Understanding Emotions* 2nd Edn. (Oxford, 2006), 116.
[12] James, 'What is an Emotion?', 73.
[13] Ibid., 73.
[14] For example, see S. Tomkins & C. Izard, *Affect, Cognition, and Personality: Empirical Studies* (New York, 1965), and P. Ekman & E. Rosenberg, (eds.) *What the Face Reveals: Basic and Applied Studies of Spontaneous Expression Using the Facial Action Coding System* 2nd Edn. (Oxford, 2005).

the changing of our facial expression.[15] Though this may contribute to a theory of emotions I maintain that this is not James' main argument. Indeed it is inconsistent with other, more central, elements of his theory.

Contrary to James, Damasio, a neurologist and biological psychologist, argues rationality is profoundly linked to our emotions. It is our emotions, such as fear, which allow us to act rationally (i.e. in our interest) and run away from the bear. According to Damasio, without emotions such as fear we might act in a way that is counter to our interests.[16] This view is held by other theorists including Lazarus, Keith Oatley, Nico Frijda and Batja Mesquita. Frijda and Mesquita write that emotions 'are, first and foremost, modes of relating to the environment: states of readiness for engaging, or not engaging, in interaction with that environment'.[17] Indeed, emotions 'function to manage our multiple motives, switching attention from one concern to another'.[18] This view of the emotions, as something which we need to interact with the world, is incompatible with James' concept that we might change our emotions dependent on how we act. The idea that emotions are an intrinsic part of our rationality and interaction with the world is strong and must be included in a comprehensive theory of the emotions.

Less debatable is the more charitable account of James' theory: that it is the feeling of bodily changes that is the emotion, rather than behaviour creating bodily feelings and then emotions. Instead of discounting James' theory we must simply query his attempt to demonstrate the link between physiology and emotions.

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[15] For example, see S. Tomkins, *Affect Imagery Consciousness* (New York, 1962), and Adelmann & Zajonc, Facial Efference and the Experience of Emotion'.

[16] A. Damasio, *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (London, 2005), 131.

[17] N. Frijda & B. Mesquita, cited in Oatley, *Understanding Emotions*, 28.

[18] Oatley, *Understanding Emotions*, 253.

Central to James' theory is that all or most emotions have specific physiological correlates, otherwise within this account there is no explanation for subtly different emotions such as fear and anger, embarrassment and shame.[19] By considering the complexities of the autonomic nervous system and by realising the vast number of alternative physiological arrangements within this system it certainly seems plausible that James' theory could be true.[20] However there are some criticisms to be made here and for this I turn to Walter Cannon, the former student of James.

Cannon's first criticism is that the slight changes in salivation, heart rate, sweat response and breathing 'do not carry enough distinct meaning to account for the many distinctions people make in their emotional experience – differences, for example, between gratitude, reverence, compassion, pity, love, devotion, desire and pride'.[21] Cannon conducted studies and concluded that the same physiological changes 'occur in such readily distinguishable emotional states as fear and rage'.[22] Thus James' theory fails to explain differentiation between emotions which we perceive.

Another of Cannon's points is that our physiological responses are slower than our emotional responses.[23] Oatley uses the example of embarrassment, highlighting that 'the blush peaks at about 15 seconds after the embarrassing event' but the feeling of embarrassment occurred closer to the event.[24] James' argument falters yet again.
Cannon also questions our sensitivity to bodily changes. While 'we can feel the thumping of the heart because it presses against the chest wall' this does not entail that we are acutely sensitive to its changes or

[19] R. C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Cambridge, 1993), 301.
[20] Oatley, *Understanding Emotions*, 120.
[21] Ibid., 121.
[22] W. B. Cannon, 'From Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage' in Solomon, (ed.) *What is an Emotion?*, 80.
[23] Ibid., 81.
[24] Oatley, *Understanding Emotions*, 121.

respond emotionally to these changes.[25] Indeed more recent studies have found that people are only faintly aware of their heart rate activity.[26] Furthermore some autonomic components are utterly without feeling according to tests on the guts where they have been 'cut, torn, crushed or burned in operations on unanaesthetized human subjects without evoking any feeling of discomfort' and along with not noticing this the subject did not experience emotional changes during these experiments.[27] The evidence and arguments seem conclusive against James' reliance on subtle alterations of our physiology as determinate of emotions.

However a convincing alternative to James' version of non-cognitive emotional theory has recently been formulated. Damasio argues that, as with James, the emotion begins with a stimulus or 'inducer of emotion' (though at this stage we are emotionally unconscious of it, for what Damasio calls the emotion is yet to occur). Next the signals resulting from processing the stimulus activate parts of the brain that are preset to respond in a certain way depending on the type of stimulus encountered. These parts of the brain are called 'emotion-induction sites'. Their activation triggers a number of responses in the brain and the rest of the body. The feeling of this 'full range of body and brain responses… constitutes emotion'.[28]

With Damasio's findings we can relocate the physiological element of James' theory to the brain. This relocation counters Cannon's first criticism: within the brain there are more intricate and sophisticated devices that may distinguish between similar emotions such as embarrassment and shame. The rapid response of the brain also counters Cannon's original criticism that the body was too slow to explain the sudden onset of emotions. Cannon's final criticism also is not applicable: our brain responding to stimulus will create responses that we are sensitive to. Indeed that is the purpose of this brain

[25] Cannon, 'From Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage', 81.
[26] Oatley, *Understanding Emotions*, 121.
[27] Cannon, 'Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage', 81.
[28] A. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens*, (London, 2000), 283.

function: to make us respond in an appropriate manner to the situation, as with Damasio's previous argument linking emotions and rational responses. This response includes emotional responses such as fear and anger.

Crucially though, this modern alternative to James' theory demonstrates that the *feeling* of an emotion is at least in part a physiological, specifically neurological, reaction rather than a cognitive judgement. However it is not just neurology which influences the potency of the emotion. This is demonstrated well by Robert Winston who discusses spinal injury patients with no feeling below the neck. They still experience emotions, suggesting physiology is not the only component, but these emotions are not as intense as before their injuries.[29] Clearly neurology and wider physiology must be accounted for in a strong account of the emotions. Nonetheless James' theory relies too heavily on physiology as determinant of emotions as Cannon showed.

Turning now to Solomon's cognitive theory of emotions, I must start by explaining what he considers an emotion to be. Solomon argues that the emotion is the cognitive process of judgement on a stimulus. Thus emotions are intentional, by which I mean they are 'about something'.[30] This, he claims, is fundamental to all emotions. Every emotion has an object because it is that object which they are judgements of. Without an object there can be no emotion. To demonstrate this, Solomon gives the hypothetical example of someone called John stealing his (Solomon's) car. The emotion results from two things. Firstly Solomon is certain that John has stolen his car (this belief is the object of the emotion). Secondly there is the judgement that this theft is an injustice. The feelings caused by this belief are what the emotion is. In the case of perceived injustice, as with the example given, the emotion felt is anger.

[29] R. Winston, *The Human Mind* (London, 2003), 192).
[30] Solomon, *The Passions*, 111.

Solomon is angry at the certain *belief*, rather than the objective fact, that John has stolen his car.[31] When my subjective knowledge of the object changes, even if in objective reality there has been no change, then my emotion will do so too. Upon learning that his car has never left his garage, Solomon will cease to be angry. Note here the stark contrast between Solomon and James who, as mentioned above, believes emotions to be wholly removed from beliefs about an object. Solomon's account seems far more convincing in this regard. He is correct to acknowledge the primacy of the subjective experience rather than objective fact in forming an emotion.

Our emotions are dependent on our normative beliefs because 'an emotion is a basic judgement about our Selves and our place in our world, the projection of the values … according to which we live and through which we experience our lives'.[32] Thus emotions are judgements that we make. For example anger is the judgement that we have been wronged; we perceive injustice to have been done. If we do not believe to have been wronged, say by John having stolen our car, then we will not feel angry. Clearly emotions are linked to what we consider important; they are linked to our ethical practices and social norms. For example if we do not believe in property rights then we would not have a strong emotional response to them being broken. It is important though that we realise Solomon does not consider these judgements to be contemplative; we do not ponder whether to feel anger about the theft of our car, instead judgements are 'undeliberated, unarticulated, and unreflective'.[33] Indeed he considers these judgements to be as commonplace as the thousands of judgements we make every day, such as 'reaching for the light switch, glancing at the clock, turning off the fire under the scalding cappuccino – perceptual judgements, aesthetic judgements, even moral judgements, that are never "thought about"'. [34]

[31] Solomon, 'Emotions and Choice', 225.
[32] Solomon, *The Passions*, 126.
[33] Ibid., 131.
[34] Ibid., 131.

For Solomon we have responsibility for these judgements:

> Since normative judgements can be changed through influence, argument and evidence, and since I can go about on my own seeking influence, provoking argument, and looking for evidence, I am as responsible for my emotions as I am for the judgments I make.[35]

According to Solomon, because we are capable of changing our judgements we are responsible for them and consequently for our emotions. If I go out looking for evidence to the contrary that John stole my car and I find this evidence by checking that the car is in the garage and has been there all night, then I will no longer feel angry. By accepting responsibility for my involvement in my own emotions, and then acting to alter them in a way that I desire, I can choose my emotions. Solomon says that with our emotions 'we are like infants who for months watch our legs bobble before us, and then we discover that we ourselves are doing the bobbling'.[36]

But what if John actually has stolen my car? If I judge this to be wrong I will feel angry. Simple understanding of emotions as judgements does not draw the conclusion that the subject controls that emotion. Here Solomon wrongly ignores other factors in our judgements. Our judgements and values result from a series of influences and are largely, though not irrevocably, entrenched, certainly within the time span of the felt emotion. We cannot choose to deem something right or wrong. While we can choose, over a period of time, to adjust our attitude towards something such as property rights, Solomon over-stresses our ability to control our judgements. It might take years or decades to remove a deeply engrained value system and while we may choose to move away from it, successful results are far from instantaneous and in some cases it

[35] Solomon, 'Emotions and Choice', 232.
[36] Solomon, *The Passions*, 132.

might not be achievable. This is not acknowledged by Solomon and this is a clear weakness in his account.

A strength of Solomon's theory is that it attempts to allow for the complexities of emotions by focussing on the individual's experience of them. While non-cognitive theories do this to an extent, Solomon allows much more for individual experiences of emotions. Solomon's theory is based on the fact that we are all unique individuals, each making different judgements and thus feeling different things in response to the same events. James' theory does not allow for this. Indeed there is nothing to make my own personal feeling of fear or love particular to myself if we all have the same physiological responses. What Solomon attempts to do is allow space for individual differences, and indeed cultural differences, in perceptions of reality in his approach to understanding emotions. He realises that emotions 'are not concerned with the world but with *my* world'.[37] Solomon here shares similarities in his approach as the existential psychotherapist Rollo May who insists we must 'discover the person, *the being to whom these things happen*'.[38] This subjective realism, acknowledging an objective external world but also an individual perception of it, is in contrast to James who seems to objectify the individual experience of emotions into a mechanical process rather than something personal and individual. Solomon's approach seems more considerate of individual perception and this is clearly preferable.

Although he accepts that bodily feelings tend to accompany emotions, Solomon insists that this feeling is not the emotion. He says that 'emotions may typically involve feelings... but feelings are never sufficient to identify or to differentiate emotions, and an emotion is never simply a feeling'.[39] He also describes bodily feelings: '[They] are always there, take the shape of the emotion, but just as easily move

[37] Ibid., 19.
[38] R. May, *The Discovery of Being* (London, 1983), 10.
[39] Solomon, *The Passions*, 99.

from one emotion to another'.[40] While there is association, bodily feelings are not a part of emotions. And yet, as Winston highlights, our bodily feelings alter how strongly we feel an emotion. Physiology does alter how an emotion *feels*. Ignoring it to the extent that Solomon does is misguided. Though his basis of separating objective from personal experience of the world is a strong one, he reacts too strongly against a theory that rightly places a part of our own feeling of an emotion in our objective reality, that of our body. Indeed consider an argument with a roommate or partner. Though the issue may be resolved (such as a dispute over who does what housework), thus meaning the object of the emotion is gone, we may still feel angry at the other. The physical, non-cognitive elements of an emotion remain – such as high levels of adrenaline. We feel the residual emotions of anger after the object has ceased to be. Thus the cognitive element has gone but the non-cognitive element remains. This contradicts his statement that bodily feelings can 'easily move from one emotion to another'.[41]

As with James, Solomon's account is too narrow. Solomon focuses too much on cognitive elements and is reluctant to accept the importance of temperament and personality traits and biological influences including instincts on emotions. Both theories are too insular and, by distancing themselves from the other, each isolates itself from important aspects of the emotions. Their failure in creating successful narrow accounts of emotions demonstrates that a complex conceptualization of emotions from a hybrid of perspectives including biological, psychological and social phenomena should be attempted, such as that done by Loyal Rue.[42]

To summarise, James' theory lacks subtlety, scientific grounding and any relation to the particular subjective *feeling* of emotions connected to the object of the emotion. However he is correct to give

[40] Ibid., 97.
[41] Ibid., 97.
[42] L. Rue, *Religion is Not About God* (London, 2006), 79.

consideration to the role of the physiological aspect of emotions, as demonstrated by Winston. Also debate around James' theory has lead to some key components of a theory of the emotions being researched and established. Solomon alternately, owing to the importance he obdurately places on subjective experience, gives us a more nuanced account which bears greater relation to the emotions we feel. Though he is wrong to draw such strong conclusions about our choice of emotions, his incorporation of judgements and objects within his theory is clearly a significant improvement on James' theory. And yet in his efforts to fix the gaps he sees in James' system, Solomon ignores the strong elements of the non-cognitive account of emotions, thereby creating a similarly deficient theory.

What this shows is that taking a strong conceptual basis for a theory of the emotions (i.e. cognitive/non-cognitive) is a flawed approach to achieving a satisfying theory. There is a lack of modesty in their claims of knowledge and further lack of awareness of the vulnerability of such narrow theories. Alternately, a dialogical approach tacitly acknowledges the likelihood of epistemological and methodological weaknesses in such a difficult area of the philosophy of psychology. Such theoretical modesty allows for progression through dialogue. So, hypothetically, a theory of the emotions would develop from James' original theory, taking into account the findings of Cannon, Winston and Damasio, thereby resituating the non-cognitive elements into parts of the brain rather than the autonomous nervous system, but retaining a physiological element to the theory. That theory would also apply some elements of Solomon's theory, such as the importance given to individual and social differences on the perception of experiences and the feeling of emotions. As a result of a healthy dialogue in which both cognitive and non-cognitive sides would be willing to recognize their own shortcomings a more complete and less flawed theory of emotions can be achieved. Clearly a transtheoretical understanding of the emotions is our best chance of creating a satisfying concept. Without open dialogue between opposing views, and without the willingness to concede defeat on either side, a theory of the emotions is condemned to failure. Dialogue, in this field, is of crucial importance.

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Did Communist rule in the German Democratic Republic live up to its rhetoric regarding women's emancipation?

Felicity Cooke

Communism in the German Democratic Republic offers an interesting assessment of the reality/perception paradigm. Despite attempts to convey ideas of absolute equality between the sexes, as perceived by the legal and theoretical frameworks created by the state, the GDR remained unable to overcome realities of economics, the 'double burden' and entrenched gender roles within East German society to achieve their aims. By examining each of these aspects in turn, this article will illustrate that whilst some improvements regarding female emancipation were made in the public sphere, little progress was made within the private, and as such the reality remained at odds with the idealised perception of communist equality.

The 'women's question', as it is referred to by numerous historians, provides an interesting appraisal of the success of communist regimes in central and eastern Europe. Indeed, in the discussion surrounding the fall of communism and the transitional politics which followed, much commentary has noted the positive position of women under communism when compared with their status within emerging democracies.[1] It cannot be assumed, however, that this reflects

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[1] R. Kay, 'Introduction: Gender, Equality and the State from Socialism to Democracy?' in R. Kay (ed.), *Gender, Equality and Difference During and After State Socialism* (London, 2007), 12.

complete cohesion between the political rhetoric on the subject and the realities of women's emancipation during communist rule. Here, using secondary materials produced by both contemporaries of communist rule and more modern historians, the degree of emancipation achieved by women in the German Democratic Republic will be examined. Following an assessment of the rhetoric and legislation established by the GDR, the question and historiography of ideology versus economic necessity with regards to women's place in the workforce will be considered, as will the realities of working restrictions and the 'double burden' and entrenched gender roles within East German society. This will conclude that whilst improvements were made in the *public* sphere, women remained conventionally oppressed within the private.[2]

As a nation built upon a Marxist-Leninist foundation[3], policies and rhetoric regarding women in the GDR were based upon the writings of Marx, Engels, Bebel and Zetkin, and followed the basic understanding of oppression due to gender as being a direct result of - and subordinate to - capitalism and the class struggle.[4] This view of women and their position in society meant that if a fully socialist state was in place then they would naturally be emancipated; no one group could oppress another as the means of production had ceased to be privately owned.[5] Equality was considered to mean enabling women to participate in the workforce and find paid employment, and this was the primary focus of GDR policy relating to women, alongside issues regarding the family and children.

For the purposes of this exercise, legislation will also be included under the term 'rhetoric', as it effectively operated as such during communist rule. In the first constitution of the GDR the equality of

[2] H. Bridge, *Women's Writing and Historiography in the GDR* (Oxford, 2002), 27.
[3] H. Frink, *Women After Communism* (Maryland, 2001), 9.
[4] Bridge, *Women's Writing*, 27.
[5] Kuhrig, in E. Finzel, '"Equality" for Women, Child Rearing, and the State in the Former German Democratic Republic' (2003) 26:1 *Women's Studies International Forum*, 47.

men and women was stated explicitly, and was reiterated in the revised constitution of 1968, which stated that other aspects pertaining to women's emancipation should be protected by the State.[6] In the interim years between the two constitutional revisions, laws were put in place to ensure that women could perform fully in both of their duties, as both mother and worker[7], and this continued until the fall of the GDR in 1989. The duality of roles protected and promoted by the State led to the 'double burden' which will be discussed later, but it does illustrate that the position of women was important enough to the SED Government to merit legal protection.

In practice, the legislative rhetoric was successful to a large extent. During the Honecker era approximately half of the labour force was female[8], and by 1987, 88.6% of women of working age were employed[9]. The dramatic rise in divorce rates, the majority of which were applied for by women, have also been interpreted as suggesting that women had attained a level of economic independence which meant they were no longer forced to be dependent upon a husband or marriage that had ceased to be fulfilling.[10] Of course, these improvements in the place of women within the public sphere were not absolute; the majority only found employment in the lower echelons of professions, and despite a move towards promoting more women in previously 'male' occupations – particularly following Party Secretary Ulbricht's comments in 1963 that "we cannot build socialism with hairdressers alone" – women remained almost completely unrepresented in the upper reaches of occupations.[11]Whilst they may have been emancipated in the classical socialist sense in that they could participate in production, they still had not reached true *social* equality.

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[6] *Ibid.*, 48.
[7] D. Rosenberg, in S. Wolchik & A. Meyer, *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, (Durham NC, 1985), 346.
[8] M. Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies, 1945-1990*, (London, 2000), 60.
[9] Finzel, '"Equality" for Women' 49.
[10] D. Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally*, (London, 1983), 260.
[11] Rosenberg, *Women, State, and Party*, 349.

Historians have debated whether this increase in women in the workplace was in fact due to adherence to communist ideology or was rather due to the economic necessities of the period and the nation. Commentators writing during the German Democratic Republic years appear more inclined to view the increase in women in the workforce as vital to ensure the stability and growth of the nation's economy. For example, Childs highlights the post-war economic climate experienced in both the GDR and other European states, and regards this major demographic change as a reason for increased pressure upon women to participate.[12] Rosenberg also refers to the chronic labour shortage due to war, and that it was essential for many women to take up jobs simply to survive.[13] Whereas Childs makes no mention of the ruling SED Party's ideology, Rosenberg does admit to some changes in the reasoning behind female participation in later years, however it is still suggested that economics played the more dominant role in determining their position. This is a view rejected by twenty-first century interpretations, where historians such as Fulbrook view the regime as having had a 'very real' ideological commitment to equality between the sexes, rather than an exploitative reaction towards circumstance.[14]

Regardless of whether the changes in women's ability to work were due to political justifications or economic needs, it is clear that whilst they may be considered partially successful in the realms of employment, the GDR did not manage to produce a government that gave a fair representation to women. Although female participation was discussed by the Party on occasion, it does not appear to have been a central concern, and just as in the workplace, the number of women involved in the higher, more powerful positions decreases dramatically.[15] Of course, it could be argued that given that this was not part of the explicit rhetorical – and by consequence, legislative – aims of communist rule in the GDR it

[12] Childs, *The GDR*, 253.
[13] Rosenberg, *Women, State, and Party*, 348.
[14] Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies*, 60.
[15] Rosenberg, *Women, State and Party*, 347.

cannot be considered to have failed in this area. However, it is fair to assume that a nation striving for complete equality between all citizens would also seek to have balance within the political organisation, and as such the lack of action and attention paid to this area of policy can be deemed to illustrate an inability to live up to communist ideology.

Although perhaps not strictly undermining the rhetoric of the GDR government and their policies, the 'double burden' and household role of women under communism remained a subject of tension. The duality of the role that women were expected to fulfil of both worker and mother – mother being not only to do with childcare but effectively housekeeping also – appears to have been endorsed by communist theorists such as Clara Zetkin. She notes that a socialist society should enable a woman to 'fulfil her task as wife and mother to the highest degree possible'.[16] In this vein, motherhood was considered central to the role of women under communism in the GDR, and although again this has been attributed to economic reasoning in a similar manner to employment, it does adhere to communist ideology. This issue is perhaps more contentious with a feminist interpretation of 'emancipation' rather than a communist one; if socialism recognises equality as being entirely based upon employment then this would naturally differ from the western feminist view of the right to choose one's own path.

Despite this, it remains a central point of concern regarding the 'women's question' that economic equality did not ensure that the entrenched gender roles and sexism within German society were addressed. The accounts relayed by Christel Sudau of the casual sexism encountered in daily East German life[17] are testimony to the fact that women were not truly free. Moreover, there remained a lack

[16] C. Zetkin, *Only in Conjunction with the Proletarian Women will Socialism be Victorious* (1896), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1896/10/women.htm>, accessed 13 March 2010.
[17] C. Sudau, 'Women in the GDR' (1978) 13 *New German Critique*, 69-70.

of equality within the private sphere, with the majority of household work and the main care of children being left to the woman. In this area the legislation appears to have been oxymoronic. In the family code of 1965 it was explicitly stated that men and women were equal within the home,[18] however in the event of a child falling ill it was only the mother who could take paid time away from work to look after them. This further illustrates that the ideas espoused by the GDR government were not put into practice, and that reality did not live up to rhetorical perception.

Ultimately it is clear that despite some great improvements regarding the 'women's question' not every aspect of female emancipation was achieved, and the practicalities did not entirely live up to the rhetoric. The attitude towards women in the workplace changed dramatically,[19] to such an extent that it was considered to be socially unacceptable for a women not to work. In this way the GDR did live up to its rhetoric to some extent. If the most basic Marxist interpretation of gender equality is used, then certainly women were fully engaged in the means of production. However, given their lack of representation in the more senior ranks of employment and in politics it is clear that with a more nuanced analysis they did not achieve full freedom as it would be considered today. Moreover, within the household and in the psyche of East German society there remained a strong belief in outdated gender roles. This concurs with Bridge's discussion of the relative success of the GDR in the public sphere whilst failing to provide women with emancipation in the private sphere. Of course the realities of the regime as considered by Fulbrook should also be recognised. The material shortages, political oppression and lack of freedom experienced by GDR citizens was experienced by both men and women alike with no distinctions between the two.[20] Perhaps in this way true emancipation of women was in fact achieved; they were just as equally lacking in freedom as their male counterparts.

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[18] Rosenberg, *Women, State, and Party*, 346.
[19] Childs, *The GDR*, 258.
[20] Fulbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies*, 91.

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