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MEMORIALISATION

AND

JEWISH THEOLOGY

IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES:

MONUMENT, NARRATIVE, LITURGY

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of the relationship between the understanding of the past and the practice of theology. It is built around three major case studies: the history of interpretation of the commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), the commemoration of the First World War in Canada, and the development of post-Holocaust theology. Linking these cases are issues of theological response to (or justification for) violence, and tensions between individual and collective identity.

Part I focuses on Deuteronomy 25:17-19, and the internal contradiction between the commandments to remember and blot out the memory of Amalek. The passage is analysed both in terms of language and reception history, with special attention paid to Rabbinic interpretations from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (sermons and commentaries generated during or immediately after the German Reform movement, the American Civil War, and the Nazi occupation of Poland). This reading prompts two further strands of analysis, which are pursued separately: the distinction between the remembering commanded in the passage and concepts of memory active in the Western philosophical tradition prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the place this passage has in a larger tradition of religious and secular discourse on acceptable justifications for violence, again in both Jewish and more broadly Western thought.

Part II takes up these themes, beginning with an historically contextualised reading of two versions of *Antigone*—one written by Sophocles in the early days of the Athenian Empire, and the other by Jean Anouilh during the Second World War. Both of these focus on a dead body as the site of ideological contestation between divergent identity narratives—a conflict that is also apparent in negotiations over the memorialisation of the First World War, which is the main focus of this part. A close reading of novels from L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series, published before, during, and just after the war reveals that the First World War partly destabilised the individual-focused structures of memorialisation that were in place prior to its beginning, in favour of structures which enforced the collective identity of the soldiers who died in the war; while much of this instability could be (and was) addressed in existing theological language, the war nevertheless left a mark on Canadian society and religious practice. This part concludes with an examination of the Canadian National Monument at Vimy, conducted via archival documentation of the monument's design and construction and then through a reading of *The Stone Carvers*, a recent novel which re-imagines the circumstances documented in the archives through the eyes of one war veteran and his family. This dual reading also demonstrates the instability of memorials, the tendency of their meaning to shift over time.

Part III commences with a discussion of the shift in memorial forms precipitated by the Holocaust. I contend that the tendency to memorialise the Holocaust with complex museum narratives betrays an anxiety about the intended audience of these memorials, which points in turn to the degree to which the Holocaust upset previous cultural and religious worldviews. This section focuses on theological and literary attempts to record and respond to the ruptures caused by the Holocaust, with specific reference to two recent novels by Jewish Canadian women which, taken together, provide a constructive interruption to overly tidy narratives of national and religious identity.

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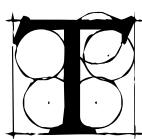
## NOTES ON THE TEXT

References to texts typically cited by line or paragraph (such as Sophocles' *Antigone* or the *Mishnah Torah*) include, for ease of referencing, both the standard citation and the specific page of the edition I have used.

The abbreviation *A&P* is used for volumes of *The Acts & Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada*.



**P**RELUDE



his thesis is about memorialisation—not about memory itself, but about the process of constructing cultural memory, about the negotiation, implicit or explicit, between what is remembered, transmuted into narrative, handed on from generation to generation, and what is forgotten, unspoken, overlooked. My underlying assumption is that the understanding of the past generated by such a process plays an essential role in shaping attitudes and actions of individuals and societies in the present. This understanding (‘memory’) is at times difficult to distinguish from the process of its formation (‘memorialisation’); the former is often the only evidence that may be found of the latter. That the two concepts blur together in discourse heightens the need for clarity on this point. The process of memorialisation is never complete; memory is not set in stone—it is constantly open to re-negotiation, and ‘reading backwards’—an insertion of more recent understanding and experience into discourse about the past. This is discussed more fully in my first chapter.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis is about ‘Jewish Theology’, itself a contested term.<sup>2</sup> Jewish theology is not, in spite of the insistence of the multitude of first-year papers which have graced my desk over the past two years, ‘words about God’ or ‘language about God’, nor, in Phyllis Tickle’s more elegant formulation, ‘God-talk’, nor even, in the classic definition put forth by Anselm, ‘faith seeking understanding’, carried out from a Jewish perspective.<sup>3</sup> Or, rather, it is not simply this. ‘Theology’ is a word that falls far more naturally from a Christian tongue; the notion of Jewish theology is, by itself, a form of syncretism, Judaism being, in general, far more inclined towards *praxis* (or *halachah*) than *logos* (there is no Hebrew word that quite approximates the range of meanings that adhere to *logos*).<sup>4</sup> Robert G. Goldy has observed that, ‘[h]istorically, Jewish theology has arisen at times when the Jewish people lived in, and were able to freely interact with, a highly developed non-Jewish culture’; he goes on to argue that such an enterprise did not emerge in America until after the Second World

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<sup>1</sup> An example of reading backwards is brought forward by Nicola King, in the introduction to her book *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), when she describes a Holocaust survivor recounting his experience, constantly punctuated by the insertion of the claim ‘he didn’t know that then’—understanding he acquired after the fact was so intimately bound up in his memory of what he did experience that he could not separate the two in his recounting. King writes that ‘[h]is memory of that moment seems to have been deeply affected by what he didn’t know at the time of the event: what he also has to remember is the painful fact of his own ignorance’ (p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Although not so contested that Louis Jacobs was compelled to include any introductory or explanatory note in his volume *Judaism and Theology: Essays on the Jewish Religion* (Valentine Mitchell, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Phyllis Tickle, *God-Talk in America* (The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998); Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991) 2.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Robert G. Goldy, *The Emergence of Jewish Theology in America* (Indiana University Press, 1990) 9-12.

War—although he admits its existence in ‘ancient Alexandria, medieval Spain, and modern Germany’.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Jewish theology has emerged, in the United States and elsewhere in the English-speaking world, and it has, indeed, done so in conversation with Christianity; a brief survey of the books on my shelf which identify themselves as ‘Jewish Theology’ show them to be produced almost entirely by authors who have some academic background in Christian academic theology.<sup>6</sup> Almost all the self-identified Jewish theologians whose works currently inhabit my office shelf either have received an education from, or hold an academic post at, a department historically associated with some branch of Protestant Christianity: Judith Plaskow, Melissa Raphael, Ellen Umansky, David Blumenthal, Eugene Borowitz.<sup>7</sup> My own experience as a student in a department with a predominantly Christian history and intellectual culture suggests that, in such circumstances, theology is a privileged discourse, and the ability to speak its language carries rewards in the degree of seriousness with which one’s work is considered, which may encourage this sort of linguistic syncretism, the quest to apply words like ‘theology’ and ‘liturgy’ to a religious system in which they are applicable metaphorically, rather than historically.<sup>8</sup> I maintain, however, that such metaphorical connections are potentially productive; they function, as Paul Ricoeur suggests, to underline both similarity and difference, holding them in tension against one another, creating a space in which understanding of both concepts being connected can be ‘shattered’ and rebuilt.<sup>9</sup>

Jewish theology is, as I understand it via Goldy, contextual theology: it arises out of and responds to a specific intercultural *milieu*; its questions and answers arise from the encounter between Judaism and something other than Judaism.<sup>10</sup> It may contribute questions and insights back to Judaism-in-other-contexts, or even religion-in-other-

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<sup>5</sup> Goldy 7.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, the only two possible exceptions to this are Louis Jacobs and Rachel Adler, neither of whose biography is sufficiently known to me for a definitive statement to be made either way.

<sup>7</sup> This is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

<sup>8</sup> Liturgy and Theology are the two ‘borrowed’ words which I use most often in this thesis. Both have the virtue of referring to an enterprise engaged in by the same people who study it: ‘theology’ from an outsider perspective, insofar as such a proposition is coherent at all, is ‘religious studies’, and ‘liturgy’ done in a context one does not oneself recognise as liturgical becomes ‘ritual’.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Ricoeur, ‘Word, Polysemy, Metaphor: Creativity in Language’ in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection & Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés, 65-85 (University of Toronto Press, 1991) 80-81, 85.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Contextual theology’ originated in the 1970s as an African, Asian, and South American Christian response against the universalist claims of European theology; for an overview of its historical development, see Sigurd Bergmann, *God in context: a survey of contextual theology* (Ashgate, 2003). I am familiar with the term from the work of the Canadian Protestant theologian Douglas John Hall, who acknowledges that ‘[t]he term “contextual theology” is [...] a tautology’, since all theology arises from a cultural context; he argues that an *acknowledgement* of context is as important for those who write from a privileged (economically stable, European-descended) background as for those who write from an historically disadvantaged position—see Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Fortress Press, 1991) 69.

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contexts—indeed, it may even begin with, or acquire, the aim of influencing global Judaism, but historical hindsight informs later generations that its causes began with the local and particular. By drawing attention to the contextual nature of theology, I am also endeavouring to write with consciousness of my own situatedness in a specific historical and cultural context, and the influence that context has on my own work.

I write, then, having been trained under the supervision of an Anglican priest, in a department of Theology and Religious Studies with historic ties to the Church of Scotland, and with a previous educational background in Catholic theology, acquired under the supervision of a feminist theologian with Mennonite roots (and panentheist leanings)—as well as an undergraduate degree in studio art; my previous training in both art and feminist theology has played a role in my selection of source material for this study. This thesis is not precisely about gender, but gender—especially gendered divisions between public and domestic spaces—is a distinct theme in much of the material with which I engage, and this is reflected in my close readings. I write as a Canadian, though, like many Canadians, one who has spent considerable time living abroad, in both the United States and Europe. All of these circumstances mark my academic work; I have occasionally described this thesis as an intersection between Jewish and Canadian studies, and a significant portion of its subtext is an essay in drawing lines between Christian and Jewish modes of discourse—although these are more often than not lines in the sand, attempts to pin down and separate two enormous, ever-shifting, deeply entwined cultural systems and make a definite statement about both of them at once. My major concern is to discover whether, and how, the context in which I write might offer a productive intervention into the field of Jewish Studies, how theological education carried out in primarily Christian terms can be brought to enrich a religious understanding of Judaism, and how national and religious cultural understanding might interact.

This thesis is about identity. Memory and individual identity are closely linked; we are what we remember as much as we are anything else. This is apparent when philosophers of identity theorize scenarios such as the transplant of one person's memory into another's body—the term for such a scenario in science fiction is the 'body swap', which is to say that we speak of Rachel inhabiting Leah's body, rather than Leah acquiring Rachel's brain or personality; the *locus* of identity in such a scenario is with the consciousness, rather than the body.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, an amnesiac is a person who has 'lost their memory', not an entirely new person; memory is not the sole criterion which determines identity. Nor is identity shaped just by personal experience, but also by the complex of stories—history,

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Marya Schechtman, *The Constitution of Selves* (Cornell University Press, 1996) 16-17.

folk tales, other people's memories—which surround individuals and help them to locate themselves within their socio-cultural *milieu*. Ricoeur argues that 'we never cease to reinterpret the narrative identity that constitutes us, in light of the narratives proposed to us by our culture'.<sup>12</sup> In other words, such stories (which I will define in my first chapter as components of 'cultural memory') do not simply inform people about past events, they provide models from which one might learn how to perform the '-ness' of group identity—Canadianness, Jewishness.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis is about imagination, which refers to both 'the power or capacity to form internal images of objects or ideas not actually present to the senses, including remembered objects' and the activity of the mind exercising this capacity.<sup>14</sup> Sidra Ezrahi has written that

what is "remembered" is of course also imagined, as mimesis takes on the authority and license of memory and memory becomes an article of faith. In its most radical form, memory and imagination describe a circularity that promotes an aesthetics of the whole.<sup>15</sup>

Memorials, the vehicles constructed to convey cultural memory from one generation to the next, depend upon imagination: they stem from the imagination of their creators, and act on the imagination of those who encounter them. This is true of each of the sub-types of memorial with which I am concerned here. Monuments invite the visitor into a physical

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Ricoeur, 'Life in Quest of Narrative', trans. David Wood, *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood, 20-33 (Routledge, 1991) 32.

<sup>13</sup> See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition (Verso, 1991).

I realise that, in this thesis, I tend to treat Canadianness and Jewishness as identities which oppose one another, rather than overlap or inform each other; there is very little said in these pages about the condition of being at once both Jewish and Canadian. In part, this is a function of the texts from which I am working—Montgomery's sole reference to Judaism in the *Anne* books is the immigrant Jewish peddler who sells Anne Shirley the dye which turns her hair green, in *Anne of Green Gables* (1908; repr., Puffin Classics, 1994) 260-261; Urquhart has nothing to say about Jews at all, and both Michaels and Ravel, while distinctively Canadian authors, portray Jewishness and immigrant status as interlocking conditions—although Ravel is concerned with children of the second generation; more than any of the other authors in this study, she begins to portray Jewish-Canadianness. In part, this is simply a feature of the exilic character of Jewish identity, as André Aciman has suggested: 'we are always from elsewhere, and from elsewhere before that' Aciman, 'In a Double Exile', *False Papers: Essays on Exile and Memory*, 107-110 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000) 109; see also Arnold M. Eisen, *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homeliness and Homecoming* (Indiana University Press, 1986); Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* (University of California Press, 2000) esp. 3-23; and the essays in Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed., *The Writer Uprooted: Contemporary Jewish Exile Literature* (Indiana University Press, 2008). In part, this is the result of a still-lingering ambivalence about exactly what constitutes Canadianness—as Margaret Atwood has observed, the Canadian immigrant novel does not follow the pattern typical of the American immigrant novel: 'First, Canada does not demand a leap into the melting pot [...] Secondly, if [the immigrant] does wipe away his [*sic*] ethnic origin, there is no new "Canadian" identity for him to step into: he is confronted only by a nebulousness, a blank'; see Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Anansi Press, 1972) 150. However, the reader should not take from this the impression that Canadianness and Jewishness are entirely irreconcilable; the novels of Mordecai Richler provide an excellent starting point for correcting any such misapprehension—but Richler belongs to a very different study than the one I am engaged in here and now.

<sup>14</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. 'imagination'.

<sup>15</sup> Ezrahi 9.

space, but within that space one encounters images (and sometimes text) which prompt the construction of a mental picture of the events and lives represented therein.<sup>16</sup> Narrative invites the reader into a space that is not physical, but nonetheless real, as Ricoeur insists:

To speak of a world of the text is to stress the feature belonging to every literary work of opening before it a horizon of possible experience, a world in which it would be possible to live [...] To appropriate a work through reading is to unfold the world horizon implicit in it<sup>17</sup>

This unfolding, like the reconstruction of events represented by a monument, takes place primarily in the reader's mind; it is a work of the imagination. The barrier between fiction and memory is more permeable than one might expect; both are constructions. This also holds true for the third category of memorial I consider, liturgy.

Liturgy, and especially Jewish liturgy, as I discuss more fully in my concluding chapter, has historically been considered to be a type of text which describes a public performance of worship.<sup>18</sup> Neither the text nor its performance is imaginary—and, indeed, some might take offence at such a characterization<sup>19</sup>—however, the space which they construct for participants is *imaginative*. The many variations on the Passover Seder, for example, are carefully constructed to guide participants through an imaginative reconstruction of the Exodus, so that each participant might 'regard him or herself as if he or she had come out of Egypt'.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, the *Ne'ilab* service on Yom Kippur is dominated by the image of the worshippers standing at the gates of heaven, pleading for admittance; the worshippers, in fact, pray as though they are at those gates, they imagine themselves in that space just as the participants at Passover imagine themselves as slaves in Egypt.<sup>21</sup> The imaginative space of liturgy differs from that of narrative in that it is a shared space; liturgy is primarily a communal endeavour.<sup>22</sup> However, liturgical space functions in a similar

<sup>16</sup> See especially my discussion in the chapter entitled 'Making Memory Solid'.

<sup>17</sup> Ricoeur, 'Life in Quest of Narrative' 26.

<sup>18</sup> See Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Indiana University Press, 1987) 1-3.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Stanley Hauerwas insists that 'Attending liturgy is a Christian's duty because it's *true*. It's what makes life make any sense at all' (emphasis added) 'Christianity: It's Not a Religion: It's an Adventure (1991)' *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, 522-535 (Duke University Press, 2001) 530.

<sup>20</sup> Mishnah *Pesahim* 10:5 (adjusted for gender neutrality). For a more robust discussion of the imaginative function of several variants on the Passover seder, see my article 'Seder and Imagined Landscape' in *Memory, Mourning, and Landscape*, ed. Elizabeth Anderson, Avril Maddrell, Kate McLoughlin, and Alana Vincent (Rodopi, forthcoming 2010).

<sup>21</sup> See Reuven Hammer, *Entering the High Holy Days: A Complete Guide to the History, Prayers, and Themes* (Jewish Publication Society, 2005) 167-174.

<sup>22</sup> The difficulty with considering liturgy to be entirely communal is that this results in having to consider the recitation of the Amidah, for example, as liturgical when it takes place in the presence of a *minyan*, but not when it is recited privately. While context is certainly important, such a finely drawn distinction strikes me as nonsensical—a Catholic priest who says the Daily Office by himself is still engaged in a liturgical performance, and for a very similar reason to the one I would use to argue that some solitary acts of

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fashion to narrative space, insofar as it provides the community with an identity-generating narrative which may be interpreted and re-interpreted as circumstances and the needs of the community change.

The issues surrounding memorialisation in the past century are, as even this brief preface indicates, complex and diverse, and the form of this thesis is dictated by the complexity of its material. The first part of this thesis will be an examination of one such liturgical space, the reading of Parshat Zakhor, one of four short passages appended to the normal order of Torah readings in the month prior to Passover. This examination both illuminates the backwards-reading tendency of memorials, as the responses of various communities over different points in history demonstrate the way that each found in the text a model for their own situation,<sup>23</sup> but also provides a framework for a more widely-ranging discussion of what memory is and how it functions, on both an individual and communal level.

Because it relies heavily upon terminology which I develop in my first chapter, the roadmap for the remainder of this thesis may be found at the end of that chapter.

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Jewish worship ought to be considered liturgical: it connects him to the history and life of the community, even if the community itself is not physically present. This is yet another example of the imaginative dimension of liturgy.

<sup>23</sup> Cf Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (Basic Books, 1985) 7. In many ways, my reading of the Amalek texts reveals the dark side of the liberative narrative that Walzer finds in the Exodus text.

**Part One**  
**Memory**  
**War**  
**War**

**Amalek**  
**Memory**  
**Parshat**  
**also just**  
**Deuteronomy**  
**passage**  
**Jewish**  
**war**  
**War**

**culture**  
**Israel**  
**reading**  
**Maimonides**  
**Halbwachs**  
**Peace**  
**rather**  
**also**  
**Deuteronomy**  
**passage**  
**Jewish**  
**war**  
**War**

**tradition**  
**living**  
**Security**  
**soldier**  
**make**  
**although**  
**century**  
**order**  
**English**  
**collective**  
**woman**  
**History**  
**however**  
**parallel**  
**remember**  
**concerned**  
**may**  
**one**  
**discussion**  
**name**  
**distinction**  
**cultural**  
**Article**  
**conservatism**  
**necessary**  
**whether**  
**people**  
**two**  
**life**  
**captivity**  
**means**  
**contrast**  
**University**

**religious**  
**commentary**  
**particular**  
**thus**  
**international**  
**Zakhor**  
**Annalekites**  
**see**  
**entirely**  
**terms**  
**warfare**  
**war**  
**warfare**  
**justice**  
**last**  
**soldiers**  
**least**  
**word**  
**authority**  
**issue**  
**Council**  
**Israelites**  
**present**  
**commandment**  
**part**  
**even**  
**interpretation**  
**holy**  
**God**  
**must**  
**chapter**  
**text**  
**command**  
**history**  
**press**  
**point**  
**use**  
**means**  
**contrast**

**warfare**  
**warfare**  
**justice**  
**last**  
**soldiers**  
**least**  
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**history**  
**press**  
**point**  
**use**  
**means**  
**contrast**

**language**  
**theory**  
**read**  
**read**  
**question**  
**attack**  
**mind**  
**specific**  
**Bible**  
**texts**  
**through**  
**time**  
**three**

**Connerton**  
**taken**  
**peace**  
**longer**  
**warfare**  
**justice**  
**last**  
**soldiers**  
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**word**  
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**contrast**



## Remembering Amalek

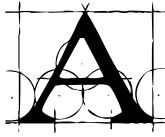
זכור את אשר־עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים:

אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל־הנחשלים אחר־יך ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלהים:

והיה בהניח יהוה אלהיך | לך מכל־איביך מסביב בארץ אשר יהוה־אלהים נתן לך נחלה  
לרשתה תמחה את־זכ עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח:

Remember what Amalek did on the road when you were brought forth from Egypt. Finding you on your journey, he struck at the stragglers, the feeblest of all that were faint and weary; he did not fear God. When the Lord your God grants you rest from the enemies that surround you, in the land that the Lord your God will give you to hold as your inheritance, you shall blot out the remembering of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget.

Parshat Zakhor: Deuteronomy 25:17-19<sup>1</sup>



t the end of every winter, in the month of Adar, the normal order of Torah readings is supplemented with four special readings which, taken together, lay the foundation for the observance of Pesach-Shavuot<sup>2</sup>, which begins in the following month of Nissan. The readings are, in order, Shekalim (Ex. 30 11-16), Zakhor (cited above), Parah (Num. 19:1), and HaChodesh (Ex. 12:1-20).<sup>3</sup> One may argue that these readings lay out four essential pillars of Judaism: charitable giving, remembrance, ritual purity, and observance of sanctified time.<sup>4</sup> These four areas are firmly intertwined, and a discussion of any one will necessarily involve the other three. My primary concern, however, and the focus of my discussion is the second area: remembrance.

Parshat Zakhor, read on the Sabbath before Purim, is recorded as part of the law that God commands Moses to convey to the Israelites.<sup>5</sup> It contains two positive commandments: to always remember the treachery of Amalek, and to blot out the memory of Amalek entirely.<sup>6</sup> Instantly, then, we are confronted with a paradox: how is it possible to both remember and forget at the same time?

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<sup>1</sup> All translations preceded by the original Hebrew are my own. All other translations are taken from the JPS Tanach, unless otherwise specified. Throughout this thesis, quotations from the Torah are cited first by parsha and then by their standard chapter and verse. Because the Jewish lectionary is fixed to a one year reading cycle, a parsha citation not only identifies a certain point in the text, but also a certain fixed point in time—thus, citing this as Parshat Zakhor, rather than Ki Seitzei, indicates that I am reading it in the context of the Sabbath immediately preceding Purim—and therefore in conversation with the Book of Esther—and only a few weeks after the parallel passage (Ex. 17:14), part of Parshat Beshalach, would have been read out loud in the Synagogue, rather than near the end of the lectionary year, when passages from Deuteronomy are normally read.

<sup>2</sup> I am here choosing to treat Pesach and Shavuot, linked by the counting of the omer, as the beginning and end points of a continuous festival commemorating the journey from Egypt to Sinai, rather than as two distinct festivals.

<sup>3</sup> Mishna *Megillah* 3:4

<sup>4</sup> Ronald Hendel identifies three marks of distinction between the Israelites and the surrounding tribes in the Hebrew Bible: ‘circumcision, food laws, and the observation of the Sabbath. The domains of these practices—the body, food, and time—are exemplary for showing the effective symbolism of rituals as markers of cultural boundaries’; see Hendel, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford University Press, 2005) 19. Hendel and I are in agreement with regards to the importance of time and ritual purity (which extends to both bodily and food practices, though Parshat Parah is specifically concerned with bodily purification), and the remainder of Hendel’s work is concerned with documenting the distinctiveness and importance of remembrance within the Hebrew Bible. My scheme differs from his, then, in the inclusion of charitable giving, but more importantly in that it is drawn from and reflective of post-Biblical—indeed, post-Temple—liturgical practice.

<sup>5</sup> The relatively minor festival of Purim celebrates the events of the book of Esther, in which Esther and her uncle Mordecai save the Jewish people from a pogrom engineered by the villainous Haman. Haman is named ‘the Agagite’ (Esther 3:1), which marks him as a descendent of Agag, and, by extension, of Amalek. There are two Agags identified in the Tanach: the first is the king of the Amalekites who employed Balaam to prophesy against the Israelites (Parshat Balak: Numbers 24:7); the second is killed by Saul in 1 Samuel 15. A lengthy treatment of this connection can be found in Elliott Horowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) 107-146.

<sup>6</sup> *MT, Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:5 (Hershman 217). In the following discussion, I assume Amalek refers to the nation of Amalek, rather than the person Amalek; thus, the pronouns used are ‘it’ and ‘their’, rather than ‘he’ and ‘his’.

Rabbinic commentary mostly sidesteps this issue, as does contemporary Christian commentary, both seeming to read ‘blot out the memory of’ as a poetic hyperbole meant to indicate total obliteration.<sup>7</sup> The Harper Collins Study Bible (NRSV) suggests the following cognate passages: Deut 9.14, 25.6, 29.20; 1 Sam 24.21 (*sic*); Ps 9.5-6, 109.13. I can only assume that the reference in 1 Samuel is actually meant to be to 24.22, ‘So swear to me by the Lord that you will not destroy my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s house’; all the other passages noted similarly make reference to the blotting out of a name (שם) rather than memory (זכר), as in Deut 25.19. We could also add Ex.17.14, 32.33, Deut

<sup>7</sup> Rabbinic treatments of the passage are addressed later in this chapter and in the next. A brief survey of Christian commentary yields the following results: John W. Rogerson’s commentary on Deut. 25.19 in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Eerdmans, 2003) ignores the difficulties of verse 19 entirely, focusing on Deut. 25.17-19 as a whole and its place in the ‘narrative framework for the laws of ch. 12-25’ (168), and S. R. Driver’s *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (T&T Clark, 1973) considers verse 19 ‘a striking and emphatic’ passage entirely consistent with ‘the style and manner of Dt.’ (286); William D. Johnstone’s commentary on the parallel passage, Ex. 17.14, also in *Eerdmans Commentary*, is likewise more concerned with the passage’s place in a larger narrative structure, noting the mirroring of pre- and post- Sinaitic events in Exodus and Numbers (89-90). Everett Fox’s commentary in *The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy: a new translation with introductions, commentary and notes*, The Schocken Bible, Volume I (Schocken Books, 1995) notes the broad connection of these passages to the theme of holy war (352; 966), as does G. Ernest Wright’s commentary on Deut. 25.19 in *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Volume II, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Abingdon, 1953) 482; Henry H. Shires and Pierson Parker, in the same volume of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, note that the passage is decidedly un-Christian, and recommend that the dictates of Rom. 12:20 be followed instead (482-3). J. Coert Rylaarsdam’s commentary on Ex. 17.14 in Volume I of *The Interpreter’s Bible* does focus on the command to ‘blot out the name of Amalek’, but is content with tracing the progression of the feud up through I and II Samuel and I Chronicles (961); J. Edgar Park’s commentary on the same passage, also in Volume I of *The Interpreter’s Bible*, focuses on the command to write down ‘a memorial in a book’ (961-2), as does Rev. David Stalker’s commentary on the same passage in *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley (Routledge, 1962), 225, and Carol Meyers’s commentary in *Exodus*, *The New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) 135, although Meyers also notes the holy war connections. Again in *Peake’s*, Rev. G. Henton Davies simply glosses Deut. 15.17-19 as a simple command to remember (280). Peter C. Craigie’s commentary on Deuteronomy offers an interesting interpretation of v. 19, ‘You shall not forget’, proposing that it be read as a factual statement, rather than a positive commandment, because ‘in Israel’s future history, the continuing aggressiveness of the Amalekites gave the Israelites little chance to forget, until at last the Amalekites seem to have ceased to be a nation, about the time of Hezekiah (1 Chr. 4:43)’; See Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976) 318.

Richard D. Nelson does note that ‘[t]he rhetoric of v. 19 is striking: wipe out all memory of them, but always remember!’ However, Nelson does not go any further in addressing this as a difficult passage, focusing the remainder of his commentary, again, on the concept of holy war, justified by Amalek’s ‘violation of universally accepted principles of war’; see Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 302.

Brevard Childs’s commentary on Exodus also concentrates on the theme of holy war, focusing primarily on the notion of perpetual enmity between Amalek and Israel; he finds this puzzling in light of the victory described in Exodus, but reads Deut. 25.27 as recounting ‘a humiliating defeat of Israel by the hands of Amalek’, in which Amalek committed ‘an act of barbarism and provided a motivation for Israel’s continued hatred’. See Childs, *Exodus: A Commentary* (SCM Press, 1974) 313.

William H. Propp’s commentary on Exodus follows Childs’s assertion that זכר and שם are interchangeable (see below), but makes an important point about the textual and oral modes of remembrance commanded in Ex. 17.14: ‘That which is written is permanent in a sense; but, precisely because it is set down, it may easily be forgotten. In contrast, that which is taught orally, “put into the ears,” remains in the forefront of consciousness (Calvin). Our passage thus adumbrates the Jewish tradition of Oral Torah (*m. ‘Abot 1:1*’). See Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) 619.

32.26, and 2 Kings 12.27 to the list of cognate passages; here, again, the direct object is always name, save for Ex.17.14, which is a very close parallel to Deut 25.19, and where the object is memory—but, again, the memory of Amalek. It seems clear that the standard interpretative key here is generally considered to be the verb (זָכַר), rather than its object, and, thus, Parshat Zakhor is read through comparison with passages dealing explicitly with family lineage and implicitly—since the family lineage under consideration is, in all of the cognate passages, that of an Israelite—covenant.<sup>8</sup> I would argue, however, that the change in direct object is too important to ignore; if memory is meant to connote family lineage, why not use the exact same word—name—as in all those other passages?

Brevard Childs argues that the noun form of the root זָכַר is properly translated as ‘name’, rather than ‘memory’, noting that it is frequently used in parallel to שָׂם, and that the clearest distinction between the two words is that the former can be construed as a speech act, while the latter represents that which has been spoken. ‘Clearly there is a close relationship between cultic proclamation and memory. [...] Yet again, it is important to see that *zēkher* is only secondarily related to memory. The emphasis lies with the act of proclaiming.’<sup>9</sup> By this argument, then, the two positive commandments are to always remember what Amalek did, but to blot out the utterance of Amalek’s name—which may appear to unravel the paradox, as, although Childs argues that the hiphil form of the verb is also an act of speech, the form that we see in Deut 25.17 is the qal, which even Childs agrees translates best as remember, an act of cognition.<sup>10</sup> However, Childs relies here on assertion, more than argument, to make his case; while he cites a number of passages in which the noun may be translated quite sensibly as name, he does not produce a single passage in which that translation can be definitively shown to be superior, and several of his chosen passages become rather strained under his word choice.<sup>11</sup> Even if Childs is

<sup>8</sup> See Lyle Eslinger, ‘More Drafting Techniques in Deuteronomic Laws’. *Vetus Testamentum* 34, no. 2 (1984): 221-26; 226. Rashi’s commentary on this phrase also supports such an interpretation.

<sup>9</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (SCM Press, 1962) 72.

An interesting parallel with the Homeric tradition is the word *kléos*, typically translated as ‘glory’, which according to Gregory Nagy ‘should have meant simply “that which is heard”’, but which came to indicate the transmission of great deeds through the recital of epic poetry. See Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979) 16-17.

An important distinction between *kléos* and זָכַר is that, while both may take their roots from, and refer implicitly to, acts of recitation, the former is always positive, a property of heroes, while the latter is neutral, as can be discerned from the passage currently under discussion; a commandment to verbally convey the great deeds of Amalek would be jarring and nonsensical.

<sup>10</sup> Childs, *Memory and Tradition* 10-11. While Hebrew grammar is sufficiently different from that of Latin and German-derived languages (such as English) that applying terms from one system to the other is more often misleading than not, hiphil verbs are very often rendered in English as causative, and qal verbs are usually rendered in English as perfect.

<sup>11</sup> This is especially true of Ps 6.6 and 145.7, in which Childs must translate זָכַר as ‘praise’ in order to arrive at a coherent reading. See Childs, *Memory and Tradition* 71.

correct in his theory that memory was, to an ancient Israelite, an essentially active and vocalised, rather than purely cognitive, process, the majority of English translations contradict him,<sup>12</sup> which is to say that very few contemporary, English-speaking readers of the passage are likely to understand ‘memory’ in the way that Childs suggests. Moreover, we are still left with another layer of paradox: this particular passage is read out loud in the synagogue twice in the year, once during the normal course of readings, as the end of Parshat Ki Seitzei, and once, the Shabbat before Purim, as Parshat Zakhor. The name of Amalek is uttered at the very moment of its prohibition; Amalek is commemorated in the very command that its memory be blotted out.<sup>13</sup>

And even if Childs is correct that **שם** and **זכר** are essentially interchangeable, it is still worthwhile to note that **זכר** is only used in reference to Amalek; Amalek is singled out for special treatment, even if only in the barest lexicographical fashion. This is evident in commentaries upon Deut 25.19 and Ex.17.14 that focus on what Amalek did to deserve such a penalty. The Ramban maintains that Amalek’s main sin was idolatry; their attack against the Israelites was actually a challenge to Hashem’s divine authority.<sup>14</sup> This reading is echoed in the nineteenth century, by the German Orthodox Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, writing in the generation immediately following the Reform movement. Hirsch asserts that Amalek (and the command to remember Amalek) serves as an example to the people about to enter the Promised Land of the contrast between the faith in God demanded of Israel and the faith in military might—a thinly-veiled reference to the secularism promoted by the Reformers—represented by Amalek:<sup>15</sup>

This most marked contrast was accordingly again pointed out to the people who were about to enter the Land of the Torah, there to faithfully carry out

<sup>12</sup> A brief comparison of translations currently in circulation should suffice to demonstrate this point. Of twenty-two translations sampled, eleven translate the word as ‘memory’ (New Revised Standard Version, English Standard Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, New Living Translation, New Century Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, New International Reader’s Version, New International Version UK, New Jewish Publication Society Translation); a further eight translate it as ‘remembrance’ (Amplified Bible, King James Version, New King James Version, 21<sup>st</sup> Century King James Version, American Standard Version, Young’s Literal Translation, Darby, Interpreter’s Bible); one transforms the noun into a verb (Contemporary English Version: ‘you must wipe out Amalek so completely that no one will remember they ever lived’), and only three render it as ‘name’ (The Message, Today’s New International Version, The Anchor Bible).

<sup>13</sup> Lena Roos has pointed out that this tension between utterance and blotting out is enacted every year during Purim festivities, when the book of Esther is read out loud and noisemakers are employed to drown out the reader every time Haman’s name is mentioned. However, no such measures are employed during the reading of passages concerning Amalek.

<sup>14</sup> Nahmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, trans. Charles B. Chavel (Shilo, 1973) s.v. Ex. 17:16.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted at the outset that I use ‘Israel’ as it is used in Jewish liturgy, to denote the entirety of the religious community which traces its origins back to Jacob, who received the name in Parshat Vayishlach (Genesis 32:29), because he ‘strove with God and with men and has overcome’ (**כי-שרית עם-אלהים ועם-אנשים ותוכל**), rather than to denote citizens of the modern-day state. When geography is at issue, I refer to ‘the land of Israel’. It should be clear that the implications of my chosen usage are theological, and the latter political.

its dictates. The event itself—that first unprovoked attack by Amalek—with all the details of its contrast to what their mission in life was to be, was again brought to their minds, to be kept in perpetual recollection. [...] [H]ere Israel is exhorted to consider itself, and prove itself a co-working tool for this War of God against Amalek’s leading mankind astray with the blinding glitter of military fame and glory in the palm awarded to victories of physical might.<sup>16</sup>

The retelling of the Amalek narrative in Ginzberg’s *Legends of the Jews* places the emphasis on Amalek’s deceitfulness: they lie in wait for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea, incite other nations to join in their attack, lure individual Israelites away from the camp to kill them.<sup>17</sup> The final proof of Amalek’s treachery, by this account, comes well after their initial defeat by Joshua:<sup>18</sup>

Concealing their weapons in their garments, the Amalekites appeared in Israel’s camp as if they meant to condole with them for Aaron’s death, and then unexpectedly attacked them. Not content with this, the Amalekites disguised themselves in Canaanite costume and spoke the speech of the latter, so that the Israelites might not be able to tell if they had before them Amalekites, as their personal appearance seemed to show, or Canaanites, as their dress and speech indicated.<sup>19</sup>

Not only do the Amalekites initiate a surprise attack, in this account, they infiltrate the Israelite camp through deceit, both under the guise of offering condolences, and disguised as members of another tribe. Ginzberg’s text emphasizes that the actions of Amalek are not due to a lack of fear in God; the reason given for assuming the speech and garments of Canaanites is that the Amalekites believed that God would, indeed, answer the prayers of the Israelites, and do so effectively, and thus, ‘[i]f we now appear as Canaanites, they will implore God to send them aid against the Canaanites, and we shall slay them.’<sup>20</sup> The offense here is an attempt to subvert the bond between God and Israel, by deceiving Israel and directing their focus, and therefore their prayers, and therefore God’s attention, away from their true needs. That the Amalekites believed such a trick would prove effective may arguably be construed as a lack of respect for the intelligence of the Israelites and their God, but this is a move beyond the boundaries of the text itself.

Other commentators point to some aspect of the attack as particularly violating universal standards of decency in warfare: either they attacked without cause, or without warning, or (as suggested in Deut 25.18) unfairly targeted those unable to defend

<sup>16</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Pentateuch (translated and explained)*, trans. Isaac Levy, vol. 5, *Deuteronomy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Judaica Press, 1989) 524.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews: Volumes III and IV* (Forgotten Books, 2008) 37.

<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with Peter Craigie’s hypothesis that Deut. Verses 17-18 ‘probably have in mind a number of encounters with the Amalekites, of which that referred to in Ex. 17 is the first. See Craigie 317.

<sup>19</sup> Ginzberg 214.

<sup>20</sup> Ginzberg 215.

themselves; a rather exhaustive summary of such commentaries appears in Avi Sagi's article on the subject and need not be rehearsed in further detail here.<sup>21</sup> Still others view the issue as not so much what Amalek may have done, but what Amalek represents; this is the mode of interpretation that has dominated 20<sup>th</sup> and, thus far, 21<sup>st</sup> century Judaism, although its roots go back at least to Isaac Luria (d. 1572).<sup>22</sup>

Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, the Piacezna Rebbe, preached two sermons on Parshat Zachor during his imprisonment in the Warsaw Ghetto. In his sermon on 23 March, 1940, Shapira bases his reading of Amalek on an alternative reading from Rashi, which translates קרך אשר as 'who chilled you' rather than 'who encountered you', arguing that the encounter with Amalek cooled the Israelites' ardour for Torah.<sup>23</sup> He thus equates Amalek with worldly wisdom, which tempted and continues to tempt the Jewish people away from Torah, and suggests that 'the text is saying: "Now that you have seen and experienced all this, go and 'obliterate the memory of Amalek from beneath the heavens.'"'<sup>24</sup> His sermon on 28 February, 1942, is considerably longer and more complex, delving into the Kabbalistic underpinnings of his interpretation of the passage, but the message is essentially the same:

The implication is that we have to obliterate the seeds Amalek has planted, because otherwise, after Amalek himself is destroyed, the seeds that he has planted will remain. Who knows how long the Sabbath that today so many Jews, constrained by Amalek's torments, are forced to desecrate, God have mercy, will remain so desecrated? After this war is over, people will not be as afraid of doing work on the Sabbath as they once were. [...] Those young people who are forced to abandon the Torah now, who are enduring so much pain and suffering they do not even know if they are alive: Will they

<sup>21</sup> A number of these interpretations, including those put forth by Yitzhak Abrabanel, Yaakov Tzevi Mecklenburg, Yaakov Sofer, Yitzhak Aramah, Rabbi Judah, and Rabbi Nathan, are detailed in Avi Sagi, 'The Punishment of Amalek in Jewish Tradition: Coping with the Moral Problem', *The Harvard Theological Review* 87, no. 3 (1994) 325. See also the discussion of just war in Ch. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Sagi further subdivides this mode of interpretation into three sub-modes: metaphysical, conceptual, and psychological; he traces the metaphysical mode back to Luria, the conceptual only back as far as Hirsch, and attributes the psychological mode to 'the Hasidic tradition'; see Sagi 330-6. This distinction is interesting, but not particularly relevant to the point at hand.

<sup>23</sup> Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939-1942*, trans. J. Hershey Worch (Jason Aronson, 2002) 55-57. Rashi offers three separate explanations of קרך: first, because קרך (encounter) is linguistically connected to מקרה (a sudden thing) that Amalek attacked by surprise; second, that because קרך is linguistically connected to קרי (pollution), Amalek polluted the Israelites through pederasty (see Horowitz 114); third, because קרך is linguistically related to קור (cold), Amalek 'chilled' the Israelites. Shapira's reading is somewhat different from the parable provided in the Rashi commentary, which compares Amalek's attack on the Israelites to a man who jumps into a pot of boiling water and is scalded, but nonetheless persuades others around him that the water is cool enough to bathe in (i.e., Amalek showed other nations that Israel was susceptible to attack).

It is also notable that Rashi connects Deut.25.17, 'Remember what Amalek did to you', directly to the previous verses concerning fair weights and measures, warning that unjust measures constitute a provocation to enemies—and thus placing some blame for Amalek's attack upon the Israelites themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Shapira 57.

put their whole heads and bodies back into the study of Torah, after the destruction of Amalek?<sup>25</sup>

For Shapira, Amalek is not a specific people, but a specific type of people (or, perhaps, people who engage in a specific type of behaviour); the command to blot out the memory of Amalek remains unfulfilled so long as that sort of person and that sort of behaviour continue to exist. Thus, it is no contradiction for the Israelites to be commanded at once to remember and to blot out the memory of Amalek; the blotting out is a struggle that continues to this very day.<sup>26</sup>

Having dispensed with one apparent contradiction, however, we find ourselves immediately confronted with another: to whom is the command to remember actually given, and how can it possibly be fulfilled? To a Jewish reader, this question is hardly worth asking; the idea of memory stretching continuously from generation to generation is part of ‘the taken-for-granted, tacit background of beliefs, concepts, values, attitudes, and so forth’<sup>27</sup> that constitutes Jewish culture.<sup>28</sup> But it flies in the face of the concept of memory which has, at least until recently, been the basis for philosophical treatments of the subject in what, for the sake of simplicity, I refer to as the ‘Western’ philosophical tradition, although I do so in full consciousness that this is, at best, an oversimplification and at worst a complete misnomer. Jewish thought, insofar as it constitutes a unified system of thought at all, is a ‘Western’ system (in contrast to Chinese philosophy), simply not the dominant one, and there is, as evidenced by instances of Rashi borrowing from Plato’s *Symposium* in his gloss on Parshat Bere’shit (Gen. 1:27), and as shall be discussed at greater length in Chapter Two, a reasonable amount of overlap and borrowing between the two systems. The distinction I am drawing here (along with the collapsing of two vastly

<sup>25</sup> Shapira 300.

<sup>26</sup> For further examples of this reading of Amalek, see Horowitz 2-4.

<sup>27</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Fortress Press, 1997) 30-1.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Parshat Nitsavim, Deut. 29:13-14: ‘I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the Lord our God and with those who are not with us here this day’; also the injunction in Mishnah *Pesabim* 10:5: ‘In every generation one must see oneself as if one had personally experienced the exodus from Egypt’. See also Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (HarperCollins, 1991) 25-28; Plaskow notes that Parshat Yitro (Ex. 19:15) seems to specifically exclude women from the revelation at Sinai, and that its annual reading perpetually re-enacts that exclusion. See also Yosef Hayim Yerusalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (University of Washington Press, 1982).

Again, there is an interesting parallel with the Homeric tradition, with the verb *μιμνήσκω*, which Nagy suggests ‘means not so much that the Muses “remind” the poet of what to tell, but, rather, that they have the power to put his mind or consciousness in touch with places and times other than his own in order to witness the deeds of heroes (and the doings of gods)’ (Nagy 17). However, Nagy makes clear that this ‘witness’ is not a direct transportation of the poet to the scene, but rather mediated through the witness of the Muses; they convey the *ἄλεος* which he is to recite to the poet, who then repeats it to the audience. See also Virgil’s invocation to the Muse at the beginning of the *Aeneid*: ‘Musa, *mibi causas memora*’—‘Muse, *cause me to recall*’ (*Aeneid* I, ln 8, emphasis added).



complex and diverse networks of thought into two unified systems) is, in other words, a useful fiction—but still a fiction, a narrative constructed in hindsight.

## MEMORY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead open their recently published volume, *Theories of Memory: A Reader*, with an historical overview of the evolution of concepts of memory.<sup>29</sup> They begin with Plato, working their way through Aristotle, Cicero, Yates, Locke, Hume, and Hegel, before finally arriving at the Late Modern era. It is notable that, while they do have a section devoted to ‘Jewish Memory Discourse’, it is entirely separate from this initial overview; it does not fit into the narrative of intellectual history that the editors are attempting to present.<sup>30</sup> A brief examination of the theorists who do fit into that narrative reveals the reason for the separation between the Western philosophical tradition and the Jewish concept of memory: all the theorists represented in Rossington and Whitehead’s overview, up until late modernity, treat memory as an individual faculty. This distinction is made most clearly in Locke, when he writes:

Had I the same consciousness that I saw the ark and Noah’s flood, as that I saw an overflowing of the Thames last winter, or as that I write now, I could no more doubt that I who write this now, that saw the Thames overflowed last winter, and that viewed the flood at the general deluge, was the same self,- place that self in what substance you please—than that I who write this am the same myself now whilst I write (whether I consist of all the same substance, material or immaterial, or no) that I was yesterday.<sup>31</sup>

This is not the passage that Rossington and Whitehead have chosen to excerpt for their anthology. Rather, they select an earlier chapter of the same book, ‘On Retention’, which describes, rather mechanistically, the functional relationship between mind and memory. This decision on the part of the editors—and the absence of any excerpt from Descartes—

<sup>29</sup> Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead, eds., *Theories of Memory: A Reader* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007). This is the first major historical anthology dealing with memory studies to be published; I am reading it here as representative of the generally accepted approach to the intellectual history of the topic. See also the review of the volume by Rebecca Bramall in *Memory Studies* vol. 1 (2008): 341-343.

<sup>30</sup> This section, containing extracts from Yerushalmi, Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, and James E. Young, is located in Part II: Positionings, sandwiched between ‘Collective Memory’ and ‘Trauma’—and, tellingly, *not* in Part III: Identities, which is taken up by ‘Gender’, ‘Race/Nation’, and ‘Diaspora’.

<sup>31</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. John W. Yolton (Everyman, 1993) XVII:16 (185-186). Although Locke here uses the word *consciousness* instead of *memory*, later passages in this chapter of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* demonstrate that he uses the terms equivalently, if not interchangeably; memory is, to Locke, consciousness of the past. For example: ‘Suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same person that did those actions, had those thoughts that I once was conscious of, though I have now forgot them?’ XVII:20 (187); ‘and the mind many times recovers the memory of a past consciousness[...].’ XVII:23 (189).

obscures the linkage between memory and individual identity that I will place at the centre of Part II of this study.<sup>32</sup> However, it cannot obscure, and may even serve to emphasize, that memory, from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment, has been conceived of as a function restricted to an individual mind. Every excerpt in the first two sections of the *Reader* operates with the implicit assumption that memory functions as a link to knowledge or experience acquired in an individual's own past, and is concerned primarily with either describing (primarily in the case of the Enlightenment and Romantic philosophers) or improving (primarily in the case of the ancient and medieval thinkers) this function.<sup>33</sup> Within such a framework, either commandment in Parshat Zakhor is logically incoherent; no person currently alive could be commanded to remember something which they did not

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<sup>32</sup> Locke is here engaged with what Marya Schechtman has labelled 'the reidentification problem'—the philosophical problem of whether a body moving through time and acquiring different experiences can be said to be the same entity at point *A* as at point *Z*. This is the normative approach to the philosophy of identity. See also Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Clarendon Press, 1984), still a highly influential treatment of the reidentification problem; and also Paul Ricoeur's critique of Parfit in 'Narrative Identity', discussed in the prelude.

Schechtman's analysis of earlier treatments of this problem concludes that re-identification puzzles are asking the wrong question, and she goes on to theorize identity in terms of character and narrative—a much more intuitive approach for scholars, such as myself, already steeped in narrative. However, even Schechtman does not carry the narrative approach to identity forward past the boundaries of an individual's self-awareness; to the best of my knowledge, no philosopher of identity has made the leap between the internally oriented statement 'My selfhood is defined by the continuity of my memory' and the externally oriented statement 'My selfhood is defined by another's memory of me'. While under most circumstances, the latter statement could very quickly be shown to be logically untenable (I do not cease the exercise of my selfhood because my mother happens to forget who I am), it becomes reasonable in situations where the 'self' under consideration is deprived of agency—as, for example, a dead body would be (I am not interested in pursuing questions concerning the immortality of the soul). Thus, it is the latter statement which becomes most relevant to the issues of commemoration that will be taken up in Part II.

<sup>33</sup> Section 1, 'Classical and Early Modern Ideas of Memory', edited by Jennifer Richards (20-67), contains excerpts from Plato's *Theaetetus* and *Phaedrus*, Aristotle's *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Ad Herennium*, Mary J. Carruthers's *The Book of Memory: A Study in Medieval Culture* and Francis A. Yates's *The Art of Memory*. The brief excerpt from *Theaetetus* (found on page 25) describes memory as a wax tablet upon which impressions are made and from which impressions may be erased; the somewhat longer pair of excerpts from *Phaedrus* (pages 25-27) discuss the ability of the soul to recollect the true nature of existence, and suggest that training in philosophy is the best way to nurture such an ability. The excerpt from *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* (28-38) is concerned first with identifying the connection between memory and the soul (or in what part of the soul memory resides), and then with precisely how recollection occurs. The excerpt from *De Oratore* (39-42) describes the advantages of a well-trained memory, and *Ad Herennium's* (43-49) excerpt details a system of image-associations useful for aiding rhetorical recollection. The extracts from Carruthers's *The Book of Memory* (50-58) and Yates's *The Art of Memory* (pp. 59-67) also detail various associative systems meant to improve recollection; Carruthers's extract is somewhat remarkable in that it, alone of all the excerpts in this section, is a modern work which talks about concepts and systems of memory in the medieval period, rather than a medieval work on memory.

Section 2, 'Enlightenment and Romantic Memory', edited by Michael Rossington (pages 70-89), contains excerpts from Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature*, and Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind, Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. The excerpt from Locke (75-79) is discussed above. The Hume extract (80-84) addresses the relationship between memory and imagination, portraying them as two separate faculties, while the Hegel excerpt (85-89) hearkens back somewhat to Cicero and Yates, discussing the mechanistic function of memory in terms of the construction and retrieval of mental images.

themselves experience, nor could they be commanded to blot out a memory which cannot be reasonably said to exist.

This is not the case in the third, and final, portion of the historical section, which covers representative texts from late modernity: Marx, Nietzsche, Bergson, Freud, and Benjamin. While the excerpts from the last three theorists continue the pattern of reflection on memory as a marker of individual existence and experience, the excerpts from Marx and Nietzsche appear to approach the relationship between memory and history. Nietzsche uses the term *history* to signify events in the past, including an individual's own experienced past:

A leaf flutters from the scroll of time, floats away—and suddenly floats back again and falls into the man's lap. Then the man says 'I remember' and envies the animal, who at once forgets and for whom every moment really dies, sinks back into night and fog and is extinguished forever. Thus the animal lives *unhistorically*: for it is contained in the present, like a number without any awkward fraction left over; it does not know how to dissimulate, it conceals nothing and at every instant appears wholly as what it is; it can therefore never be anything but honest.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Nietzsche here uses *history* and *memory* in a somewhat interchangeable fashion, being more concerned with the role the past plays in distinguishing human from animal consciousness (the latter existing only in an eternal now) than with distinctions between memory and history as potentially different types of past.

The excerpt from Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* involves a similar conflation of *history* and *memory*, although that conflation appears in this case to be at least as much on the part of Rossington and Whitehead as on the part of Marx himself. Granted, only fifty-two years elapsed between Napoleon Bonaparte's original *coup d'état* and what Marx characterised as an echo event orchestrated by Louis Bonaparte; there were certainly people alive at the time Marx wrote who had a clear living memory of the time of Napoleon, even if Marx himself (born in 1818, some nineteen years after Napoleon's *coup*) was not among them. Nonetheless, Marx's critique is almost entirely historical; the word *memory* occurs only twice in the entire book, and the second time (in a later chapter than that excerpted by Rossington and Whitehead) it refers in an uncomplicated fashion to the function of an individual mind.<sup>35</sup> The first instance, from the passage excerpted for the

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<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' [1874], trans. R.J.Hollingdale, in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazale, 60-77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 102-103; reprinted in Rossington and Whitehead 102-108. While Rossington and Whitehead have selected a relatively short portion of the essay to excerpt, Nietzsche's conflation of *history* and *memory*—or, perhaps, cultural and personal history—is consistent throughout the larger essay.

<sup>35</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852; repr., International Publishers: 1963).

*Reader*, is more interesting: ‘As long as the French were engaged in revolution they could not free themselves of the memory of Napoleon’.<sup>36</sup> Neither Marx nor the editors of the *Reader* note anything unusual in this usage, nor make any attempt to explain it; absent that sentence, the excerpt reads as a straightforward critique of a political misuse of history. This is, however, the first time in the *Reader* that memory does not clearly refer to an individual experience and, in fact, appears to describe a link to the experience of a collective past, the sort of memory that would be necessary to the fulfilment of the commandments in Parshat Zakhor.<sup>37</sup>

## MEMORY AND THE SOCIAL COLLECTIVE

The conflation of memory and history in the above passages from Marx and Nietzsche may appear to have been mostly unselfconscious, the result of an innocence with regards to the past that seems to have been mostly lost by the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—though, in truth, it was already well eroded by the time either of them wrote. Bill Schwartz’s entry on memory in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* suggests that conscious division between ‘subjective’ and ‘social memory’ dates to the development of the

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The second time ‘memory’ is used in the complete work is in Chapter 5: ‘[...] which holds those infected by it fast in an imaginary world and robs them of all sense, all memory, all understanding of the rude external world [...]’ (91).

Cognate terms (remember, remind, reminisce, recollect, recall) also occur in the text, though again not with great frequency. Most of these also refer unambiguously to the activity of a single mind, with only two notable exceptions:

‘If after Duprat’s interpellation it proceeded to the order of the day, this did not happen merely because Girardin’s motion that it should declare itself “satisfied” reminded the party of Order of its own systematic corruption’ (85).

In this passage Marx has been speaking of the party as a single entity, just as he treated ‘Bourgeois society’ in the first quote, and thus in both cases ‘remembering’ or being ‘reminded’ could be read an extension of the anthropomorphic metaphor, or as an instance of collective remembering.

‘The former revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to smother their own content. The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead in order to arrive at its own content’ (18). Who or what is actually doing the recollecting in this instance is entirely unclear.

<sup>36</sup> Rossington and Whitehead 99.

<sup>37</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary’s entry on memory complicates this picture somewhat. The first instance of the word in English is recorded in 1225 CE, and refers specifically to a commemorative activity, rather than a mental faculty: ‘þe Memoires of þe halhen’ (a margin note in *Ancrene Riwle*). This usage died out after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, re-emerging briefly in the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century (although use of terms such as ‘in memory of’ or ‘to the memory of’ remained in usage from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the present day). The earliest recorded usage of memory as ‘the action of remembering’ is c. 1250 CE, which is not terribly long after the *Ancrene Riwle* note, but the idea of memory as a mental faculty does not appear until 1380 CE, in Chaucer.

Prior to the importation of the word memory from French to English, via the Normans, the Anglo-Saxon term for contemplation of the past (particularly the traces of the past that precedes living memory which are evident in the landscape) was *distsceawung*, which literally translates as ‘contemplation of the dust’. See Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (Blackwell, 1992) 253.

discipline of historiography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> Schwartz supports this in part by citing a passage written by the historian Thomas Macaulay in 1849, prior to the passages from Marx or Nietzsche discussed above; even if neither of them were deeply familiar with the discourse of the emerging discipline, it left a mark on their language. However, even Schwartz places the movement of memory to ‘the center [*sic*] of modern consciousness’ in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily crediting Freud with bringing it to prominence.<sup>39</sup>

While Freud’s memory discourse was, for the most part, strongly centred on the individual mind, later works, such as *Moses and Monotheism*, expand the scope of his theories from the individual to a social collective.<sup>40</sup> In Freud, this shift is accomplished in the simplest way possible, by treating the collective metaphorically, as one very large individual, possessed of a single mind and will—a model which renders the commandments in Parshat Zakhor perfectly comprehensible, but is too high a level of abstraction to pass a test of realism; no collective operates in as neat or as unified a fashion as Freud imagines.<sup>41</sup> Other theorists, such as Maurice Halbwachs and Paul Connerton, have attempted to correct this, offering increasingly complex models meant to account for the collective as a collection of individuals, each with their own mind and motivations.

Halbwachs was a contemporary of Freud, and a follower of Durkheim.<sup>42</sup> A sociologist, rather than a psychologist, he had little interest in the function of individual minds, instead insisting that the consciousness of a social collective possesses ‘a self-sufficient reality. In spite of the fact that they are engendered by society, they are assumed to originate and develop independently of the forms of social life’.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, Lewis Coser, who edited and translated a number of Halbwachs’s works into English,

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<sup>38</sup> Bill Schwartz, ‘Memory’, in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* 214-217, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meghan Morris (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). See also Susan A. Crane, ‘Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory’, *The American Historical Review* vol. 102, no. 5 (1997): 1372-1385.

<sup>39</sup> Schwartz 215.

<sup>40</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (Hogarth Press 1939; reprinted Random House, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> This is perhaps an oversimplification of Freud, though not by much. Patrick H. Hutton protests that Freud did not envision ‘a free-floating collective memory’, but rather saw it as an issue of historical repetition (quite similar to that discussed by Marx) in which ‘the re-creation of similar conditions historically calls the same psychical predispositions to come into play [...] The legend of Moses could be made to evoke a deeper content because it was only a place marker for the hidden “deep memory” of the original experience’, although this ‘deep memory’ and ‘original experience’ still belong to a collective, rather than a collection of individuals. See Patrick H. Hutton, ‘Sigmund Freud and Maurice Halbwachs: The Problem of Memory in Historical Psychology’, *The History Teacher* 27.2 (1994): 145-58; 152.

C.G. Jung, of course, also developed a theory of the collective unconscious, although we shall not pause to consider that in greater depth here.

<sup>42</sup> For a brief description of Durkheim’s work, especially in relation to Halbwachs, see Lewis A. Coser, ‘The Revival of the Sociology of Culture: The Case of Collective Memory’, *Sociological Forum* 7.2 (1992): 365-73.

<sup>43</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, ‘Individual Psychology and Collective Psychology’, *American Sociological Review* 3. 5 (1938): 615-23; 615. Note that this article was published only a year before Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*.

insists that Halbwachs's collective memory is not 'some mystical group mind', but rather a specific group context which provides a basis for the memories of individuals.<sup>44</sup> Coser is here citing a passage from Halbwachs's 1951 work, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.<sup>45</sup> This, therefore, represents over a decade's worth of development and refinement in Halbwachs's thought from the publication of 'Individual Psychology and Collective Psychology', and if a younger Halbwachs was a bit more focused on the importance of viewing the collective mind and collective memory as phenomena in their own right, the mature Halbwachs was careful to identify collective memory as a contextual system in which—and even because of which—individual memories function:<sup>46</sup>

it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories. If we enumerate the number of recollections during one day that we have evoked upon the occasion of our direct and indirect relations with other people, we will see that, most frequently, we appeal to our memory only in order to answer questions which others have asked us, or that we suppose they could have asked us. [...] Most of the time, when I remember, it is others who spur me on; their memory comes to the aid of mine and mine relies on theirs. There is nothing mysterious about recall of memories in these cases at least. There is no point in seeking where they are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them [...]<sup>47</sup>

Halbwachs's theory of collective memory remains one of the most, if not the single most, influential explanations of group memory.<sup>48</sup> However, it still does not provide a particularly satisfactory explanation of social memory enduring beyond a single generation, or two at the most—the sort of memory commanded in Parshat Zakhor. With the aid of Halbwachs, we can see that the command given to all of Israel is really meant to be fulfilled

<sup>44</sup> Coser 367.

<sup>45</sup> Partially available in English as Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Halbwachs's earlier reification of collective memory is even more apparent in his 1939 article, 'Individual Consciousness and Collective Mind', *The American Journal of Sociology* 44.6, 812-22.

<sup>47</sup> Halbwachs *On Collective Memory* 38.

<sup>48</sup> See Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (Columbia University Press, 2004) 11-24; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) 36-40; Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, trans. Simon Lee (Polity Press, 2000) 125-30; Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Open University Press, 2003) 4, 7, 50-56; Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (Routledge, 2007) 5-7; Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006) 99. Castelli's summary of Halbwachs's critics (pp. 19-24) is especially useful; the main criticism she cites is the philosophical difficulty involved in applying the language of individual actions and attributes to a collective.

This is not to say that there have been no competing theories of collective memory. For example, Jan Assman cites Aby Warburg as an important thinker who worked in parallel to Halbwachs; see Assman, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995) 125-133. However, in my review of the literature no other theorist is currently cited as widely as Halbwachs.

by all of Israel, acting in concert, rather than by each individual Israelite guarding the nooks of his or her mind,<sup>49</sup> but we cannot quite extrapolate the continuity of that memory from the time the command was given down to the present day.

This gap in Halbwachs's explication was noted and largely corrected by Paul Connerton, in his 1989 book *How Societies Remember*.<sup>50</sup> Connerton argues that collective memory is performative; it is transmitted primarily through ritual and bodily practices. By this Connerton means primarily unconscious, non-deliberate habits and postures, but more deliberate rituals are also vehicles for memory transmission—particularly commemorative rituals tied to a fixed and recurring point in the yearly calendar, as in the annual recitation of Parshat Zakhor.<sup>51</sup> Connerton also places a particular emphasis on ritual speech, maintaining that

The *performativeness* of ritual is partly a matter of utterance [...] Curses, blessings and oaths, together with other verbs frequently found in ritual language, as for instance 'to ask' or 'to pray' or 'to give thanks', presuppose certain attitudes—of trust and veneration, of submission, contrition and gratitude—which come into effect at the moment when, by virtue of the enunciation of that sentence, the corresponding act takes place. Or better: that act takes place in and through the enunciation. Such verbs do not describe or indicate the existence of attitudes: they effectively bring those attitudes into existence by virtue of the illocutionary act.<sup>52</sup>

We have already noted that, paradoxically, Amalek is commemorated in the command to blot out its memory, though we neglected to point out that, more obviously, Parshat Zakhor also contains the self-fulfilling commandment to remember; the very first word of the passage, 'Remember', is a performative verb of the sort that Connerton describes.<sup>53</sup> This may appear to be arriving back at the conclusion reached through Childs's conflation of memory with utterance, albeit by a different route, but Connerton does not quite suggest

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<sup>49</sup> Traditionally, of course, each Israelite would only guard the nooks of 'his' mind.

<sup>50</sup> It is also entirely possible that Halbwachs's theory remains preeminent not due to its innate perfection, but rather due to several decades during which there was little academic interest in social or collective memory (with the exception of the early critics mentioned by Castelli; see above, note 37); Halbwachs was not even translated into English until 1980, and a complete translation of *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: Etude de mémoire collective* has yet to appear. See Coser 365; Crane 1375-8; Patrick Hutton, 'Recent Scholarship on Memory and History', *The History Teacher* 33, no. 4 (2000): 533-48, 537; Kurt Lang, 'Review: How the Past Lives On', *Contemporary Sociology* 22, no. 4 (1993) 596-600. See also William Hirst and David Manier, 'Towards a psychology of collective memory', *Memory* 16, no. 3 (2008): 183-200, the introduction of which seems to imply that academic interest in collective memory has been constant and continually progressing—however, Hirst and Manier are psychologists, and as ill at ease with the literature of the humanities and social sciences as I am with the literature of psychology; they may be mistaking the large number of articles now in existence for evidence of a uniformly high level of interest in the subject since the time Halbwachs.

<sup>51</sup> Connerton 45.

<sup>52</sup> Connerton 58. Emphasis in original.

<sup>53</sup> Connerton himself holds that 'In both the Old Testament and the prayer-book "remembrance" becomes a technical term through which expression is given to the process by which practising Jews recall and recuperate in their present life the major formative events in the history of their community' (46).

that it constitutes memory on its own.<sup>54</sup> Rather, ritual utterance (such as a public reading of a set text at a fixed point in the liturgical calendar) forms part of the structure which supports the transmission of collective memory, which also includes family relations, oral tradition, clothing, unconscious gestures, movements, and postures—in short, Connerton argues that collective memory is encoded and transmitted in culture itself.<sup>55</sup>

### CULTURE: A BRIEF INTERLUDE

The concept of culture has a long and varied history; the word is used above to indicate what Tomoko Masuzawa calls ‘the empirical totality of a given society’.<sup>56</sup> This use derives from the German *Kultur*, and is one of the latest senses of the word to enter the English language (the Oxford English Dictionary places its first use in 1891).<sup>57</sup> However, the earlier meanings and evolution of the word also contribute to our understanding of the sort of memory that Connerton is describing.

*Culture* comes into English from the Latin *cultura*, which, as with so many Latin roots, was originally agrarian in context, denoting ‘the tending of something, basically crops or animals’.<sup>58</sup> Cicero extended its use beyond the agrarian with *cultura animi*, the cultivation of the spirit (or mind), although Raymond Williams asserts that such a usage did not actually become common until early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>59</sup> The important feature of this usage is the unspoken assumption that it enables: discussing the cultivation of the spirit or mind is implicitly admitting the existence of something above the spirit or mind, capable of tending it. Once this crucial step from the concrete to the metaphorical has been taken, subsequent shifts in meaning all rest on changes in who, or what, is actually doing the tending.

Kathryn Tanner suggests that the understanding of culture as ‘spiritual, artistic, and intellectual refinement’ arose during the Reformation, partially in response to the

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<sup>54</sup> The distinction between ‘remember’ as a performative verb and memory-as-utterance is subtle, but the performative verb is still referring to a process which takes place through the utterance, whereas in Childs’s memory-as-utterance, the utterance *is* the process.

<sup>55</sup> Connerton 38-39; Connerton’s admission of oral tradition, passed from grandparent to grandchild (rather than from parent to child) is based on his reading of Marc Bloch, who was a colleague of Halbwachs (see Castelli 19).

<sup>56</sup> Tomoko Masuzawa, ‘Culture’, *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* 70-93, ed. Mark C. Taylor (University of Chicago Press, 1998) 77.

<sup>57</sup> For a more complete discussion of the German notion of culture, see Tanner 9-12.

<sup>58</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford University Press, 1983) 87.

<sup>59</sup> Tanner 4; Williams 87. The OED identifies the earliest use of the word in English as Palladius’s *De Re Rustica*, c. 1450.



weakening of restraints previously enforced by means of the medieval religious hierarchy.<sup>60</sup> With this development, the ability of a single, centralised, Church to ‘afford a means for the transmission of much of the culture with little loss of content—thus protecting cultural continuity and stabilizing the society’ was drastically diminished.<sup>61</sup>

In its early incarnation as ‘a noun of process’, *culture* carried certain overtones of Puritanical perfectionism, which certain inflections of the term retain even to this day.<sup>62</sup> But by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the understanding of culture as a process waned, and the word began to refer to the end result, or ultimate goal, of the cultivation process.<sup>63</sup> The ideal of the cultured mind served as the same sort of model for individual development that medieval hagiography once provided; in some instances (especially in Germany) it took on an almost spiritual significance.<sup>64</sup> This significance led eventually to culture being equated with virtue (or a lack thereof, depending on one’s social class).<sup>65</sup> At the same time, culture began to shift from an abstract ideal to a commodity, which an individual might possess or lack.<sup>66</sup> The term began to return to a more concrete inflection, referring to the intellectual artefacts associated with the possession of culture—specific works of philosophy, art, literature, etc., which one might appreciate (or pretend to appreciate) in order to demonstrate the cultivation of one’s mind.<sup>67</sup>

While this idea of culture (henceforth referred to as ‘constructed culture’) seems to imply a near-universal system of values, or at least aesthetics, the particular intellectual commodities associated with such culture did vary between societies, as did the exact virtue ascribed to their possessors. Tanner identifies three main approaches to the idea of constructed culture. In France, culture represented a deliberate contrast to the stratified order of feudal society. Seen as a commodity that could be possessed by anyone it quickly became a democratizing force, possessed by everyone, and presumed to consist of the same set of accomplishments throughout the world (bearing in mind, of course, that ‘the

<sup>60</sup> Tanner 4-5; see also Williams 87.

<sup>61</sup> Clyde Kluckhohn, ‘Myth and Rituals: A General Theory’, *Harvard Theological Review* 35 (1942; repr. Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1962) 65. Kluckhohn is here speaking of religion, and using culture in the later, anthropological, sense.

The rise of culture to replace the diminished stabilising authority of religion may be the source of the opposition occasionally found between religion and culture found. See Masuzawa 70-70; H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, (1951; expanded edition, HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 31; Tanner 4.

<sup>62</sup> Williams 87. See also T. S. Eliot, ‘Notes towards the Definition of Culture’ *Christianity & Culture* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1948) 95; Masuzawa 74; Tanner 5-7.

<sup>63</sup> Williams 88; the OED places the earliest such use of the word in 1678 (Isaac Barrow’s *Sermons*), and notes other occurrences in 1703 and 1790, but by far the greatest frequency of such references is concentrated in the 1800’s.

<sup>64</sup> Masuzawa 75. See also Castelli 33.

<sup>65</sup> Williams 92.

<sup>66</sup> Eliot 96; Tanner 12-13.

<sup>67</sup> Eliot 95; Niebuhr 33; Tanner 12; Williams 90.

world' was mostly limited to Europe and, to a lesser extent, its colonies). In Britain, by contrast, culture became a reaction to the democratic ideal common to France and America; the possession of constructed culture, which was there referred to as 'high culture', separated the enlightened aristocracy from the lower forms of life. In Germany, culture was construed as a blatantly nationalist undertaking, and German culture was acknowledged as a phenomenon distinct and apart from the culture of any other society. The acknowledgement of the unique, self-contained nature of German culture led logically to the idea of other societies possessing their own unique, self-contained culture, and the word came to represent the mark of a particular society's dominance over the individual psyche.<sup>68</sup> This is the source of the current anthropological understanding of culture, a nearly perfect reversal of the term's original meaning. From being something deliberately and painstakingly acquired, or imposed on an individual, culture has mutated into Masuzawa's 'empirical totality of a given society', something that no individual can exist outside of; it is no longer a commodity that any person is capable of possessing.

This recent meaning is not without its own nuances, many of which are indirect results of the word's long and confusing heritage. There exists, for example no true consensus on where, or even whether, to draw the line between what Tanner calls 'the taken-for-granted, tacit background of beliefs, concepts, values, attitudes, and so forth that are the constant accompaniment of everyday activities' and the everyday activities themselves.<sup>69</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, writing in 1951, construed culture as almost entirely result-oriented, defining it as 'social' and 'the work of men's [*sic*] minds and hands', including 'speech, education, tradition, myth, science, art, philosophy, government, law, rite, beliefs, inventions, technologies', though retaining certain aspects of the high culture ideal, claiming that 'the world of culture is a world of values' and that 'the values with which these human achievements are concerned are dominantly those of the good for man [*sic*].'<sup>70</sup> Tanner, by contrast embraces the more mainstream anthropological view of culture

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<sup>68</sup> For a much more thorough discussion of the various nations' approaches to the idea of culture, see Tanner 6-16.

<sup>69</sup> Tanner 30-31; see also Williams 91. Katherine Verdery believes that 'nearly all nonanthropologists understand "culture" as cognition, ideas', rather than activities or material artefacts, a belief which I neither share nor see much evidence for in the (nonanthropological) sources I have consulted, though Religious Studies may be still sufficiently close to anthropology that researchers in that field absorb a more technically correct use of anthropological language than is evident in other disciplines. See Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (Columbia University Press, 1999) 34.

<sup>70</sup> Niebuhr 32-35. It should be noted that this definition is formulated in the context of *Christ and Culture*; culture is being set up to function in contrast to 'Christ'—the emphasis in Niebuhr's definition is on culture as a *human* construct.

as ‘the defining mark of human life’, and an ‘entire way of life’.<sup>71</sup> In sharp opposition to the idea of a high culture that an individual may possess or lack, she maintains that

culture is understood to constitute or construct human nature. Culture does not function to regulate or repress it. Indeed, there is nothing to human life with any definite form or shape of its own that might exist outside culture so as to be regulated or repressed.<sup>72</sup>

However, neither Niebuhr nor Tanner makes a particularly strong distinction between culture and its artefacts, or outward signs. To an extent, such a distinction is impossible to make. If we construe culture as a thing entirely separate from its concrete artefacts, we can make very few definite statements about a specific culture itself. If we treat culture instead as a ‘complex whole’,<sup>73</sup> which encompasses both the intangible and its artefacts, we risk confusion between the artefact and the culture it represents—and, returning to Connerton, confusion between memory and its method of transmission.

At this juncture, it is enough to be aware—and wary—of the potential for such confusion. The important point to take from this discussion is that culture is both the ‘taken-for-granted, tacit background’ and a deliberate construction; collective memory is encoded and transmitted by both conscious and unconscious means. I am primarily interested in its conscious, or at least semi-conscious, manifestations; to emphasise this, I will henceforth use the term ‘cultural memory’ to refer to collective memory deliberately constructed and transmitted through artefacts, rituals, and texts.

## MEMORY AND HISTORY

To characterize cultural memory as memory deliberately constructed and transmitted through texts, as I have done above, opens up another set of questions: what difference, if any, is there between cultural memory and history? Why is Parshat Zakhor, with its commandment to remember, the important passage, the passage that gets read out loud in the synagogue twice during the liturgical year? Why not its cognate passage (Ex. 17.14), in which God commands Moses to write the fate of Amalek ‘as a remembrance in the record’ (זכרון בספר) to be passed on to Joshua and the generations that followed?

What we saw in the passages from Marx and Nietzsche discussed at the end of the second section of this chapter was a subtle shift in the way that memory has been

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<sup>71</sup> Tanner 25, 27.

<sup>72</sup> Tanner 27.

<sup>73</sup> Edward B. Tyler, *Primitive Culture: Research into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (John Murray, 1873) 1, quoted in Masuzawa 78.

construed: at the time they wrote, ‘memory’ was beginning to move from signifying an operation of an individual mind to signifying a mode of relationship between the present and the past. It is from this wider construal that 20th century theories of memory arose, striving to make distinctions between memory and history (as well as between different types of memory) that would have been unnecessary prior to this merging of terms. Halbwachs began to draw the line between the two in the second chapter of *The Collective Memory*.<sup>74</sup> He characterizes history as an external framework, devoid of personal connection:

Proper names, dates, formulas summarizing a long sequence of details, occasional anecdotes or quotations, are the epitaphs to those bygone events, as brief, general, and scant of meaning as most tombstone inscriptions. History indeed resembles a crowded cemetery, where room must constantly be made for new tombstones.<sup>75</sup>

Paul Ricoeur writes that this passage in *The Collective Memory* marks a sharp division between ‘living memory’ and the abstract anonymity of history:

History is first learned by memorizing dates, facts, names, striking events, important persons, holidays to celebrate. [...] At this stage of discovery, itself remembered after the fact, history is perceived, mainly by the student, as “external” and dead. The negative mark placed on the facts mentioned consists in the student’s not being able to witness them. It is the province of hearsay and of didactic reading. The feeling of externality is reinforced by the calendrical framework of the events taught: at this age one learns to read the calendar as one learns to read the clock.<sup>76</sup>

It is worth noting that while Connerton identified the repetition of rituals *within a calendrical framework* as one of the primary methods of collective (or cultural) memory transmission, Ricoeur sees the calendar as enforcing the externality of the past, moving it away from the realm of memory and into the realm of history. It is also worth noting that, for Ricoeur, as for Halbwachs, memory is ‘living’ and history ‘dead’; this dichotomy is present, to greater or lesser extents, in most attempts to theorize the difference between history and cultural memory.

Thus, we have also Pierre Nora’s assertion that ‘There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory’.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Mary Douglas (Harper & Row, 1980) 50-87.

<sup>75</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* 52.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (University of Chicago Press, 2004) 394.

<sup>77</sup> Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*’, trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24; 7. This article is identical to the preface to *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol. 1 (Gallimard, 1984), available in English as *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 1, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Columbia University Press, 1996).

Nora identifies the cause of the ‘memory boom’<sup>78</sup> as ‘the acceleration of history’, the increased speed at which the past is overtaken by ‘our hopelessly forgetful modern societies’.<sup>79</sup> It does not take Nora long to arrive at the same point as Ricoeur:<sup>80</sup>

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.<sup>81</sup>

The two commands in Parshat Zakhor now become quite clear: to keep the wrongdoings perpetrated by Amalek in living memory (the commandment is not ‘Remember Amalek’, but ‘Remember *what Amalek did*’), but to let the Amalekites themselves fade from the immediacy of memory into the distant realm of history; to recite, but not relive, the details of the encounter.

This distinction (though not its relation to Parshat Zakhor) has also been made by the historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in his influential book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. ‘The biblical appeal to remember [...] has little to do with curiosity about the past’, he writes. ‘Israel is told only that it must be a kingdom of priests and holy people; nowhere is it suggested that it become a nation of historians’.<sup>82</sup> Rather than the distinction between living, immediate memory and dead, external history found in Ricoeur and Nora, however, Yerushalmi argues that memory is selective in nature. History is neutral, recording the past in its entirety; memory transmits only the fragments of past that it deems relevant—in the case of Jewish memory, only the moments of God’s intervention into

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<sup>78</sup> This phrase is widely used to describe the surge of interest in memory, and especially collective memory, evident in the humanities since the 1980’s. See David C. Berliner, ‘The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology’, *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2005): 197-211; David G. Rosenfeld, ‘A Flawed Prophecy? Zakhor, the Memory Boom, and the Holocaust’, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, no. 4 (2007): 508-520; Volf 39-40; Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 2006) 1.

The introduction to an earlier volume, edited by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), is quite critical of Nora’s project, accusing him of narrowness and parochialism in his exclusive focus on France, which leads to a suggestion that his central thesis (that collective memory is no longer a widely operating social force) may not be applicable outside of France. They further suggest that the large amount of money the French government spends on museums may be better explained by recourse to economics (museums and culture are a sound investment with a good rate of return) than by hypothesizing that ‘the sacred is dead and we need a set of symbolic substitutes’ (2). However, Winter and Sivan do not attempt to account for the public interest that makes museums popular enough to be considered a sound investment in the first place.

<sup>79</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory* 8.

<sup>80</sup> Ricoeur actually wrote *Memory, History, and Forgetting* after Nora’s *Realms of Memory* was published, and includes Nora in his analysis.

<sup>81</sup> Nora, *Realms of Memory* 8.

<sup>82</sup> Yerushalmi 10.

history are worthy of passing into memory.<sup>83</sup> This distinction perhaps ignores the claim that history is itself not a set of events, but rather a set of texts, a narrative constructed after the events themselves have passed.<sup>84</sup> It does, however, highlight the constructed nature of cultural memory. This process of construction is my concern in the remainder of this thesis.

Rabbi Shapira's reading of Parshat Zakhor placed the deeds of Amalek firmly in the realm of living memory by relating those deeds to the situation in which Shapira and his congregation found themselves. The Jews hearing Shapira's sermon in the Warsaw Ghetto did not have to strive to recall the details of what Amalek did to them on their journey, after they left Egypt, as Ricouer imagined the young Maurice Halbwachs straining to recall the details of his history lessons; they knew perfectly well how the SS took advantage of their famine and weariness, cutting down those too weak to defend themselves.<sup>85</sup> Shapira's sermon built a connection between the two oppressions, enabling his listeners to reach back beyond their own personal memory to interpret their experiences within the narrative framework provided by the cultural memory transmitted through the regular recital of scripture. In turn, the personal memories of the members of the community buttressed the viability of the Amalek narrative as a cultural memory, a part of their own living (and lived) experience.

This, I suggest, is the primary function of a memorial: to move the past from the realm of history into the realm of memory, by forging an active connection to the lived experience of the individuals who encounter it. A memorial, as I understand it, should not be confused with Nora's *lieu de mémoire*, although many of the *lieux* that Nora describes could also, given the proper circumstances, function as memorials. However, Nora believes that *lieux de mémoire* are little more than archives, sorting facilities which help to shepherd the last vestiges of living memory into the storehouse of history; a memorial functions in the opposite direction. A memorial forges an emotional link between an individual and a

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<sup>83</sup> Yerushalmi 10-11.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (Columbia University Press, 1988): 'It appears to me that in the West, for the last four centuries, "the making of history" has referred to writing' (pp. 5-6). See also Elizabeth A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Harvard University Press, 2004): 'The historical fact must be recognized not as "what really happened," but as "what the evidence obliges us to believe"' (19).

<sup>85</sup> Compare with Emil Fackenheim's description of the search for a Biblical parallel to Hitler: 'Though foredoomed to failure—Hitler is without precedent—inevitably the search goes on, must go on. It fails with the Pharaohs, for these were pragmatic enemies only [...] Failing with Pharaoh, the search then turns to Amalek, but this too fails, for this Biblical enemy attacks the weakest only because they are easiest to defeat. The enemy of our time has only one Biblical type that comes close to being his prototype, but this one is uncannily close: the Haman of Esther, who wants to kill all Jews because of the trifling slight of a single Jew'. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust: A Re-reading*, (Indiana University Press, 1990) 60-61.

past event which they themselves did not experience directly, enabling them to relate to the past *as if* they had personally encountered it, and through that relation renders the past an active part of that individual's living experience. This is a well-documented function of Jewish liturgy, but such functionality is not limited to Jewish tradition, nor to liturgy; architectural sites (the classic 'memorial' form, although I hasten to point out that not every monument provides the emotional conduit necessary for it to be a memorial in the technical sense that I am proposing), literature, even film, music, and visual art can act as memorials.

## MOVING FORWARD

In the following pages, I will examine a sample of memorial sites and texts from the last century, a timeframe recent enough that the boundaries between living (individual) memory, cultural memory, and history are constantly being re-negotiated. None of these is neutral. Each one is a construction; each both presents a particular interpretation of the event(s) it represents and is itself subject to interpretation and re-interpretation.

In the next chapter, I will return to an examination of the commandments of Parshat Zakhor, reading them from an ethical, rather than linguistic standpoint. This reading becomes the basis for a more broad discussion of the role that narrative and language play in creating spaces in which violence can become not only ethically permissible, but necessary. The history of 'Just War' rhetoric is a long and bloody lesson in what is at stake in choices about how collective memory ought to be constructed, transmitted, and interpreted.

In Part Two, I will engage in a closer study of the way memorialisation contributes to the formation of identity, both individual and cultural. Due to the strong parallels between the social situation of the Athenian Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE and that of the British Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century CE, as well as to the great influence classical forms had on the accoutrements of memorialisation in the First World War, I begin by briefly returning to ancient Greece, to examine what light the conflict over the burial of Polynices portrayed in Sophocles' *Antigone* may shed on the issue of how, and by whom, the meaning of history is negotiated.

This discussion provides the foundation for my investigation of the way the memory of the First World War was constructed in Canada. Throughout Part Two, I argue that the dead (or wounded, or missing) bodies of soldiers are the locus of such negotiations. I further argue that the dominant Christian theology of the time neither

challenged nor was challenged by the events of the war; rather, commemorative activity freely borrowed images of sacrifice and atonement, and the churches incorporated the transformed images back into their regular vocabulary of worship. Focusing on Canada permits me to draw on a particular set of historical circumstances which, taken together, provide a useful interruption to more dominant (British and American) understandings of the war, thus underlining the element of selectivity at work in memorialisation. My main vehicle for this discussion is a parallel reading of four novels from L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series (the publication of which spanned the years 1908 to 1921) and the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission (now known as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission).

I conclude Part Two with a close examination of one particular Canadian monument to the First World War, the Walter Allward-designed Canadian National Vimy Memorial. 'Reading' the monument alongside Jane Urquhart's fictional account of its creation in *The Stone Carvers* permits me to unpack the way the memory of the First World War has evolved from the time it was being constructed by Allward, Montgomery, and a host of other Canadian culture-makers, until the present day, when more nuanced historical readings are available to undermine the triumphant, nation-building myth of Canada's War. One of the great risks of constructing memorials which carry the past forward into the present is that the consciousness of the present can, then, also infect the past. Memorials are too dependent on their readers ever to be truly stable texts.

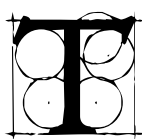
In Part Three, I begin by conducting a similar, though briefer, examination of the presentation of memorials to the Holocaust. I suggest that, where the First World War memorials were originally designed to serve an existing community of mourners, acting as substitutes for the bodies of dead soldiers, the Holocaust memorials, particularly those which take the form of museums, have been designed to *create* a community of mourners, guiding the visitor towards a sense of sympathy for and responsibility to the victims they commemorate.

Two churches bombed during the Second World War and rebuilt afterwards provide the framework for my consideration of the relationship between the history of the years 1933-1945 (the total span of Nazi rule in Germany) and religious practice since that time. Where the vocabulary of memorialisation at work in the First World War was well in tune with the Christian theological language of the time, the memory of the Holocaust poses a direct challenge to Jewish theological understanding. It is the negotiation between theology and history, and the role that memorialisation plays in this, which is my primary concern in this part. After a survey of several notable academic theologians, I focus



primarily upon the relatively recent work of David Blumenthal and Melissa Raphael, both of whom, in different ways, are concerned particularly with the issue of encounter between God and humanity, and how the understanding of and approach to such an encounter is altered by understanding of the Holocaust. Thus, my focus returns to the issue of Jewish liturgy—not within a calendrical framework, as at the beginning of this thesis, but as a space of encounter. I conclude with a reading of two contemporary novels by Canadian Jewish women, both of which point towards the possibility of, but do not actually accomplish, a reconciliation between liturgical and quotidian existence, a renewal of connection between God and Israel, accomplished in part by a re-interpretation of existing memorials.

**R**EMEMBERING AMALEK



he command to blot out the memory of Amalek, when it is taken as a poetic hyperbole meant to indicate complete obliteration, the most total form of total war imaginable, is ethically repulsive to most contemporary readers.<sup>1</sup> It has tended to be read by Christian commentators as a relic of a savage era which humanity has long since abandoned: the totality of destruction described as a sharp contrast to the limited and methodical means by which contemporary nations now conduct their wars, and the divine commandment as a counterpoint to the deliberation with which we now engage before embarking upon military adventure. In this chapter, I will examine the complex of issues surrounding the ethical conduct of warfare which are opened up by such readings of the Amalek texts: the way that remembrance of Amalek has been constructed and interpreted within the tradition of debate over the ethics of war.

Biblical scholars frequently analyse Deut. 25:17-19 and its cognate passage in Exodus in terms of ‘the ban’, *הָרַם*.<sup>2</sup> That they do so may be counted as slightly curious, given that word’s utter absence from any passage in Torah which deals with Amalek; such analyses begin with an assumption of similarity between the treatment of Amalek and nations which are explicitly subjected to the ban. However lexicographically unjustified this assumption may be, it provides a ready point of entry into a discussion of the ethics of memory, the ways in which memorialisation or past events may be used (or misused) to justify action or inaction in the present. In her study, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, Susan Niditch divides passages dealing with *הָרַם* into two types: those that treat the ban as a sacrificial system, in which ‘[i]mposition of the ban, so that dead enemies become an offering to God, is one way of making sense of the inevitable carnage of war’,<sup>3</sup> and those that treat the ban as a mechanism of God’s justice, ‘rooting out [...] impure, sinful forces damaging the solid and pure relationship between Israel and God’.<sup>4</sup> Niditch links this latter interpretation to the idea of the just war.<sup>5</sup> While the passages from Deuteronomy and Exodus with which I have been working do not make an appearance in this volume (presumably because Niditch is cognizant that the verb *הָרַם* does not make an appearance in either passage), Niditch does analyse 1 Samuel 15 (the *haftarah* for Shabbat Zakhor), which details a later interaction between the Israelites, led by King Saul, and the Amalekites, led by King Agag (from whom Haman, the villain of the Book of Esther is said to descend) as an instance of

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Childs, *Exodus* 313; Fox 352, 966; Meyers 135; Nelson 302; G. Ernest Wright’s commentary in Buttrick, vol. 2, 482.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford University Press, 1993) 50.

<sup>4</sup> Niditch 56.

<sup>5</sup> Niditch 57.

the ban as a measure of God's justice.<sup>6</sup> It is worthwhile to quote Niditch's final analysis of this approach to warfare at some length:

It is not easy for humans to kill others. To participate in mass killing in war is destructive of individual psyches and of the larger community's mental health. The ban in either trajectory is a means of making killing in war acceptable. [...] [T]he ban-as-God's-justice ideology actually motivates and encourages war, implying that wars of extermination are desirable in order to purify the body politic of one's own group, to eradicate evil beyond one's group, and to actualize divine judgment. In the ban as God's justice a sharp line is drawn between us and them, between clean and unclean, between those worthy of salvation and those deserving elimination. The enemy is thus not a mere human, an offering, necessary to win the assistance of God, but a monster, unclean, and diseased. The ban as God's justice thus allows people to accept the notion of killing other humans by dehumanizing them and the process of dehumanization can take place even within the group during times of stress, distrust, and anomic.<sup>7</sup>

While Niditch does not make reference to the work of Elaine Scarry at any point in her book, the parallels between what she writes here and Scarry's 1985 book, *The Body in Pain*, are striking. Scarry discusses, at some length, the psychological necessity to disguise and obscure the actual injuring of bodies which, she argues, is the single inarguable fact of warfare.<sup>8</sup> The main means by which this disguise is perpetrated is linguistic rearrangement:

the act of injuring, or the tissue that is to be injured, or the weapon that is to accomplish the injury is renamed [...] as prisoners subjected to medical experiments in Japanese camps were called 'logs', and as the day during World War I on which thirty thousand Russians and thirteen thousand Germans died at Tannenberg came to be called the 'Day of Harvesting'.<sup>9</sup>

This inversion, in which people become inanimate ('logs', or crops to be harvested) and weapons take on a life of their own ('arms', parts of a body, as Scarry describes slightly later in the same paragraph as the passage quoted), acts just as the notion of holy war, the ban as justice, described by Niditch, in 'allow[ing] people to accept the notion of killing other humans by dehumanizing them'.

Scarry takes what may be rightly labelled a logically extreme view of the idea of the 'just war'; by reducing war to two structural components (injury and competition), she is able to argue that, while there may be some justification for the existence of 'a contest based on a reciprocal activity that would produce a nonreciprocal outcome abided by all', there is no necessity, and thus no justification of, or justice in, such a competition being

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<sup>6</sup> Niditch 61-62.

<sup>7</sup> Niditch 77.

<sup>8</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford University Press, 1985) 63.

<sup>9</sup> Scarry 66.

based on the injuring of human bodies.<sup>10</sup> Niditch does not go nearly so far—which is to be expected, as her book is a descriptive study of war as it is portrayed in the Hebrew Bible, rather than an argument for or against war itself—but is, at times (such as in the passage quoted above) sharply critical of fictions (to use Scarry’s terminology) which make the taking of human lives too easy by obscuring the basic humanness of the lives to be taken. However, both Niditch and Scarry note, however obliquely, that justifications for war rest on a removal of responsibility from those most immediately concerned (the soldiers involved in directly injuring other human beings) to a more remote authority. Holy war, which entirely removes the responsibility for moral discernment from humanity, may thus be construed as an extreme form of this tendency.

### THE JUST WAR IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

The editors of a recent collection of readings on *The Ethics of War*, Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, identify three major approaches to the subject: pacifism, the position that war is always to be avoided; ‘realism’, proponents of which tend to refuse the validity of ethical considerations (the classic ‘might makes right’ viewpoint); and ‘the just war tradition’, which attempts to mediate between those two extremes.<sup>11</sup> This ‘tradition’ is polygenous; it is exceedingly difficult to identify any precise point of origin, or to trace its development neatly from one thinker to the next. Reichberg, Syse, and Begby have not attempted to impose a developmental narrative on their sources, preferring to let the multivocality of the tradition speak for itself; other sources which I have consulted tend to be somewhat narrower in their scope, but, with a few exceptions, there is no uniformity in the thinkers singled out as important from one source to another.<sup>12</sup>

The original just war theory is usually credited to Augustine of Hippo, although recent scholars have been at pains to point out that Augustine was himself the inheritor of

<sup>10</sup> Scarry 142.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, eds., *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Blackwell, 2006) x.

<sup>12</sup> Nor is there, for the most part, much evidence that later thinkers referred heavily to the work of earlier thinkers. Most of the works in this area which I have examined rely upon case studies and appeal to reason, rather than tradition, for their authority. See, for example, Karma Nabulsi, ‘Conceptions of Justice in War: From Grotius to Modern Times’ in *The Ethics of War: Shared Problems in Different Traditions*, ed. Richard Sorabji and David Rodin, (Ashgate Publishing, 2006) 44-60; Richard J. Regan, *Just War: Principles and Causes* (The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); Richard Sorabji, ‘Just War from Ancient Origins to the Conquistadors Debate and its Modern Relevance’ in *The Ethics of War*, ed. Sorabji and Rodin, 13-29; Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Penguin Books, 1977), and Robert L. Holmes, ‘Can War be Morally Justified? The Just War Theory’, in *Just War Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain (Blackwell, 1992) 197-233. The Holmes article has been especially helpful to the brief developmental sketch that follows.

a philosophical tradition stretching back at least as far as Thucydides.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Augustine's thought on war is, perhaps, too fragmentary to be properly termed a theory; Reichberg, Syse, and Begby have suggested (in my view correctly) that Augustine's 'moral intuitions' required the input of later thinkers to be transformed into coherent doctrine.<sup>14</sup> In *The City of God*, Augustine suggests that war ought to be approached as a 'necessity' rather than as a 'happiness', though he does not illuminate precisely what constitutes 'necessity' or 'happiness', or how the two are to be differentiated.<sup>15</sup> The difficulty is somewhat illuminated later on in that same work, when he explains that it is natural and just that the earthly city seeks the good of peace, and '[t]his peace it strives to obtain through war'.<sup>16</sup> Since we may reasonably suppose that peace is, for Augustine, a happiness, it follows that the war leads to happiness, but is not happiness itself—'happiness' is the end which is approached through the 'necessity' of war. In *Questions on the Heptateuch*, Augustine clarifies the circumstances under which war may be deemed necessary:

As a rule just wars are defined as those which avenge injuries, if some nation or state against whom one is waging war has neglected to punish a wrong committed by its citizens, or to return something that was wrongfully taken.<sup>17</sup>

However, the important question of who has the authority to decide that these conditions have been met is not addressed here, but, rather peripherally, in *Against Faustus the Manichean*. There, Augustine suspends questions of justice as unnecessary to the subject at hand,<sup>18</sup> focusing instead on the necessity of deference to those higher up the chain of command:

No one can have any power against them but what is given him from above. For there is no power but of God, who either orders or permits. Since, therefore, a righteous man, serving it may be under an ungodly king, may do the duty belonging to his position in the State in fighting by the order of his sovereign,—for in some cases it is plainly the will of God that he should fight, and in others, where this is not so plain, it may be an

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<sup>13</sup> Reichberg, et al., contest the idea of Augustine as the originator of the just war tradition, pointing to texts from Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero in support of their claim that Augustine's thought was built on a pre-existing tradition. See Reichberg et al. 70-71.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *City of God* Book IV, ch. 15: Augustine, *The City of God: Books I-VII*, trans. Demetrius B. Zema and Gerald G. Walsh (The Catholic University of America Press, 1949) 211-212.

<sup>16</sup> *City of God* Book XV, ch. 4: Augustine, *The City of God: Books VIII-XVI*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Mother Grace Monahan (The Catholic University of America Press, 1952) 419-420.

<sup>17</sup> *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum* 6.10, translated in Louis J. Swift, *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Michael Glazier, 1983)135.

The revenge motive is, of course, prevalent in Parshat Zakhor, although in present-day discourse vengeance is considered to be a poor excuse for warfare.

<sup>18</sup> *Against Faustus* Book XXII, ch. 74; Reichberg et al. 81.

unrighteous command on the part of the king, while the soldier is innocent, because his position makes obedience a duty<sup>19</sup>

Just as it is not the place of mere humans to question the will of God, Augustine argues, it is not the place of a mere soldier to question the will of the ruler that soldier serves.<sup>20</sup>

Augustine similarly defers the responsibility for the means by which a war is waged:

the only thing a righteous man has to worry about is that the just war is waged by someone who has the right to do so [...] it does not matter at all, as far as justice is concerned, whether he wins victory in open combat or through ruses.<sup>21</sup>

A far more systematic theory of just war was put forth by Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa theologiae* II-II, Question 40 (On War). According to Aquinas,

In order for a war to be just, three things are required. First, the authority of the prince by whose command the war is to be waged. [...] Secondly, a just cause is required, namely that those who are attacked, should be attacked because they deserve it on account of some fault. [...] Thirdly, it is necessary that those waging war should have a rightful intention, so that they intend the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil.<sup>22</sup>

Aquinas refers directly to Augustine in support of the second and third points, and, indeed, neither revises nor greatly embellishes upon what Augustine had already asserted some eight hundred years previously. His great contribution is, rather, a focused and coherent compilation of the existing thought on the subject. He does differ slightly from Augustine on the question ‘Whether it is licit to lay ambushes in war?’, taking the laying of an ambush as a specific instance of a more general question: whether it is licit to mislead the enemy.<sup>23</sup> Aquinas identifies two ways in which the enemy might be misled, and judges one, providing the enemy with false information, as illicit in war as it is in peace, while the other, concealing information from the enemy, he finds entirely permissible.<sup>24</sup> Aquinas does not, in other words, ascribe a special status to actions undertaken in the context of war; to him, the moral test for acts in wartime is the same as for acts in peacetime.

The difficulty with Augustine’s and, to a lesser extent, Aquinas’s willingness to suspend as irrelevant questions of *jus in bello*, justice in the means by which war is waged,

<sup>19</sup> Augustine, *Against Faustus* 22.5, trans. Richard Stothert, Logos Virtual Library <<http://www.logoslibrary.org/augustine/faustus/2275.html>>, accessed 9 January 2010.

<sup>20</sup> This deference to authority has not been successfully deployed as a defence in the war crimes trials of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See, for example, Hannah Arendt’s account of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Books, 1963), esp. 246-247. See also Arendt, ‘Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship’ [1964] in *Responsibility and Judgment* (Schocken Books, 2003) 17-48.

<sup>21</sup> *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum* 6.10; Swift 138.

<sup>22</sup> *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.40.1; Reichberg et al. 176-178.

<sup>23</sup> It is worth remembering at this point that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, ambush is one of the charges often levelled against Amalek.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theologiae* II-II q.40.3; Reichberg et al. 180-181.

provided that appropriate conditions for *jus ad bellum*, justice in the reasons for which war is waged, have been met, has been highlighted by Robert L. Holmes.<sup>25</sup> Holmes notes that it would appear theoretically possible for both sides in a war to at least believe that they have just cause, and, thus, to hold themselves licensed to pursue that cause by any means necessary.<sup>26</sup> This issue was addressed by Francisco de Vitoria in two lectures delivered in 1539 (and published in 1557) concerning the Spanish conquest of the New World.<sup>27</sup> In the second of these, *De Jure Belli (On the Law of War)*, Vitoria points out that this possibility is, in fact, a probability; '[i]t does not usually happen that princes wage war in bad faith', and most wars are fought by two opponents who both believe that their cause is just.<sup>28</sup> In addition to displaying a somewhat remarkable faith in the usual virtue of princes, Vitoria considers this dilemma to be evidence that not all wars which are deemed just and carried out by a legitimate authority actually are just. Otherwise,

all the belligerents would be innocent, and consequently it would not be lawful for either side to kill anyone on the other. Even the wars of Turks and Saracens against Christians would be justified, since these peoples believe that they are serving God by waging them.<sup>29</sup>

The distinction between what Holmes identifies as the objective moral status and subjective perception of a just war renders the conclusions regarding conduct in war reached by Augustine and Aquinas problematic. In such circumstances, not only does concern for justice cease to mediate the means by which a war is conducted, as each side may increase its use of force to match its subjective perception of the justice of its cause, but those who engage in war do so without any guarantee that their use of force will be licensed as just, since that license depends on the objective, rather than perceived, justice of their cause.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Holmes 197-233.

Aquinas's conclusion regarding the legitimacy of ambushes ('For a man would have an inordinate will if he were unwilling that others should hide anything from him') seems to imply that warfare ought to be conducted by the same set of rules as the rest of life (Aquinas speaks of deception in general terms, and applies those general conclusions to the specific case of the ambush). His conclusion regarding the permissibility of warfare on holy days, Article 4 of the same question, is also an application of a general principle to the specific case of warfare ('The observance of holy days is no hindrance to those things which are ordained to man's safety'). However, the legitimacy of that application rests upon a subjective perception of the necessity of warfare ('However, as soon as the necessity [of warfare] ceases, it is no longer licit to wage war on a holy day'); in Aquinas's scheme, whether an action is just in war is still dependent upon the justice of the war itself.

<sup>26</sup> Holmes 201.

<sup>27</sup> Reichberg et al. 288.

<sup>28</sup> Francisco de Vitoria, 'On the Law of War' 2.1 in *Political Writings*, Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrence ed. and trans. (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Augustine, Aquinas, and Vitoria are reasonably in agreement that this difficulty extends only to those under whose authority the war is carried out (the princes), and not the common soldiers who actually carry out the war. As discussed above, Augustine maintained that a soldier is justified in waging war so



This difficulty in contemporary just war theory is addressed in two ways. First, focus has shifted from just and unjust causes and towards a distinction between aggressive and defensive warfare, as demonstrated especially by chapter seven of the United Nations Charter, which will be discussed at greater length below.<sup>31</sup> Second, there is an increased emphasis on *jus in bello*.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the Just War Criteria published by the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops in the 1983 pastoral letter, ‘The Challenge of Peace’,<sup>33</sup> includes, in paragraphs 85-100, *jus ad bellum* criteria as laid out by Augustine and Aquinas (just cause, competent authority, right intention, last resort),<sup>34</sup> as well as by Vitoria (comparative justice), but also adds ‘probability of success’ and ‘proportionality’ (paragraphs 98 and 99-100, respectively), with paragraph 100 forming a conceptual and stylistic bridge between the list of criteria for *jus ad bellum* and the more flowing narrative which describes the considerations of *jus in bello* (paragraphs 101-110). This latter discussion is focused on two areas of concern which the bishops believe ought to inform ‘strategy, tactics, and individual actions’ during war-time: proportionality (the idea that the good achieved by the war must be sufficient to outweigh the evil of the war itself) and discrimination (the limitation of violence to persons and targets that can be reasonably classed as military, rather than civilian).<sup>35</sup> Proportionality is, in this scheme, the key concept; its inclusion under both headings renders *jus in bello* a key criterion for *jus ad bellum*. In other words, the criteria for a just war are not just that it be fought for a just cause, but that it be fought in a just manner.

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long as he is sure of the authority of the king under whose command he does so. Likewise, Aquinas holds that “To have recourse to the sword (as a private person) by the authority of a prince or judge [...] is not to “take the sword,” but to use it as commissioned by another, wherefore it does not deserve punishment” (*Summa* II-II Q. 40 Article 1). Vitoria alone admits the question of whether the common soldier bears any responsibility for determining whether the authority under which they fight is legitimate, or whether the cause of the war is just; he suggests that it is not required for the common soldier to closely examine the causes of the war (‘On the Law of War’ 2.2.3), but that one who does come to the belief that the war is unjust must obey his (for Vitoria, the soldier in question is always a he) conscience and not fight, ‘even if he is ordered to do so by the prince’ (‘On the Law of War’ 2.2.1) and that, further, there are circumstances in which the lack of just cause is so apparent ‘that even citizens and subjects of the lower class may not use ignorance as an excuse for serving as soldiers’ (‘On the Law of War’ 2.2.4).

<sup>31</sup> United Nations, *Charter* (1946) <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter7.shtml>> (Accessed 3 May 2009).

<sup>32</sup> This shift has not been instantaneous; Reichberg et al. trace its development over several centuries, noting especially movements towards *jus in bello* criteria in the works of Hugo Grotius (17<sup>th</sup> century) and Emerich de Vattel (18<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>33</sup> United States Council of Catholic Bishops, ‘The Challenge of Peace’ <<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/TheChallengeofPeace.pdf>> Accessed 14 April 2009. G.K.A. Bell, writing in 1940, found an earlier, but similar, document put forward by the Université catholique de Louvain to point towards a pacifist position, as ‘It would seem exceedingly difficult for any modern war to satisfy all these conditions’. Bell, G.K.A., *Christianity and World Order* (Penguin Books, 1940) 81.

<sup>34</sup> While the ‘last resort’ criterion is not made explicit by Aquinas, it is essentially a restatement of Augustine’s dictum that war should be a matter of necessity rather than happiness.

<sup>35</sup> See also the discussion in Holmes 212-214.

This particular formulation of just war criteria continually returns attention, if not to the concrete reality of injured flesh which Scarry places at the centre of her analysis, to the reality of the human lives at stake in warfare. It is, however, worthwhile to note that the strongest language regarding the preservation of life occurs in paragraph 104, which advocates against the taking of ‘innocent’, which is to say civilian, lives; the injury or death of soldiers is entirely absent from the discussion.

## JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS WARFARE

The previous chapter’s discussion of collective memory revealed a long philosophical tradition which, until rather recently, did not engage with the concept of memory found at work in the Torah. The case of just war theory is somewhat more complex. There is a parallel Jewish tradition, which developed mostly without engaging or being engaged by the theorists discussed above; there is not a single Jewish thinker excerpted in the Reichberg, Syse, and Begby volume. However, both traditions work largely from the same source texts—Vitoria, for example, frequently appealed to the Hebrew Bible to support his arguments.<sup>36</sup> In working from the same, or similar, starting points, the traditions are capable of having moments of convergence just as frequently as their lack of reference to each other leads to moments of divergence.

Norman Solomon has presented a sound overview of the historical development of Jewish attitudes towards warfare, beginning with the text of Parshat Shofetim (Deut. 20), which outlines the rules by which the Israelites are to conduct their wars.<sup>37</sup> This code of conduct has a smaller echo in Deut. 23:9-14, which dictates safeguards for ritual purity within the camp during a military campaign.<sup>38</sup> These early texts are concerned with the means by which the war is conducted: the men in the army must be ritually pure, and free of any motivation to avoid battle, whether that motivation is intrinsic (fear of battle) or extrinsic (domestic obligations, such as a new wife, new vineyard, etc.); fruit-bearing trees should be preserved for food, rather than used to manufacture siege equipment; no city should be attacked before an offer of peace is made (the exact terms of which are outlined in Deut. 20:11), and in the event that offer is rejected, the city is besieged, the men killed, and women, children, livestock, and everything else in the city is plundered (Deut. 20:12-14)—with the exception of cities belonging to the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites,

<sup>36</sup> Norman Solomon, ‘The Ethics of War: Judaism’ in *The Ethics of War*, ed. Sorabji and Rodin, 109.

<sup>37</sup> Solomon 108-109.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Nelson has also noted that Deut. 23:4-7 is a thematic precursor to Parshat Zakhor (Nelson 302). This turns Deut.23: 4-14 into a lynchpin, connecting the text of Deut. 20 to that of Deut. 25:17-19.

Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites ('the seven nations'), in which case 'everything that breathes' is to be killed (Deut. 20:17).<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that the Hebrew word here is **חַרֵּם**; Niditch analyses this passage as an instance of 'The Ban as God's Justice', noting that the justification given for the slaughter is that survivors might 'influence Israel to turn away from God'.<sup>40</sup> Two issues stand out to later commentators on this code of warfare: the obligatory offer of peace, and the harshness of the treatment extended to the tribes inhabiting the land promised to the Israelites.

While contemporary commentaries tend to question the historical validity of the ban, suggesting that the Deuteronomic text is far harsher than any Israelite military campaign,<sup>41</sup> the Rabbinic tradition was built on reading strategies which softened the dictates of Deut. 20:17.<sup>42</sup> Notably, the Rabbis read the verses dealing with the treatment of the tribes inhabiting the promised land as an exception *only* to the commandment given regarding the treatment of women, children, and livestock in verse 14; following a reference in Joshua 11:19, they held that terms of peace were to be offered even to those tribes.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Joshua ben Hananiah's assertion that 'Sennacherib mixed up all the nations' (c. 100 CE) meant that commandments pertaining to the treatment of specific nations (such as Deut. 20:17, or, for that matter, Deut. 25:19) could no longer be carried out.<sup>44</sup>

### *MAIMONIDES AND THE MISHNEH TORAH*

As with Augustine's gestures towards a theory of just war, Rabbinic writings on the subject are spread across a relatively wide body of text. However, the tradition was mostly compiled, explicated, and occasionally expanded upon by the Rambam, Moses Maimonides, at the end of the twelfth century of the Common Era, in the last treatise of the *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>45</sup> This treatise, 'Laws Concerning Kings and Wars', is first and foremost a fantastic work of imagination. Unlike the Christian theorists who I discussed earlier, all of whom wrote in response to their immediate political situations, in and for societies in

<sup>39</sup> Solomon notes that 'the seven nations' comprises a total of ten tribes named at various points in the Torah (134).

<sup>40</sup> Niditch 67.

<sup>41</sup> See especially Solomon 109-110; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Clarendon Press, 1972) 51.

<sup>42</sup> Solomon notes that due to the political situation of the Jews following the destruction of the second Temple, these re-readings lack 'firm contact with contemporary reality [...] it is historical reconstruction or messianic speculation, not the operational law of an actual society' (Solomon 110).

<sup>43</sup> Solomon 110.

<sup>44</sup> Mishna *Yadayim* 4:4; Solomon 110.

<sup>45</sup> Solomon 115.

which Christianity was the socially dominant religion, Maimonides wrote as a religious minority, in an Islamic society, at a time when there was no Jewish kingdom, nor any realistic indication that one might ever exist.<sup>46</sup> The goal of his writing was not to instruct any ruler contemporary to him, but, rather, to extrapolate from Torah what laws a hypothetical Jewish kingdom might be governed by. He discerned ten positive and thirteen negative commandments; of these, eight positive and six negative commandments pertain specifically to warfare, and a further three (one positive and two negative) relate to the treatment of women captured in warfare.<sup>47</sup>

Maimonides begins his treatment of war in the fifth chapter of the treatise (the first four, as the title would suggest, are dedicated to laws concerning the hypothetical Jewish king) by noting the distinction between religious and optional wars.<sup>48</sup> Although Maimonides addresses the rules specific to religious wars before the rules for optional wars, or those applicable to both kinds of war, my discussion will begin with the latter, which is more immediately relevant to the preceding discussion, before returning, briefly, to the laws which are specifically relevant to Parshat Zakhor.

### *THE OPTIONAL WAR*

An optional war is one engaged in ‘against neighboring nations to extend the borders of Israel and to enhance his greatness and prestige’; to engage in optional warfare requires the consent of ‘the court of seventy-one’.<sup>49</sup> Solomon notes that such a court has not existed for the past two thousand years or more, and, thus, ‘the definition of “competent authority” virtually rules out the possibility of non-defensive war’.<sup>50</sup> However, Maimonides still finds it important to lay out rules for provinces conquered in an optional war, even going so far as to debate whether such a war would be permissible against Egypt, weighing the commandment against returning to settle in Egypt against the authority of the king and

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<sup>46</sup> There is now a Jewish state, of course, but Maimonides could not have imagined the structure its government has taken, as the parliamentary system developed several hundred years after he wrote. The extent to which the law he extrapolated from Torah may or may not be relevant to the now very real state of Israel is a question open to debate, as Maimonides’s imagined Jewish kingdom would have derived much of its religious legitimacy from being under the rulership of a king from the restored Davidic dynasty.

<sup>47</sup> For a complete listing, see Hershman 205-206.

<sup>48</sup> Solomon traces this distinction to a statement by Rava, in the Babylonian Talmud *Sotta* 44b. See Solomon 111.

<sup>49</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 5:1-2 (Hershman 217).

<sup>50</sup> Solomon 111.

court to expand the borders of Israel—he does decide that under such circumstances, settling in a portion of Egypt annexed to Israel would be permissible.<sup>51</sup>

More importantly, Maimonides re-iterates the obligation to offer peace to any city before waging war against it. Moreover, he insists that after a peace offer has been made and rejected, the city ‘may not be surrounded on all four sides but only on three in order to give an opportunity for escape to those who would flee to save their lives’, a move which Solomon finds puzzlingly impractical—he traces the origin of that command to Rabbi Nathan, and hypothesizes that Nathan was searching for an explanation of ‘how, despite the annihilation of the Midianites alleged in Numbers, Midianite raids are reported in Judges 6’.<sup>52</sup> Maimonides expands the commandment against cutting down fruit trees to also forbid depriving the trees of water, ‘smash[ing] household goods, tear[ing] clothes, demolish[ing] a building, stop[ping] up a spring, or destroy[ing] articles of food with destructive intent’.<sup>53</sup> These commandments, taken together, form a powerful prohibition against engaging in total war.

#### *THE BODY OF THE SOLDIER*

While the issue of injury is even more ignored in the code of Maimonides than it is in the sources discussed in the previous section, the bodies of the soldiers themselves are quite central to the proper conduct of warfare, regardless of the causes of the war. The soldiers’ bodies must remain in a ritually pure state, although certain requirements are relaxed, presumably in a concession to the demands of military life. Thus, the soldiers in camp are exempt from the ritual washing of hands before eating, certain regulations concerning the Sabbath (a siege may continue on the Sabbath, and provided certain conditions are met in the construction of the camp, the soldiers ‘are permitted to carry objects from tent to tent and hut to hut’, a thing which is normally forbidden on the Sabbath), and from certain dietary laws—they may eat of dubious produce as well as forbidden meat and wine.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the purity of the camp is to be maintained; both Deut 23.13-15 and Maimonides devote significant attention to the requirement that a location outside the camp must be specified for urination and defecation (Maimonides also specifies that this place must be separate from the field of battle), and excrement is to be buried by means of a stick or paddle which every soldier must keep with his weapons. Maimonides does not,

<sup>51</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:6-8 (Hershman 217-218).

<sup>52</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 6:7 (Hershman 222).

<sup>53</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 6:8; 6:10 (Hershman 222-223).

<sup>54</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 6: 11; 6:13; 8:1 (Hershman 223; 228).

however, address the strictures regarding night-time impurity found in Deut. 20:10-11—a somewhat uncharacteristic oversight on his part.

The bodies of dead soldiers are mentioned, although only briefly: ‘Whoever is killed in battle is buried on the spot where he falls; he acquires the right to the place as does one who is found lying in the road’.<sup>55</sup> Maimonides offers no elaboration on whether these burials conform to or depart from normal burial customs, whether, for example, the bodies are cleaned first, whether they may be moved temporarily from the spot on which they fall, or how much time is permitted to pass before burial. This passage is, however, interesting when read in light of the war graves projects that I will discuss in the Part II.

### *THE BODY OF THE CAPTIVE WOMAN*

Maimonides also gives considerable attention to another type of body—the bodies of captured women. Immediately after the passage in which he rules it permissible for soldiers to eat unclean meat, he also expounds on Deut. 21:11-12’s ruling that it is permissible for a soldier to rape a captive woman.<sup>56</sup> This is a tremendously problematic text, and Maimonides’s interpretation renders it even more repulsive.<sup>57</sup> A full critique is,

<sup>55</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 6:12 (Hershman 223).

<sup>56</sup> The first question that ought to be put to the text—both the Biblical passage and Maimonides—is, of course, whether the actions being licensed actually qualify as rape. See Sandie Gravett, ‘Reading “Rape” in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language’, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28 (2004): 279-299. Gravett’s consideration of this passage suggests its closest linguistic parallel is Lamentations 5:11, in which the rape of captive Israelite women is listed among the atrocities endured by the Israelites during the exile (Gravett 287). It seems to me that even the most charitable reading of these passages simply sidesteps the issue of the female captive’s consent—and the word in contemporary English which best describes sexual intercourse without regard to the consent of one party or the other is ‘rape’.

The irrelevance of the woman’s consent is emphasised earlier in *MT, Hilkebot Ishut* 14:8, which rules that the husband of an Israelite woman who does not wish to have intercourse with him must divorce her immediately, ‘for she is not like a captive woman who must submit to a man that is hateful to her’.

See also Tikva Simone Frymer-Kensky, *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism* (Jewish Publication Society, 2006) 243-244; 251-252n8.

<sup>57</sup> It is especially notable that the passage concerning meat is at the beginning of Chapter 8; the passage that details all other dietary laws is near the end of Chapter 6. They are separated by a lengthy and unrelated detailing of the reasons for which soldiers may be discharged prior to a battle, and the means by which such discharges are accomplished. The movement of the passage concerning meat away from the other food laws and into proximity with the laws regarding captive women creates a relationship of equivalence between the two which is made clear in the first line of the first passage concerning captive women: ‘A soldier in the invading army may *also* [that is, in addition to eating unclean meat], if overpowered by passion, cohabit with a captive woman’. (*MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 8:2 (Hershman 228)). This parallel is strengthened further by the conditions placed on the consumption of unclean meat: it is permitted only to ‘[t]he armed men who invade heathen territory, conquer the (enemy) forces, and take captives’—it, like the captive woman, is a spoil of war, rather than a relaxation of purity codes due to the necessities of camp life.

Pearl Elman’s analysis of earlier Rabbinic sources shows that this comparison is not original to Maimonides, but is also found in Midrash Hagadol, Midrash Tannaim, and the Babylonian Talmud (*Kiddushin* 21b). See Elman, ‘Deuteronomy 21:10-14: The Beautiful Captive Woman’, *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 1 (1997);

unfortunately, outside the scope of my argument here, although the text is certainly deserving of one.<sup>58</sup> We should pause to note, however, that this passage in Deut. is typically read as *improving* the treatment of a female captive.<sup>59</sup> All this being said, I am interested here in the focus given to the ways in which the body of the captive woman is presented as threatening to the bodily purity of the soldier, and the ways in which this threat is mitigated.

The contact between the captive woman and the soldier is to be limited: ‘Coition with her is permitted only at the time when she is taken captive’.<sup>60</sup> The soldier is permitted to have intercourse with only one woman, only once, after which he must bring her into his home (presumably acquiring some degree of responsibility for her wellbeing) for at least three months.<sup>61</sup> During this time, the woman ‘lets her nails grow, shaves her head, in order to become repulsive to him’.<sup>62</sup> Pearl Elman notes that the earlier commentaries suggest that repulsion is the inevitable result of a union between an Israelite and a foreign woman (regardless of her conversion status), rather than something which must be cultivated via grooming practices; Saul M. Olyan’s reading of the biblical text supports this, interpreting the shaving of the head as part of a ritual meant to separate the captive woman from her previous identity, in preparation for her conversion and marriage.<sup>63</sup> However, Maimonides mentions no specific grooming rituals for a woman who has indicated her willingness to

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<<http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/journal/vol1n1/v1n1elma.htm>> Accessed 26 April 2009.

<sup>58</sup> At this point, I would very much like to be able to cite critiques of this section of Maimonides, or at the very least of the root passage in Deuteronomy, but in truth there are very few. Elman, above, has addressed earlier Rabbinic sources. James A. Diamond’s article on medieval Rabbinic readings of the passage in Deuteronomy focuses on Nahmanides (whose interpretation is considerably more gentle and less problematic); when he makes reference to Maimonides, it is never to this section of the the *Mishneh Torah*. See Diamond, ‘The Deuteronomic “Pretty Woman” Law: Prefiguring Feminism and Freud in Nahmanides’, *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 14, no. 2 (2008): 61-85.

It is perhaps telling that of all the volumes of work by Jewish feminists, the one most likely to address the issue of the captive woman is Rachel Biale’s *Women in Jewish Law: The Essential Texts, Their History, & Their Relevance for Today* (Schocken Books: 1995) which includes an entire chapter on rape, is silent—not just on Maimonides (though Biale engages with passages from the *Mishneh Torah* elsewhere) but on the root passage from Deuteronomy.

<sup>59</sup> Solomon 109; Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* 134-5.

<sup>60</sup> *MT, Hilkhoh melakhim*, 8:3 (Hershman 228).

Elman notes that this represents an innovation in interpretation that occurred in the Babylonian Talmud; earlier midrashim and the Jerusalem Talmud ruled that intercourse could only take place *after* the thirty-day waiting period, purification rituals, conversion of the woman, and contracting of a valid marriage.

<sup>61</sup> Elman also notes that several of the earlier commentaries suggest that marriage to a captive woman will result in a disharmonious household because the sons born of such a marriage will be rebellious. Implicit in this is the idea that the mother’s foreign nature will be transmitted to her children.

<sup>62</sup> *MT, Hilkhoh melakhim*, 8:5 (Hershman 229).

<sup>63</sup> Saul M. Olyan, ‘What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish and What Do They Signal in Biblical Ritual Contexts?’, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 4 (1998): 611-622; 617-19.

The Ramban interpreted these grooming practices as rites of mourning which accompanied a forced conversion; see Olyan 618 n33.

convert.<sup>64</sup> Rather, he mandates alterations in personal appearance only for a woman who refuses conversion; in his scheme, there appears to be no other purpose behind these alterations than to repel the soldier, thereby diminishing his desire for further intercourse with her—unless and until she consents to conversion.

Maimonides twice emphasises the importance of the captive woman's conversion: 'He [the soldier] puts up with her, in the hope that she might accept Judaism', and, later, 'If she refuses to be converted, she is put up with for twelve months'.<sup>65</sup> If the woman remains unwilling to convert to Judaism, but willing to accept and abide by the Noahide laws, then at the end of the twelve months she is released to become a resident alien; if she does not accept those laws (which is to say, will not denounce her own religion as idolatry), she is to be killed.<sup>66</sup> The reason for the twelve-month waiting period is not given explicitly, but can be discerned from the abrupt shift in focus after the description of the woman who is granted resident alien status, but prior to the ruling on the woman who refuses to accept the Noahide laws.<sup>67</sup> In between the descriptions of the legal fates of each of these women, there is an interjection:

If she conceived on her first intercourse, the child is a proselyte, and is in no respect to be regarded as his [the soldier's] son, because his [the child's] mother is a heathen. But the court on its authority arranges for his ablution.<sup>68</sup>

By mandating that the woman must be 'put up with' for twelve months following her rape, Maimonides ensures that any child conceived will have been born—that is to say, separated from the body of its mother—prior to the woman's execution. The underlying theme in this entire section is the separation between the bodies of Israelites (the soldier, the proselyte child) and non-Israelites (the unconverted captive woman). As the issue of captives only arises in an optional war, and this set of laws is thus purely theoretical, the degree to which it is worked out in Maimonides and in earlier Rabbinic writings points to a more general concern with bodily purity, conversion, and intermarriage, with the boundaries between Jew and non-Jew, than a specific concern about conduct in warfare; this is apparent in the shift from the discussion of the captive woman to the following section's discussion of laws governing Noahides living amongst Jews.

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<sup>64</sup> 'If after the first coition, while she is still a heathen, she expresses her willingness to accept Judaism, arrangements are forthwith made for her ablution for the purpose of conversion'. *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 8:5 (Hershman 228-9).

<sup>65</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 8:5; 8:7 (Hershman 229).

<sup>66</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 8:7; 8:9 (Hershman 229-30).

<sup>67</sup> In fact, paragraph 9 begins a transitional section between the discussion of the rape of the captive woman and the discussion of laws governing resident aliens within Israel.

<sup>68</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 8:8 (Hershman 229-30).



## RELIGIOUS WARS

In contrast to the optional war stands the religious war: ‘the war against the seven nations, that against Amalek, and a war to deliver Israel from the enemy attacking him’.<sup>69</sup> A religious war does not require the approval of the court.<sup>70</sup> As mentioned earlier, an offer of peace must be made to any city before a siege is begun; the sole exception to this is cities belonging to Amon or Moab, ‘but though no peace offer is made to them, if they of their own accord sue for peace, it is granted to them’; and as mentioned previously, a siege must still provide an escape route to the residents of the city.<sup>71</sup> Maimonides neither departs from nor elaborates greatly upon the commandment given in Deut. 20:17; cities, belonging to the seven nations or to Amalek, which reject a peace treaty are to be conquered and ‘everything that breathes’ is to be killed—no captive woman scenario can arise in a religious war.<sup>72</sup> However, Maimonides is quick to point out that war against the seven nations is only a theoretical concern, as ‘their memory has long perished’.<sup>73</sup>

Maimonides does not extend this statement to Amalek, nor does he make any reference to the extermination of Amalek recounted in 1 Chronicles 4:43; he merely reminds his readers that it is a positive commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek and a positive commandment to remember the deeds of Amalek.<sup>74</sup> Maimonides may have assumed that his audience would have been well aware that Amalek is no longer a viable nation; however, his rhetorical choice in this passage keeps open the possibility that contemporary ‘Amaleks’ may be identified, and war against them licensed for religious reasons, without the approval of the court.<sup>75</sup> Since, as was noted earlier, the court is no longer available to approve wars, the only just causes for war currently available within the Jewish tradition are religious; according to Maimonides, the only viable religious wars are defensive wars and the war against Amalek.

<sup>69</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:1 (Hershman 217).

<sup>70</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:2 (Hershman 217).

<sup>71</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:6 (Hershman 218).

<sup>72</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:4-5 (Hershman 217-218).

<sup>73</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:4 (Hershman 217).

<sup>74</sup> MT, *Hilkhot melakhim*, 5:5 (Hershman 217).

<sup>75</sup> Horowitz believes that Maimonides meant to ‘make it quite clear [...] that there were still authentic Amalekites to be found in the world—in contrast to the descendants of the “seven nations,” who were in theory also to be destroyed [...] but whose memory, he asserted, “had long perished.”’ (131). However, Horowitz also details the efforts of later scholars working from Maimonides’s text to mitigate the implications of this reading—notably Rabbi Moses of Coucy, who defers the commandment to war against the Amalekites to the messianic era (*ibid.*).

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*WAR AGAINST AMALEK*

We have already seen, in the previous chapter, the way that Rabbi Shapira's sermons navigated the shift between a consideration of Amalek as a particular people and Amalek as a particular type of people. The danger of this shift becomes apparent when we examine another set of sermons on the same passage, preached by the German-American Reform Rabbi David Einhorn, in 1864 and 1870. At the height of the American Civil War, Einhorn drew an analogy between Amalek and the contemporary practice of slavery, warning his congregation both of the spiritual danger posed by the actual practice of slavery (and, not coincidentally, the Orthodox interpretation of Torah which might lead the more literally minded to conclude that the practice of slavery was divinely sanctioned), but also of various forms of spiritual slavery that Einhorn felt posed a high risk: a proposed Constitutional amendment which would have made Christianity the official religion of the United States, and the materialism which he believed characterised much of American Jewish life.<sup>76</sup> Einhorn's invectives against both Christianity and Jewish materialism were repeated in his 1870 sermon, although the issue of actual slavery had, by then, been resolved.<sup>77</sup> In contrast to Shapira, whose sermons identified Amalek as a purely external force which, nevertheless, had a negative spiritual impact on the Jewish community, Einhorn clearly admitted the possibility of Amalek-like behaviour, and, by extension, the existence of Amalek, *within* the Jewish community. Nor did he confine himself to finger-pointing across denominational lines; while certainly the Orthodox community was, in both sermons, the subject of the heaviest criticisms he levelled at fellow Jews, his own Reform community was not exempted from the charges of materialism and spiritual indifference.

Einhorn's sermons are an example of the way that the shift from understanding Amalek as a particular people to understanding Amalek as representative of a particular type of people can undermine the precise distinctions—between ally and enemy, Jew and non-Jew, ritually pure and ritually impure—which the Deuteronomic code sought to uphold and imprint on the very bodies of the Israelites. In his recounting, Amalek ceases to be a nation, distinct from and external to the descendants of the Israelites; it is no longer the distant other that is de-humanised and marked for extermination. Blotting out Amalek becomes a mission 'to purify the body politic of one's own group'; it is Einhorn's own

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<sup>76</sup> Naomi Cohen, *What the Rabbis Said: The Public Discourse of Nineteenth-Century American Rabbis* (New York University Press, 2008) 63-65.

<sup>77</sup> Cohen 65.

friends and neighbours who are marked as less than human and expendable.<sup>78</sup> This is, however, a rare example of the use of Amalek as a rhetorical device. Far more common, in the texts which I have examined, is an approach such as Shapira's, which identifies Amalek with an already existing enemy—a type of conflict already justified as a defensive war.

**AGGRESSIVE AND DEFENSIVE WAR:**  
*THE UNION OF JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH THEORIES OF WAR*

As previously mentioned, self-defence is the cause of war most readily recognised as valid by current international law, as is evident in a reading of the United Nations *Charter*, Ch. VII.<sup>79</sup> Notably, this chapter is titled 'Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Aggression'. At no point in the chapter is the word 'war' actually used; the strongest phrase employed is 'armed attack' (Article 51), followed closely by 'urgent military measures' (Article 45), and reference to 'force' or 'armed force' (Articles 42, 43, and 46).<sup>80</sup> Rather, the Security Council and its Members 'take such action [...] as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security' (Article 42). The language of 'maintain[ing] or restore[ing] international peace and security' dominates Ch. VII, appearing in Articles 39, 42, 43, 47, 48, and 51; it forms a frame around the chapter, appearing as the last phrase in both the first and last articles in the chapter, as well as a full half-dozen times in between.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Niditch 77.

<sup>79</sup> See above, note 31.

<sup>80</sup> '[...] take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary [...]' (Article 42); 'When the Security Council has decided to use force [...]' (Article 43); 'Plans for the application of armed force [...]' (Article 46).

<sup>81</sup> 'The Security Council shall [...] decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to *maintain or restore international peace and security*'. (Article 39); 'Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary *to maintain or restore international peace and security*'. (Article 42); 'All Members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to *the maintenance of international peace and security*, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of *maintaining international peace and security*'. (Article 43); 'There shall be established a Military Staff Committee to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements for *the maintenance of international peace and security* [...]' (Article 47); 'The action required to carry out the decisions of the Security Council for *the maintenance of international peace and security* shall be taken by all the Members of the United Nations or by some of them, as the Security Council may determine'. (Article 48); 'Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective in self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has *taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security*. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall [...] not in any way effect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order *to maintain or restore international peace and security*'. (Article 51). Emphases added.

An analysis of this text in Scarry's terms may appear to belabour the point: the language of the *Charter* obscures to the greatest extent possible the precise nature of the 'actions' which may be 'necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security' (and let us not overlook the shades of St. Augustine in that formulation: the ambiguous actions are *necessary*, and the Security Council derives no happiness from them). Article 41 enumerates acceptable preludes to the use of force, including

complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.<sup>82</sup>

Should these actions fail to produce the desired outcomes, then 'demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations' are permissible.<sup>83</sup> Note the sharp decrease in specificity, from the exhaustive listing of 'rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication',<sup>84</sup> to the completely unspecified 'other operations'.

There are no bodies at stake here; there are not even states (save for the member states of the United Nations, which appear to act in concert at all times.). There is only, in the words of Article 39, a 'threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression'. In the language of the *Charter*, this act of aggression lacks an actor; the peace is not threatened or breached *by* any person, state, or thing. Threat and breach appear as though from nowhere—but from a very specific nowhere. Aggression, threat, and breach are always presumed to be outside of the Security Council. The 'attack' of Article 51 is an attack '*against a Member of the United Nations*' (emphasis added); at no point in this section of the *Charter* is there any admission of the possibility of an attack *by* a Member of the United Nations—a curious, or perhaps canny, omission for the document that governed international politics in the Cold War era. The *Charter* admits no *jus ad bellum*, no competing interests between members of the United Nations. There are only the Members, the peace, and the aggression which threatens it.

The contemporary political philosopher Michael Walzer suggests that this is a flattening of language endemic to the discourse of international relations:

Aggression is remarkable because it is the only crime that states can commit against other states: everything else is, as it were, a misdemeanour. There is a strange poverty in the language of international law. The equivalents of domestic assault, armed robbery, extortion, assault with intent to kill, murder in all its degrees, have but one name. Every violation

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<sup>82</sup> United Nations, *Charter*, Ch. VII, Article 41.

<sup>83</sup> United Nations, *Charter*, Ch. VII, Article 42.

<sup>84</sup> The *Charter* predates internet communication; the list provided is fairly exhaustive for its time.

of the territorial integrity of political sovereignty of an independent state is called aggression.<sup>85</sup>

Walzer goes on to argue for a complex relationship between the ‘duties and rights of states’ and ‘the duties and rights of the individuals that compose them’.<sup>86</sup> He suggests that it is this complexity which leads to the flattening (and, in the case of the UN *Charter*, the dislocation) of language. States do not derive their rights directly from the individuals who make up the state, but rather acquire them in a fashion which Walzer himself characterises as ‘harder to describe’.<sup>87</sup> What he does describe is a social contract which is the result of a complex negotiation, which we should now find familiar from our previous discussion of culture and cultural memory:

Over a long period of time, shared experiences and cooperative activity of many different kinds shape a common life. “Contract” is a metaphor for a process of association and mutuality, the ongoing character of which the state claims to protect against external encroachment. The protection extends not only to the lives and liberties of individuals but also to their shared life and liberty, the independent community they have made, for which individuals are sometimes sacrificed.<sup>88</sup>

Reading Maimonides through Walzer, we are able to understand that what he imagines as defensive war is not just a war in defence of the borders of the land of Israel, or even in defence of the geographically diffuse bodies of the individual people of Israel, but in defence of the culture of Israel, of its concrete artefacts and of its ‘taken-for-granted, tacit background of beliefs, concepts, values, attitudes, and so forth’—though only insofar as these artefacts and beliefs, concepts, values, attitudes, etc. are integral to the communality of the state.<sup>89</sup> This suggests that the difficulty of determining which side of a conflict is in the right has not been ameliorated, and may in fact have been intensified, by the shift of focus from justice to aggression. Who determines what is and is not integral to a community? How is this determination made?

## JUST WAR AND HOLY WAR

As we have seen, much has been written about the origins of the conflict between Israel and Amalek, and a number of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, have been

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<sup>85</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* 51-52.

<sup>86</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* 53.

<sup>87</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* 54.

<sup>88</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* 54.

<sup>89</sup> Tanner 30-1. It should be noted that Walzer is himself Jewish, although his sphere of influence extends more into the political sphere than the religious.

anxious to uncover the reason behind Parshat Zakhor's commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek. These commentaries tend to operate within the assumptions of the just war tradition as explored above: Amalek violated some principle of natural law, or threatened the territorial integrity of the Israelites, or presented a way of life that undermined an integral element of Israel's communal life (this last being the favoured position in Einhorn's and Shapira's sermons).<sup>90</sup> This approach seeks to mitigate the discomfort readers may feel at the perceived harshness of the command against Amalek—but in so doing, it largely confuses isegesis for exegesis; it reads back into the text concepts that have developed over the last two thousand or so years of scriptural interpretation, even if those concepts frequently have been developed in conversation with the text itself.<sup>91</sup> What is missing from this approach is the recognition we find in Maimonides: that war against Amalek is not a subset of defensive war at all, but an entirely different form of holy war. Natural law, territorial integrity, or communal life are explanations of the real or metaphorical war that has typically accompanied efforts to blot out the memory of a real or metaphorical Amalek, but they are not the reasons for the blotting out itself. The reason that Maimonides concludes that war against Amalek is, if not always just (by whatever metric of justice one happens to apply), then always permissible, is that the Torah commands war against Amalek. All other concerns are secondary.

This is not as sharp a contrast with the just war tradition as it may at first appear. James Turner Johnson has argued, based on a reading of many of the same texts which I have discussed above, that 'within Western culture holy war has developed as a subcategory within the just war tradition; they are [...] "analogous" rather than antithetical'.<sup>92</sup> The just war tradition evolved, in part, from a reading of texts concerned with holy war, and Johnson is at pains to point out that many of its seminal moments—such as the work of Augustine and Vitoria—occurred in response to questions of war for the sake of religion.<sup>93</sup> We might question whether 'war for the sake of religion' is truly the equivalent of holy war, in the technical sense put forth by Maimonides. That Johnson appears happy to collapse the one into the other is merely a symptom of his lamentable tendency to collapse Christianity and Judaism into a single continuous philosophical system ('the West'), the better to facilitate the comparison between that system and Islam, which is the focus of his volume. However, he presents a persuasive argument that, just as Christianity is often cast

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<sup>90</sup> For a full recounting of these various reasonings, see above, Ch. 1, as well as Sagi 325-330.

<sup>91</sup> Two thousand years here being the approximate time since the sages of the Mishnah began their debates.

<sup>92</sup> Johnson, *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*, (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) 43.

<sup>93</sup> Johnson 52-60.

as inheriting the covenant between God and Israel, Christian thinkers have also considered themselves to be the inheritors of the commandment to war in defence of that covenant.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, if we accept the hypothesis put forth at the end of the last section, that war in defence of an aspect of culture which is integral to a society's communal life is included under Maimonides's definition of obligatory or religious wars, then we must also admit at least the possibility that the broader term, 'war for the sake of religion', may be used interchangeably with the more narrowly defined 'holy war'. The distinguishing factor between the two is the issue of defence: a war in defence of religious principles, provided those principles are integral to a society's communal life, may rightly be called a holy war; a war intended to spread religion—an aggressive war—may not.

I have tried to demonstrate in my analysis thus far that all attempts to justify or limit war involve language that obscures the reality of individual bodies, of injured flesh, that is at stake in war, and defers responsibility away from the individuals actively engaged in creating injury and towards a higher authority; in my next chapter I will attempt to demonstrate that the vocabulary of war memorials is designed to accomplish something quite similar. Johnson argues that:

when the state itself develops a state ideology, something very much like holy war reasoning reasserts itself in a secular guise. Examples include the ideologies of nationalism, nazism, communism, ethnicity, and even democracy. The West, then, has not completely rejected war for religion, for something very like it lives on in the form of wars for various justifying ideologies.<sup>95</sup>

What Johnson omits is the extent to which the language of holy war, when employed in the service of a secular ideology, contributes to a flattening of language, an uncritical acceptance of one group's inherent correctness, and a dehumanization of the enemy. This comes about, in part, because the language of holy war functions by deferring the responsibility for moral judgement away from humanity and towards the divine; no questions of authority or proportionality arise in discourse about holy war. We shall see this to be the case in the religious discourse about the First World War which will be discussed in Part Two.

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<sup>94</sup> Johnson 58-9; see also Niditch 3-4.

<sup>95</sup> Johnson 60.

Christ  
mourning  
Eamon  
Klara's  
view  
back  
Polynesians  
pilot's  
one  
World  
much  
time  
sacrifice  
memorial  
may  
Jem  
novel  
Montgomery  
end  
Rilla  
Anne  
War  
Part Two  
body  
death  
dead  
physical  
monument  
Matthew  
first  
years  
public  
rather  
British  
character  
although  
men  
way  
second  
fight  
come  
around  
well  
Canadian  
life  
however  
Antigone  
book  
Klara  
Ruby  
Walter's  
world  
also  
last  
name  
work  
Vimy  
memory  
figure  
identity  
just  
graves  
away  
letter  
brother  
Matthew's  
Gables  
Canadian  
family  
design  
Walter  
brother  
letter  
brother  
Matthew's  
Gables

# Mourning the Absent



He would search out graves in fields and even in private gardens. Some were marked with wooden crosses roughly made by the dead men's comrades out of the inevitable army 'soap boxes', but because of the haste in which they had been erected many bore inscriptions that were soon washed away. These he would replace with 'well-made crosses with a painted inscription and a tarred base'.

Philip Longworth, *The Undending Vigil: A History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission 1917-1984* (Leo Cooper, 1985) 3.

He fell in love over and over again with the clay and then the plaster renditions of the young women he created, though never with the models themselves, who seemed too actual, too specifically human to be fully interesting. For the young men, once they had evolved into the perfection of plaster, he experienced huge compassion, knowing that he had caught them just as they were letting their individual personalities go, beginning to understand that they were part of a collective, moved by the lunatic actions of war.

Jane Urquhart, *The Stone Carvers* (Bloomsbury, 2002) 350.

**I**n October 1914, an officer of the British Red Cross by the name of Fabian Ware, accompanying a superior on an inspection tour, visited Béthune Cemetery in Northern France. There, he saw ‘a number of English graves all with plain but carefully made wooden crosses on them’, but no sign that anybody had recorded their presence or made arrangements for their maintenance.<sup>1</sup> In conversation with his superior, Dr. Stewart, Ware committed his unit to locating and registering ‘all the British graves the Unit could find’.<sup>2</sup> Over the next three years, the scope of his project grew. On 2 March 1915, Ware informed his superiors at the Red Cross that the War Office had recognised them as the ‘Graves Registration Commission’, solely responsible ‘to deal with the question of the locality, marking, and registration of the graves of the British officers and men in France’; by May of that year Ware’s unit gave up normal Red Cross ambulance work, and by September the Commission was absorbed into the British military command structure and separated from the Red Cross entirely.<sup>3</sup> The Graves Registration Commission’s mandate eventually expanded beyond France, to include all areas in which British troops had been active, and in May 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission was officially established by Royal Charter.<sup>4</sup>

In the wake of war’s attempted obliteration of humanity, the blotting out of Amalek, comes a pressing desire—one might even say a necessity—to memorialise both individuals and the events which led to their deaths, to testify to the value and continuation of human life. It is this desire which Ware began to act upon, and the speed with which his enterprise grew is a testament to the strength with which the need was felt by others, as well. Much of what residents of Commonwealth nations now associate with war and remembrance is a direct result of the work of the Commission. The uniform character of the battlefield graveyards, the rows of identical gravestones, the Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance, the monuments to those with no known graves—all of these elements were consciously established by the Commission in the years during and immediately following the Great War.

One of the great disruptions the war brought to the ordinary system of mourning and remembrance was the absence of a body, a fixed point for grief to focus on. Not only were the numbers of the missing—both names lacking bodies and bodies lacking names—exceptionally high, but even when bodies were successfully found, identified, and buried, they were found, identified, and buried near the battlefield. This meant that, especially in

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<sup>1</sup> Longworth 3.

<sup>2</sup> Longworth 3.

<sup>3</sup> Longworth 6, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Longworth 27.

the British Empire (and later on the Commonwealth) where a policy against the repatriation of bodies was developed early in the war, the body of the soldier was not available to the soldier's family as an object of consolation. Mourning thus became less a process of coming to terms with death, and more an exercise in coping with permanent and unalterable absence. This is attested to not only in novels, from L. M. Montgomery to Jane Urquhart, but also by the requests Fabian Ware's unit received for photographs of gravesites—according to an historical pamphlet published by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 12,000 of these requests had been fulfilled by 1917—as well by alterations in the liturgy of the Church of England and the young Presbyterian Church in Canada.

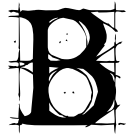
While the carnage of the First World War necessitated significant adjustments to the practice of memorialisation, these adjustments took place within the socially dominant Christian theological framework. Although the war certainly contributed to social upheaval which left its mark on German theology, in Canada (and the rest of the British Commonwealth) the socially dominant Protestant Christian theology and national myth played a mutually reinforcing role.<sup>5</sup> This theologically-driven commemoration set the stage for the further transformation of memorialisation which would come during and after the Second World War; that war heralded a far greater transformation of theological imagination, the effects of which are still being felt. Because of this, I have chosen to locate the First World War as the starting point for the historical portion of this study. It is, however, a mistake to understand First World War commemorative activities as themselves unprecedented; the roots of many practices today associated with the First World War can be traced back as far as the Athenian Empire. The parallels between Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE and Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century CE are striking: both empires engaged in major military activity beyond their borders, both were faced with the problem of how to adapt the rituals of public mourning to accommodate the large numbers of soldiers who died in foreign combat, and both, in so doing, entered into a large-scale negotiation between civic and familial modes of identity. The literary record of the Athenian struggle over commemoration thus provides an instructive framework for considering the approach taken to the death, burial, and commemoration of British soldiers in the First World War.

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Douglas J. Cremer, 'Protestant Theology in Early Weimar Germany: Barth, Tillich, and Bultmann', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56, no. 2 (1995): 289-307.

ANTIGONE

AND ATHENIAN WAR-DEAD:  
BODY AND IDENTITY IN THE GREEK  
TRADITION



iblical texts are not the only ancient texts with a significant interpretative afterlife. Western culture has also had a lengthy relationship of re-reading with the literature of ancient Greece and Rome—this is the origin of the ‘Western philosophical tradition’ which I contrasted with the Jewish tradition of Biblical interpretation in Chapter One. In this chapter, I will turn to a brief examination of Sophocles’ *Antigone* and its history of interpretation as a window into the way that discourse over mourning and ownership of the dead has developed. This discussion will provide a framework for the readings of Canadian material that I will undertake in the remaining chapters of this part of the thesis, and especially my reading of Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers*.

George Steiner locates Jacques Barthélémy’s 1788 work, *Le Voyage de jeune Anacharsis*, at the beginning point of *Antigone*’s entrance into modern Western cultural consciousness after a lengthy period of textual obscurity. ‘In chapter XI’, he writes, ‘the hero is taken to see his first Attic tragedy. It is Sophocles’ *Antigone* and the young Anacharsis is overwhelmed: “Quel merveilleux assortiment d’illusions & de réalités! Je volois au secours des deux amants...”<sup>1</sup> It is a rather peculiar sort of reading that would characterise Sophocles’ tragedy as first and foremost about the love between Antigone and Haemon; however, Barthélémy was simply the beginning of a long tradition of readings which have inserted emotional motivations into the play at the cost of obscuring its more substantial discourse on the opposition between state and familial power.

Simon Goldhill argues that Greek tragedy as a whole is intimately bound up in the political concerns of the time and place in which it was first written and performed, as a contribution to the ‘continuing public debate on internal political developments.’<sup>2</sup> A number of readings of Sophocles’ *Antigone* link it to a debate over public burial in Athens during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, as the city was in transition from an oligarchy to a democracy. I will briefly review these historically contextualised contemporary readings before returning to my own reading of the character of Antigone, in both the Sophoclean tragedy and a 20<sup>th</sup> century re-interpretation of the Antigone myth penned by Jean Anouilh. It should be noted at the outset—and repeated frequently—that I am not at all interested in a reading of *Antigone* which casts her as a tragic heroine defending religious values against the encroachment of the state. Rather, I am interested in the competing claims of authority

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<sup>1</sup> Steiner, *Antigones: The Antigone Myth in Western Literature, Art and Thought* (Oxford University Press, 1984) 7.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Goldhill, *The Orestia* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 2. See also Goldhill, ‘Civic Ideology and the Problem of Difference: The Politics of Aeschylean Tragedy, once again’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 120 (2000). While Goldhill’s primary textual engagement is with Aeschylus, rather than Sophocles, large portions of his argument are about ancient Athenian tragedy in general.

exercised over the body of Polynices, and the way they are presented and negotiated, without attributing value to one position over or against the other. As my later analysis of the competing claims of Antigone and Creon shows, Sophocles presents both positions as significantly flawed, in startlingly similar fashions.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE saw Athens transforming from a city-state (*polis*) into an empire.<sup>3</sup> Following a victory over the Persian army in the battle of Salamis (478 BCE), a number of Greek city-states banded together to form the Delian League; by 454 BCE, the League's treasury and governance were both firmly located in Athens.<sup>4</sup> Over the next several decades, Athens consolidated its position as the centre of the Empire.<sup>5</sup> This transition wrought many changes in Athenian daily life; I am interested here particularly in the relocation of mourning and burial practices for dead soldiers from the private to the public sphere.

Prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, it is unclear whether most Athenian war-dead were cremated, and their ashes brought back to Athens for private burial, or whether internment on the field of battle was more common. Thucydides mentions the soldiers who were killed at the Battle of Marathon as receiving the exceptional honour of battlefield burial.<sup>6</sup> However, this passage is commonly known as 'Thucydides' Blunder', due to a wealth of evidence indicating that battlefield burial was far more common than that passage indicates.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of where soldiers were buried—in their native earth or the ground on which they fell—it is clear that both the internment of repatriated bodies and commemoration of un-repatriated soldiers were carried out by private families on public ground: the Acropolis was littered with military memorials erected by members of the

<sup>3</sup> I am greatly indebted in this section to Rebecca Futo Kennedy, for the many informative conversations we have had about the development of the Athenian empire. Most of what I now understand about the history of the period was learned in the process of editing her book, *Athena's Justice: Athena, Athens, and the Concept of Justice in Greek Tragedy* (Peter Lang, 2009). For the significance of Athenian imperialism in *Antigone*, see Cynthia B. Patterson, 'The Place and Practice of Burial in Sophocles' Athens' *Helios* 33S (2006) 38.

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy 5.

<sup>5</sup> Kennedy argues that this process of consolidation took place largely through the transference of legal authority from the other cities in the League to the Athenian courts (Kennedy 22; 31-2), and also, importantly, through the spread of the cult of Athena from Athens to the rest of Greece (Kennedy 7).

<sup>6</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, in *Thucydides* vol. I, *Loeb Classical Library*, Charles Forster Smith, ed. and trans. (William Heinemann, 1928) 319 (Book 2, ch. 34, section 5). See also Christoph W. Clairmont, *Patrios Nomos: Public Burial in Athens during the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B. C.: The archaeological, epigraphic-literary and historical evidence*, (B. A. R., 1983) 16; Wm. Blake Tyrrell and Larry J. Bennett, *Recapturing Sophocles' Antigone*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998) 7.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Mark Toher, 'On "Thucydides' Blunder": 2.34.5', *Hermes* 127, no. 4 (1999): 497-501; see also W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, Part IV (University of California Press, 1985) 94-95.

aristocracy.<sup>8</sup> There is a wide gap between the public burial of war dead described by Thucydides (and his description of the ceremony is still regarded as authoritative, regardless of the puzzle of the Marathon burial) and any picture that has been drawn of Athenian war-burial and commemoration prior to 508 BCE, and the transition from one practice to another was no more seamless than the advent of democracy, with which it coincided. The tensions that arose in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens over burial, commemoration, and above all ownership of the bodies of the dead played out on the tragic stage, particularly in Sophocles' *Antigone*.<sup>9</sup> These tensions echo into the present day, and a particularly strong parallel exists between the Athenian Empire in the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century (BCE) and the British Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (CE).<sup>10</sup>

Christoph Clairmont dates the genesis of public burial of war dead to the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>11</sup> Prior to that, he suggests the textual evidence indicates that 'individual families cared for the burial of the sons who died in warfare', although he admits that public honours for particularly exceptional individuals were not unheard of.<sup>12</sup> However, it would be incorrect to assume that the difficulty of repatriation or the honour associated with a public funeral made the removal of mourning and burial rites from the familial domain a simple matter. William Blake Tyrrell and Larry J. Bennett note that this removal signalled a sharp divide in Athenian society:

The public funeral exacerbated the antagonism of the demos and the family over funeral celebrations by separating the dead from their families. Women had brought the dead into the world in the company of women, and they or other women of the family should have prepared the bodies for burial and mourned them. Bones and ashes brought home by family members could be tended in the house, but the public funeral replaced the body of the deceased and moved the place of grieving from the house with its familiar things and smells to the open sunny spaces of the men's agora. Although the public ritual allotted two days for the family to mourn the loss, twice that allowed for private funerals, such concessions paled before

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<sup>8</sup> Greg Anderson, *The Athenian Experiment: Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 BCE* (University of Michigan Press, 2003) 107; Clairmont 16-21.

<sup>9</sup> See Tyrrell and Bennett 7-14. See also the essays collected in *Helios* 33S (2006).

<sup>10</sup> Judith Butler traces the heritage of family/state tension through philosophical criticism of *Antigone* in Lacan, Irigary, and Hegel; her analysis of these readings need not be repeated here. It should be noted, however, that Butler's analysis focuses on Antigone herself as an agent against the state, and ignores the significance of the dead body as an object to be claimed by one group or another, lacking in voice, agency, or intrinsic identity of its own. See Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death*, (Columbia University Press, 2000) 1-25. See also Mark Griffith, ed., *Sophocles Antigone* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) 48-50. George Steiner, of course, has produced a considerably longer recounting of the place of *Antigone* in the Western philosophical and literary traditions, though it will not be reproduced here.

<sup>11</sup> Clairmont 2.

<sup>12</sup> Clairmont 2.

the splendour of the third day, when the civic values underlying the ceremony came to the fore.<sup>13</sup>

It is in this context that they suggest the confrontation between Antigone and Creon, staged by Sophocles circa 442-438 BCE, should be read, with Antigone representing the female, familial sphere usurped by the intrusion of Creon's male public law.<sup>14</sup> This thesis has been questioned by Cynthia Patterson, who notes that '[p]ublic burial "in their native earth" was a notable honor and distinction; there is no evidence that men and women (as groups) disagreed on that point', and that only the intrusion of the state permitted burial of war-dead in Athens (as opposed to on the battlefield where they fell) at all.<sup>15</sup> I would suggest an interpretative middle ground between Tyrrell/Bennett and Patterson: while there may be no evidence to suggest that women, *as a group*, were unimpressed by the honour a public burial conveyed to their family members, neither is it unreasonable to suppose that women, *as individuals*, may not have been entirely happy to cede their authority over a previously private and familial ritual to the *polis*, no matter how much honour may have been involved. The error made by both Patterson and those she criticises is to treat a group of people as though it possesses but one mind—the same difficulty which I pointed out as plaguing most theories of collective memory in Chapter One.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Tyrrell and Bennett 9. See also Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's laments and Greek literature* (Routledge, 1992) 121-123.

<sup>14</sup> The earliest date given for the first performance of Sophocles' *Antigone* is 442-441 BCE; see Sarah Brown Ferrario, 'Replaying *Antigone*: Changing patterns of Public and Private Commemoration at Athens c. 440-350', *Helios* 33S (2006) 79; Griffith 1-2; Patterson 34. Tyrrell and Bennett place the first performance at 438 BCE (Tyrrell and Bennett 3-4). Tyrrell and Bennett make a convincing case for their dating, especially when they read the punishment inflicted on the corpse of Polynices as an echo of the punishment inflicted on the commanders of the Samian ships in the aftermath of the Samian war (440-439 BCE)—see Tyrrell and Bennett 4-5. As the precise date is largely irrelevant to my discussion here, I have opted to maintain the range of possible dates.

For the gender divide in *Antigone*, see Griffith 51-4; Steiner 9-11, 236-242. For a discussion of the division between and overlap of public and private spheres of influence in the play, see Katherine Derderian, *Leaving Words to Remember: Greek Mourning and the Advent of Literacy* (Brill, 2001) 139-140.

Philip Holt, 'Polis and Tragedy in the "Antigone"', *Mnemosyne* 52, no. 6 (1999), presents an historical reading of *Antigone* which largely ignores the tensions over burial practices in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens, but instead takes for granted—and assumes an Athenian audience would also take for granted—the innate right of the *polis* to grant or deny burial according to political expediency; he argues that '[t]he audience did not come to a tragedy to vent its orthodoxies upon the characters; it came [...] partly for the more interesting and exciting experience of watching the characters defy the orthodoxies', and suggests that the audience's recognition of Creon's inherent correctness forms the perfect backdrop for high melodrama, as Antigone's stubborn challenge causes the family to crumble (Holt 670). While Holt is correct that Greek theatre was no more slavish imitator of life than is modern drama, he sorely underestimates the potential for political division over burial practices (indicated by the proliferation of tragedies focused on burial—not just *Antigone*, but *Ajax*, *Suppliants*, *Heracleidae*, etc.), as well as the extent to which, as Kennedy has argued, theatre served as a platform for political debate and commentary.

<sup>15</sup> Patterson 26-7; 36.

<sup>16</sup> Joan V. O'Brien points out that the 'dialectical tension between individual and community' was peculiar to Athens at this 'brief moment in Athenian history', in which the value placed on the individual was higher than at other times or in other Greek cities. O'Brien, *Guide to Sophocles' Antigone: A Student Edition with Commentary, Grammatical Notes, & Vocabulary* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1978) 34. See also Ferrario 104-5.



At the heart of the ambivalence surrounding the public funeral lies a question of memorialisation and identity. A living body is complex, possessed of a personality and subjectivity, able to self-identify as a member of many different groups; a dead body loses the ability to self-narrate, and instead becomes an object to be claimed by one group or another.<sup>17</sup> The corpse of an Athenian soldier could not be buried both in the family tomb and in the common grave of the public ceremony; in death, one facet of identity would be emphasised, to the detriment of any others.<sup>18</sup> The honour of a public burial could obliterate, or threaten to obliterate, the private, familial identity of the soldier.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, since the public burial was a mass burial, with the war-dead of each tribe placed together in a common chest, and one funeral oration for all the war-dead of Athens, the individuality of the soldier was subordinated to their role as a member of the Athenian military.<sup>20</sup>

### COMPETING CLAIMS

The conflict over the body of Polynices in Sophocles' *Antigone*, then, is a conflict between his civic identity and his familial role: between the meaning of his body to the state—as a traitor, an example, a locus of authority—and the meaning of his body in a more intimate

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It is also worth noting that, at approximately this same time, Pericles felt the need to include a warning regarding the proper conduct of female mourners in his funeral oration for the dead from the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides 317-319; Book II, ch. 34). The presence of such an exhortation would appear to indicate some nonconformity on the part of the Athenian women.

<sup>17</sup> This transformation of body into object is similar to, but not the same as, the linguistic transformation described by Elaine Scarry and discussed in Chapter Two. The fundamental difference is that this transformation occurs after, and as a consequence of, death, whereas Scarry's transformation occurs prior to death, and, in her scheme, is what makes death (which is to say, the killing of one human being by another) possible.

<sup>18</sup> Wendy E. Closterman, 'Family Members and Citizens: Athenian Identity and the Peribolos Tomb Setting' *Helios* 33S (2006) discusses at length the ways in which burial practices cemented the identity of not only the person being buried but also their surviving family members. Closterman notes especially a pair of monuments to a soldier named Dexilos (d. 394 BCE) which appears to accomplish precisely what I have just said cannot be accomplished: Dexilos was buried in a public gravesite with other soldiers, and his family erected a monument in their family burial ground, thus memorializing him in both of the contexts at issue here. However, the fact remains that Dexilos's body was only buried in one grave; the other monument marked the absence, rather than the presence, of a body.

It is, of course, possible for a corpse to be broken down into fragments and buried in different locations—this was, for example, common practice with saints' relics. However, I would argue that at that point the body ceases to be *a body*; moreover, there is, to the best of my knowledge, no evidence that this practice was ever utilised in ancient Athens, or in the British Commonwealth. Furthermore, the fragmentation of saints' bodies into relics is usually not the result of any ambiguity in their identities, but rather a way of making their already fixed identity available to a wider number of people.

<sup>19</sup> Although the Athenian war-dead were placed in ten separate caskets, one for each tribe, and memorial stele in the Agora listed the dead by tribe, restoring some measure of ownership to the larger, extended family. See Loraux 19.

<sup>20</sup> Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harvard University Press, 1986) 55-56; Tyrrell and Bennett 7; Ferrario 85. See also Simon Goldhill, 'Civic Ideology and the Problem of Difference' for a discussion of the role that public performances of tragedy (especially the ceremonies conducted prior to the play) played in subordinating the individual to the state.

context—as a brother, a link to the memory of a previously cohesive, now shattered family unit.<sup>21</sup> This conflict of meanings is evident even in two short passages from the text. The first comes at the end of Creon’s first speech, delivered with only the chorus onstage; Antigone is not present to hear it, although she related the substance of the decree to Ismene in the previous scene:<sup>22</sup>

Creon: Eteocles, who died fighting for this city, having excelled in battle, we shall hide in the tomb and we shall render to him all the rites that come to the noblest of the dead below. But his brother, I mean Polynices, who came back from exile meaning to burn to the ground and to enslave its people, as for him it is proclaimed to this city that none shall bury or lament, but they shall leave his body unburied for birds and dogs to devour and savage. That is my way of thinking, and never by my will shall bad men exceed good men in honour. No, whoever is loyal to the city in death and life alike shall from me have honour.<sup>23</sup>

Notable in this speech is Creon’s strict adherence to a general civic principle (‘never by my will shall bad men exceed good men in honour’) without regard to the particular familial circumstances in which it is applied; Creon can remember that Polynices is Eteocles’ brother, but either cannot or will not recognise that that relationship means that Polynices is also a member of Creon’s own family—and that the proper burial of his body is thus Creon’s own responsibility.<sup>24</sup> Creon’s notion of family is entirely bounded by his notion of civic duty, and those who fall outside the latter (such as Polynices, and, later, Antigone) can have no claim on him in regards to the former. This rigidity of thought is also apparent in Antigone’s last speech, delivered in front of the chorus and Creon, though not actually addressed to any living person.<sup>25</sup> A portion of this speech (lines 904-920; the section of the quote below beginning ‘Yet in the eyes of the wise’) is regarded by some relatively recent

<sup>21</sup> Again, note that the crucial point here is that Polynices himself is unable to exercise any agency in determining what meaning will be ascribed to his body by outside forces. See Butler 2-5. Butler points out that these two apparently contradictory meanings ascribed to Polynices’ body are actually mutually dependent; the state rests on structures of kinship, and kinship requires ‘the support and mediation of the state’ (5). Loraux expounds at great length on the ways in which and degree to which the bodies of Athenian soldiers were appropriated as part of a meaning-making exercise on the part of the Athenian *polis*.

<sup>22</sup> Sophocles 7 (lines 21-39).

<sup>23</sup> Sophocles, *Antigone*, in *Sophocles* vol. II, *Loeb Classical Library*, Hugh Lloyd-Jones, ed. and trans. (Harvard University Press, 1994) 20-23 (lines 194-210).

<sup>24</sup> See O’Brien 35; Rush Rehm, *Marriage to Death: The Conflation of Wedding and Funeral Rituals in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton University Press, 1994) 60; Tyrrell and Bennett 46-9.

<sup>25</sup> There is some debate as to whether Creon is present during this speech, or whether he exits and returns; see Griffith 281; O’Brien 101; Steiner 279. Regardless of whether he is onstage or not, the speech refers to him without being addressed directly to him.

scholars as an interpolation.<sup>26</sup> However, those lines are firmly part of the textual tradition of the play, and, more importantly, illustrate the familial structure which undergirds Antigone's construction of Polynices' identity.

Antigone: But when I come there, I am confident that I shall come dear to my father, dear to you, my mother, and dear to you, my own brother; since when you died it was I that with my own hands washed you and adorned you and poured libations on your graves; and now, Polynices, for burying your body I get this reward! Yet in the eyes of the wise I did well to honour you; for never, had children of whom I was the mother or had my husband perished and been mouldering there, would I have taken on myself this task, in defiance of the citizens. In virtue of what law do I say this? If my husband had died, I could have had another, and a child by another man, if I had lost the first, but with my mother and my father in Hades below, I could never have another brother. Such was the law for whose sake I did you special honour, but to Creon I seemed to do wrong and to show shocking recklessness, O my own brother.<sup>27</sup>

Antigone values familial relationships based on blood ties (to mother, father, and brothers) over and above those formed by choice (to a hypothetical husband, or any children she may have produced with him), but, like Creon, favours some blood ties over others. Just as Creon forgets his relationship and responsibilities to the dead body of Polynices, Antigone willfully forgets her relationship to the living Ismene (and her more distant relationship to

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<sup>26</sup> This may say a great deal more about modern reading habits than it does about the text itself; there has been a tendency to read emotional motivations into Antigone's actions that are not supported by the text, and this bit of cold rationality runs counter to the image of Antigone as the distraught, devoted sister. Anouilh's re-imagining of Antigone, discussed below, is far more connected to this image than Sophocles' original. See Griffith 277-9; O'Brien 102-3; Steiner 280-1. For an attempt at reading Antigone's motivations as equally emotional and duty-driven, see George F. Held, 'Antigone's Dual Motivation for the Double Burial', *Hermes* 111, no. 2 (1983).

George Steiner may shed some light on the modern tendency towards an overly emotional rendering of Antigone, when he traces the re-entry of the play into Western consciousness back to Abbé Jean-Jacques Barthélémy's 1788 work, *Le Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*: 'In chapter XI, the hero is taken to see his first Attic tragedy. It is Sophocles' *Antigone* and the young Anacharsis is overwhelmed: "Quel merveilleux assortiment d'illusions & de réalités! Je volois au secours des deux amants..." It is a rather peculiar sort of reading that would characterise the play as first and foremost about the love between Antigone and Haemon, but if this is, indeed, the vehicle by which the play came to popular attention, then the centrality of Antigone's love, albeit transferred somewhat more justifiably from Haemon to her brother, in later readings can better be understood. See Steiner 7.

For discussion of the significance of *Antigone* as a whole, and these lines in particular, to the Victorian intelligentsia (especially interesting in light of the influence of Victorian culture upon the attitudes towards death and commemoration in the First World War discussed later), see Gerhard Joseph, 'The Antigone as Cultural Touchstone: Matthew Arnold, Hegel, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Drabble', *PMLA* 96, no. 1 (1981).

<sup>27</sup> Sophocles 86-89 (lines 897-915).

Creon himself).<sup>28</sup> Her family is defined by her contact with their bodies; they are those that she ‘with my own hands washed [...] and adorned’.<sup>29</sup>

The actual face to face confrontation between Antigone and Creon is quite brief, and the dialogue nowhere near as philosophically satisfying as the speeches each makes when the other is absent. Creon and Antigone do not really enter into a conversation about the body of Polynices; they do not have sufficient common ground to converse. Their argument consists of each repeating and elaborating upon their basic assertion, neither able to enter into the other’s worldview sufficiently to engage with and challenge their own assertion.<sup>30</sup> For both Creon and Antigone, one facet of Polynices’ identity must override and obliterate the other: he is either a brother or an enemy; his body must be treated in the fashion appropriate for one or the other. It cannot be both.

What is markedly absent from all this debate over the appropriate role and placement of Polynices’ body is any debate at all over Polynices himself. He exists for both Antigone and Creon almost entirely as a symbol of the principles, civic or familial, for which each of them argue. All of Antigone’s speeches in defence of his right to burial concentrate on the strength of the familial bond. Not once does she mention that his behaviour in life merits any particular treatment of his body in death—that he was, for example, a kind man, fond of dogs and small children. All of Creon’s invective against him is focused on his symbolic role as an enemy of the *polis*, the leader of an attacking army, a set of claims which make little sense in the larger context of the drama. If Polynices was attempting to conquer Thebes in order to gain what he almost certainly saw as his rightful place on the throne (and let us not forget that he was the elder brother), how seriously can we take the idea of him defiling his own temples, selling his own household into slavery?<sup>31</sup> Creon never tells us, never offers any proof, that Polynices is exactly the sort of person who would do such things; rather, he seems to expect his listeners both on stage and in the audience to understand that the position of Polynices’s body outside the walls of the city as complete substantiation of his claims—the body’s location once again serving as proof of one identity, at the cost of other possible identities.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is a case of Antigone exercising the exact same limited approach to kinship as does Creon; Ismene (and Creon) has transgressed the principles by which Antigone measures relationship and so no longer counts—see Sophocles 11-13, 53-55 (lines 70-96, 538-549); Butler 9-10; Steiner 265-6. For Antigone’s similarity to Creon, see Butler 6; Patterson 38-9; Tyrrell and Bennett 75.

<sup>29</sup> Sophocles 86 (lines 900-901).

<sup>30</sup> See Griffith 34-5.

<sup>31</sup> Sophocles 21 (lines 199-202). See Griffith 30-1, 161-2; Tyrrell and Bennett 49; Steiner 215-221.

<sup>32</sup> Of course, Polynices’s willingness to bring foreigners to aid his capture of the city may have made it easier for Creon to paint him as a traitor. For commentary on this issue, see Griffith 161; Holt 663.

It should be noted that the body lying outside the city walls is different from the body lying outside the territory of the city, as that territory extended beyond the walls. Athenian law provided for denial of

## ANOUILH'S *ANTIGONE*

Jean Anouilh's rendering of the tragedy, written and produced in Nazi-occupied France, both fills in and highlights the gaps in Sophocles' text.<sup>33</sup> This is an odd drama; its English debut included in the program a note from the translator, Lewis Galantière: "The reader will have to take my word for it that only the citizen of a German-occupied country [...] would be able to come away from the play feeling that Antigone's case is stronger than Creon's".<sup>34</sup> And yet, read with a strong consciousness that the play *is* meant to be about the French Resistance, that Creon's counsel that Antigone ought to live, and be happy, is the counsel of a totalitarian regime persuading its citizens to mind their own business and go about their daily activities uninterrupted, Anouilh's drama almost eclipses the *pathos* of the original. At the same time, however, we should remember that Sophocles' original Antigone, with her championing of aristocratic family values, was also a rather difficult character for the democratic Athenian audience to engage with; Anouilh's Antigone is, perhaps, true to the spirit of the problematic and unsympathetic original.

Antigone's defense of Polynices on the basis of their kinship is fatally undermined by Creon's attack against Polynices' worthiness *as a person*:

CREON: Poor Antigone! With her night-club flower. Do you know what your brother was?

ANTIGONE: Whatever he was, I know that you will say vile things about him.

CREON: A cheap, idiotic bounder, that is what he was. A cruel, vicious little voluptuary. A little beast with just wit enough to drive a car faster and throw more money away than any of his pals. I was with your father one day when Polynices, having lost a lot of money gambling, asked him to settle the debt; and when your father refused, the boy raised his hand against him and called him a vile name.

ANTIGONE: That's a lie!

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burial within the 'native earth' of Athens; it is Creon's refusal to permit Polynices' body to be moved elsewhere for burial that is shocking to Athenian sentiment. See Griffith 31; Holt 663-665; Patterson 33. Notably, Holt rejects the suggestion that there is anything shocking about Creon's denial of burial, and maintains that he acts perfectly within what an Athenian audience would recognise as the law. His, however, is a minority opinion, and does not produce a particularly coherent reading of the play. However, see L. A. MacKay, 'Antigone, Coriolanus, and Hegel' *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962), which argues that the controversy over the burial of Themistocles (c. 459 BCE) provides a useful context for the debate between Antigone and Creon.

<sup>33</sup> For a point-by-point comparison between Anouilh's and Sophocles' versions of the drama, see Rosamund E. Deutsch, 'Anouilh's Antigone', *The Classical Journal* 42, no. 1 (1946). See also the response to Deutsch's review by Alfred C. Schlesinger, 'Anouilh's Antigone Again', *The Classical Journal* 42, no. 4 (1947).

<sup>34</sup> Cited in Edmund G. Berry, 'Antigone and the French Resistance' *The Classical Journal* 42.1 (1946) 17.

CREON: He struck your father in the face with his fist. It was pitiful.<sup>35</sup>

Here, the argument could be made that the conflict is really one of (symbolic) familial affection against actual merit, as Creon's recollection of Polynices's actual character overwhelms Antigone's blind loyalty to a brother she last saw when she was twelve years old. However, Antigone's attempt at refutation here is not, as it is in Sophocles, an assertion of the familial bond transcending any flaws in character. Rather, she attempts to deny that the flaws are real: "That's a lie!" Presumably, then, in this version of the tale Polynices' merit or lack thereof in life still has some impact on the way his body ought to be treated in death. Otherwise, Anouilh's Antigone would have no need to refute Creon's claims. They would be, as they are to the Antigone of Sophocles, simply irrelevant.<sup>36</sup>

The continuation of Creon's speech, however, re-introduces an element of uncertainty regarding the state of Polynices's body:

Funny, isn't it? Polynices lies rotting in the sun while Eteocles is given a hero's funeral and will be housed in a marble vault. Yet I have absolute proof that everything that Polynices did, Eteocles had plotted to do. They were a pair of blackguards--both engaged in selling out Thebes, and both engaged in selling out each other; and they died like the cheap gangsters they were, over a division of the spoils.

But, as I told you a moment ago, I had to make a martyr of one of them. I sent out to the holocaust for their bodies; they were found clasped in one another's arms--for the first time in their lives, I imagine. Each had

<sup>35</sup> Jean Anouilh, 'Antigone', (1944) in *Antigone and Eurydice: Two plays by Jean Anouilh*, trans. Lewis Galantière, (Methuen & Co., 1951) 53-54.

Original:

CRÉON: Pauvre Antigone, avec ta fleur de cotillon! Sais-tu qui était ton frère ?

ANTIGONE : Je savais que vous me diriez du mal de lui en tout cas !

CRÉON: Un petit fêtard imbécile, un petit carnassier dur et sans âme, une petit brute tout juste bonne à aller plus vite que les autres avec ses voitures, à dépenser plus d'argent dans les bars. Une fois, j'étais là, ton père venait de lui refuser une grosse somme qu'il avait perdue au jeu ; il est devenu tout pâle et il a levé le poing en criant un mot ignoble !

ANTIGONE : Ce n'est pas vrai !

CRÉON: Son poing de brute à toute volée dans le visage de ton père ! C'était pitoyable.

Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (Paris : La Table Ronde, 1947) 92-93.

The Galantière translation has been noted to be problematic, especially with regards to its insertion of religious language where Anouilh's original text had none; see David J. DeLaura, 'Anouilh's Other "Antigone"', *The French Review* 35, no. 1 (1961). It remains, however, the most readily available English translation, and I use it with caution, having checked the passages with which I am working against the original French. I would also note that my own analysis is focused on the body/identity issue, rather than the invocation of a 'higher law', where the presence or absence of religious language in the translation would be more intensely problematic.

<sup>36</sup> The divide between Anouilh's and Sophocles' Antigone has much to do with the divide Lars Albinus has identified as existing between the ancient and modern concepts of ψυχή (psyche): 'The modern meaning of psyche, or soul, is basically conceived in terms of *self* or *identity*. With regards to the concept of ψυχή, the opposite is actually stated in the beginning of the *Illiad*, where [...] the deceased is clearly identified with the 'corpse' (σώμα) and not with the psyche, which flies off to the invisible realm of memory'. In other words, for Sophocles, Polynices *is* his body, whereas to Anouilh, there is a distinction to be drawn between the body and the person. See Lars Albinus, *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology* (Aarhus University Press, 2000) 43-44. See also Donna C. Kurts and John Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (Cornell University Press, 1971) 331.

been spitted on the other's sword, and the Argive cavalry had trampled them down. They were mashed to a pulp, Antigone. I had the prettier of the two carcasses brought in, and gave it a State funeral; and I left the other to rot. I don't know which was which. And I assure you, I don't care.<sup>37</sup>

This now total ambiguity of the unburied body proves fatal to Antigone's position; she succumbs entirely to Creon's argument, and (briefly) resolves to let him cover up her disobedience so that she can live, marry Haemon, and be happy.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, the issue of personal rather than symbolic identity matters more to Anouilh than it did to Sophocles; one would expect the latter's Antigone to respond here that the unburied body belongs to *a* brother, regardless of which *particular* brother it is.

In Anouilh's version, Antigone eventually chooses death, against all of Creon's arguments, as a protest against the banality of life, rather than out of deference to a higher authority or as a show of solidarity with her dead brother(s). The corpse of Polynices (or Eteocles) fades from the attention of both characters and audience—the revelation of the body's ambiguous personal identity is also a revelation of its unimportance, and the rest of the play focuses on the inexplicable and unavoidable mechanisms which compose Anouilh's vision of the tragic.<sup>39</sup> Not so for Sophocles, who insists that Creon must bury Polynices before attempting to un-bury Antigone, thus keeping the body, with all its symbolic weight (but no personality), at the centre of the action right up until the end of the play. The burial and memorialisation practices of the First World War, as we shall see,

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<sup>37</sup> Anouilh, trans. Galantière 55.

Original:

Où, crois-tu que c'est drôle ? Cette trahison pur laquelle le corps de Polynice est en train de pourrir au soleil, j'ai la preuve maintenant qu'Étéocle, qui dort dans son tombeau de marbre, se préparait, lui aussi, à la commettre. C'est un hasard si Polynice a réussi son coup avant lui. Nous avons affaire à deux larrons en foire qui se trompaient l'un l'autre en nous trompant et qui se sont égorgés comme deux petits voyous qu'ils étaient, pour un règlement de comptes... Sulement, il s'est trouvé que j'ai eu besoin de faire un héros de l'un d'eux. Alors, j'ai fait rechercher leurs cadavres au milieu des autres. On les a retrouvés embrassés—pour la première fois de leur vie sans droute. Ils s'étaient embrochés mutuellement, et puis la charge de la calverie argyenne leur avait passé dessus. Ils étaient en bouillie, Antigone, méconnaissables. J'ai fait ramasser un des corps, le moins abîmés des deux, pour mes funérailles nationales, et j'ai donné l'ordre de laisser pourrir l'autre où il était. Je ne sais même pas lequel. Et je t'assure que cela m'est égal. (Anouilh 95-96)

This passage shows also a sharp contrast between Anouilh's and Sophocles' Creon, the latter of which, 'by differentiating between them [the brothers] [...] is blinded to the more compelling reality of their sameness as corpses' (Tyrrell and Bennett 49). Anouilh's Creon sees Eteocles and Polynices as interchangeable in both death and life; he uses this interchangeability to blind *others* to their sameness, by creating a hero of one and a villain of the other. Steiner notes that the description of the corpses here owes much to the condition dead bodies degenerated to in the no-man's land of WWI. See Steiner 141.

<sup>38</sup> This resolve, in turn, shatters under Creon's description of what happiness entails, and the remaining conflict in the play is over the personal and moral compromises Antigone is unwilling to make for the sake of that happiness. For further commentary on this scene as the hinge of the drama, and Creon as the ultimate victor in Anouilh's rendering, see Steiner 193.

<sup>39</sup> For a full discussion of Anouilh's tragic vision, see Donald Heiney, 'Jean Anouilh: The Revival of Tragedy', *College English* 16, no. 6 (1955), and especially his discussion of Antigone, pp. 333-4.

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reflect the tensions that have been uncovered here: between body and personality, between familial and civic group membership. Although there have been attempts to restore the body to prominence, either in burial practice or in discourse about the costs of warfare (as in the work of Elaine Scarry, discussed in Chapter Two), memorialisation since 1914 has focused increasingly on a more nebulous concept of identity—primarily through an emphasis on the names of individuals. The relationship between body and name remains ambivalent—sometimes it is a complementary substitution, flowers propped against a memorial plaque as they might be left on a grave; sometimes the two *loci* of identity appear to be in tension with one another. This will become especially clear in the final chapter of this section, ‘Making Memory Solid’, which addresses First World War memorials from a contemporary perspective, and in which the main character, Klara Becker, plays an Antigone-like role, as she attempts to maintain familial control over the memory of her dead lover and the meaning of his death, while at the same time unravelling the puzzle of mourning without a body.



ANNE OF GREEN GLABLES  
AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC MOURNING



*Figure 1: A typical depiction of an heroic death in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Benjamin West, The Death of General Wolfe (1770). Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada. Used by permission.*

**P**eople in the first war inherited their attitudes towards death from the Victorian period', writes Alan Wilkinson in his study, *The Church of England and the First World War*. 'The Evangelical emphasis upon death as the moment of judgement, and the revival of Catholic rituals for dying and burial made the deathbed of crucial religious and moral importance; the pathos of the deathbed was believed to be morally purifying', not only for the dying person, but for the instruction of the survivors, as well.<sup>1</sup> Burial and mourning had elaborate rituals associated with them, and the gravesite of the deceased was central to these rituals.<sup>2</sup> It is this context which renders coherent the efforts of Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission to create 'gardens of the dead', and may go some ways towards removing the charge of whitewashing levelled against the Commission by Jonathan Vance in his study *Death So Noble*, when he writes that

By turning soldiers' graveyards into gardens of the dead, the commission helped the relatives of the fallen to avoid the reality of death in battle. The ordered and charming cemeteries meant that visitors never had to confront the ugliness of their relative's death.<sup>3</sup>

However, Wilkinson's work (and a similar treatise on death in the Victorian era by Michael Wheeler) is specifically concerned with the Church of England; no similar study of the Canadian churches has been published, and the extent to which the social rituals Wilkinson and Wheeler describe translated to a long-established British colony such as Canada (from which Vance writes), with its own culture, social structure, and (not least) religious *millieu*, is a more open question.<sup>4</sup>

To understand the disruption the First World War brought to life and death in what was then a Dominion of the British Empire, it is thus necessary to understand what constituted a normal *Canadian* death prior to the outbreak of war. Literature from the period immediately preceding the war can provide some insight into this question, provided it is approached with full consciousness that it is literature, not ethnography; we may approach a realist novel with the expectation that what it describes is life-like, but

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (SPCK, 1978) 173.

See also the discussion of 'the Victorian cult of death' in Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 1990) 25-68.

<sup>2</sup> Wheeler 27; 47-68.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997) 65.

<sup>4</sup> It is also worth remembering that Ware himself hailed from an urban, upper-class, English background, which may have had some influence on the approach to commemoration taken by the unit under his command. According to the biography provided by the UK Service Personnel & Veterans Agency, Ware was born in Bristol, and 'educated privately and at the Universities of London and Paris'. See <<http://www.veterans-uk.info/remembrance/ware.html>> (Accessed 3 July 2009).

must firmly maintain our awareness that it is not life itself.<sup>5</sup> This is especially true when the author herself (or himself) deliberately attempts to blur such a distinction, as in the case of Lucy Maud Montgomery.<sup>6</sup>

Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series was published between 1908 (*Anne of Green Gables*) and 1939 (*Anne of Ingleside*), although it is set between the 1880's and 1919.<sup>7</sup> The books begin and end as nostalgia pieces, in which Montgomery recounts stories and elements of an idealised girlhood on Prince Edward Island, or looks back from the shadow of the tensions which would give birth to the Second World War towards a simpler time before the First World War, as she does in *Anne of Windy Poplars* (1936) and *Anne of Ingleside*. But *Rainbow Valley*, published in 1919, is set only ten years earlier, and *Rilla of Ingleside*, set during the First World War, was published in 1921—it is, in fact, the earliest Canadian war novel still available in print, and precedes the general war book publishing boom by several years.<sup>8</sup> I will return to a close reading of *Rilla* later, in order to discuss the way that

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<sup>5</sup> It is also important to maintain an awareness of the class bias involved in analysing literature, as its production and its audience are restricted to those with sufficient leisure to become literate; Wheeler's study, for example, is limited to a fairly upper-class vision of death, which is unchallenged by the literature he has chosen to work from: Tennyson, Newman, Hopkins, and Dickens, only the last of which hails from a working-class background or writes about working-class life.

<sup>6</sup> Montgomery's 1917 autobiography, *The Alpine Path* (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, reprint 1997), explicitly draws links between her own life and her stories, and as will be discussed below, her novels borrow liberally from her journals; Irene Gammell has argued that Montgomery's life writing and self-presentation (not just her autobiography, but her journals and photographs) were 'carefully crafted [...] as a literary and artistic artefact'; see Gammell, 'Life Writing as Masquerade: The Many Faces of L. M. Montgomery' in *The Intimate Life of L. M. Montgomery*, ed. Irene Gammell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 3.

<sup>7</sup> I am accepting the dates for the setting of the novels given by Owen Dudley Edwards and Jennifer H. Litster, 'The End of Canadian Innocence: L. M. Montgomery and the First World War', *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, ed. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly (University of Toronto Press, 1999) 31.

<sup>8</sup> Crawford Kilian, *The Great War and the Canadian Novel, 1915-1926* (Simon Fraser University, 1972) claims that of all the Canadian war novels published during and immediately after the war, *Rilla of Ingleside* is one of only two that remain in print (the other being J. C. Stead's *Grain*, first published in 1926), all others having been swiftly forgotten, largely due to their rather dubious literary quality.

Janet S. K. Watson notes a few reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* dated 1919 and 1920 which indicated some degree of weariness with war stories, but she suggests that memoirs and novels dated that early were the exception, rather than the rule, and the 'war literature' the *Times* complained of being overexposed to was primarily trench poetry; Watson argues that the real boom in war stories began in 1927. See Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain*, (Cambridge University Press, 2004) 185. While Watson's study is technically limited to 'Britain', by which she seems to mean modern-day Great Britain, rather than the British Empire under whose banner Canada fought the war, and thus excludes Canadian literature, she includes authors such as the very American Hemmingway in her survey of publication dates, and so seems in this particular instance to be surveying a more general trend in Anglophone literature. Samuel Hynes notes a handful of trench novels written by Englishmen beginning in 1915, which would appear to have contributed to the development of a standardized set of tropes for war novels from which Montgomery very likely drew, but again, he restricts his field of enquiry to English culture. See Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (Atheneum, 1991) 43-45, 93-95, 129-135, 206-215, 263-265. Hynes also provides some evidence that the weariness exhibited in the *TLS* reviews noted by Watson may not have needed terribly long to develop, as '[b]y November 1914 there were enough bad war poems in print to inspire an anti-war-poem poem'; see Hynes 28-29.

Elizabeth R. Epperly asserts that *Rilla of Ingleside* is 'the only contemporary fictionalized woman's account of the First World War'. See Epperly, *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L. M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance* (University of Toronto Press, 1992) 112.

Montgomery's narratives recorded the shift in memorialization activities that occurred as a result of the First World War. I am first interested in Montgomery's earlier work, the novels written before the outbreak of war: *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), and *Anne of the Island* (1915), and what these might tell us of the 'normal' process of death and grieving that the war disrupted.

Before approaching even these novels, however, I wish to draw attention to a passage from Montgomery's own autobiography, published 1917, in the middle of the war, in which she recounts her first experience of death:

When I was twenty-one months old my mother died, in the old home at Cavendish, after a lingering illness. I distinctly remember seeing her in her coffin—it is my earliest memory. My father was standing by the casket holding me in his arms. [...] I looked down at Mother's dead face. It was a sweet face, albeit worn and wasted by months of suffering. My mother had been beautiful, and Death, so cruel in all else, had spared the delicate outline of feature, the long silken lashes brushing the hollow cheek, and the smooth masses of golden-brown hair.

I did not feel any sorrow, for I knew nothing of what it all meant. I was only vaguely troubled. Why was Mother so still? And why was Father crying? I reached down and laid my baby hand against Mother's cheek. Even yet I can feel the coldness of that touch. Somebody in the room sobbed and said, "Poor child."<sup>9</sup>

Even if we are sceptical about Montgomery's ability to recollect events which occurred when she was less than two years of age with the crystalline accuracy with which she has recorded those events here, we might still note certain outstanding features of this scene: the sight of the dead woman in her coffin, her 'sweet face' 'worn and wasted by months of suffering', the cold touch of her cheek, the sounds of grief, muted by the anonymity of those who produce them (*Somebody* in the room sobbed). These are all sensory experiences, brought about by direct contact with the corpse—with the exception of the sound of sobbing, which is the sign of a community of mourners gathered together. Montgomery's recollection of her mother's funerary rites has very little of Montgomery herself in it—no reflection, very little emotion. Instead, the body of her mother dominates the scene, and Montgomery's experience is mediated through her contact with that body, up until she becomes frightened by 'the coldness of that touch', and turns to grasp her living father, seeking in his body the warmth and comfort one would typically expect a child to find in contact with their mother. But even from the shelter of that paternal embrace, her consciousness is primarily of her mother: 'Comforted, I looked down again at

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<sup>9</sup> Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 14-15.

the sweet placid face as he carried me away'.<sup>10</sup> Whether or not Montgomery actually had the set of memories she claims here, she evidently felt that such a scene was normal enough that she *ought* to have such memories; we may safely read this as reflective of Montgomery's idea of a normal and proper death scene in the 1870's.

### MATTHEW CUTHBERT

The first notable death in the *Anne* books occurs at the end of *Anne of Green Gables*. Matthew Cuthbert, the aged bachelor who, with his sister Marilla, adopted the eponymous heroine, Anne Shirley, collapses when he reads in the local newspaper that the bank in which he had invested the family's life savings has failed.

"Matthew—Matthew—what is the matter? Matthew, are you sick?"

It was Marilla who spoke, alarm in every jerky word. Anne came through the hall, her hands full of white narcissus,—it was long before Anne could love the sight or odor of white narcissus again,—in time to hear her and see Matthew standing in the porch doorway, a folded paper in his hand, and his face strangely drawn and gray. Anne dropped her flowers and sprang across the kitchen to him at the same moment as Marilla. They were both too late; before they could reach him Matthew had fallen across the threshold.

"He's fainted," gasped Marilla.<sup>11</sup>

This passage comes at the very beginning of the chapter titled 'The Reaper Whose Name is Death'; the reader is not terribly surprised when a neighbour, the ever-practical Mrs. Lynde, appears, checks Matthew's pulse, and pronounces 'gravely' that 'I don't think—we can do anything for him'.<sup>12</sup> Anne and Marilla, however, lacking the benefit of chapter titles, take somewhat longer to come to terms with the news:

"Mrs. Lynde, you don't think—you can't think Matthew is—is—" Anne could not say the dreadful word; she turned sick and pallid.

"Child, yes, I'm afraid of it. Look at his face. When you've seen that look as often as I have you'll know what it means."

Anne looked at the still face and there beheld the seal of the Great Presence.<sup>13</sup>

Anne's first reaction to Matthew's death—disbelief—is mitigated by her ability to see his body, or, rather, Mrs. Lynde's guidance leads her to recognise what she has already seen. Anne presumably has ample opportunity to continue this process of looking and recognising, as Matthew lies in his coffin in the parlour for two days, until he is carried out

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 15.

<sup>11</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 352.

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 353.

<sup>13</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 353.

to be buried.<sup>14</sup> Matthew's burial is narrated with an emphasis on the familiarity of his surroundings; he is 'carried [...] over his homestead threshold and away from the fields he had tilled and the orchards he had loved and the trees he had planted'.<sup>15</sup> While 'away' introduces an element of dissimilarity, and should signify the process of separation between the dead Matthew and the land on which he had lived, the weight of the sentence falls on repeated references to the connections between him and the land: '*his* homestead [...] the fields *he* had tilled [...] *he* had loved [...] *he* had planted' (emphases added). His grave is near the homestead; Anne visits it, tends it, and plants 'a slip of the little white Scotch rosebush his mother brought out from Scotland long ago' on it—the rosebush forging a connection between Matthew's native land of Prince Edward Island and his ancestral land of Scotland.<sup>16</sup> Later books in the series make frequent reference to Anne's visits to tend the grave; such visits often mark or herald significant plot developments.<sup>17</sup>

Irene Gammel has argued that Matthew's death was a plot device which permitted Montgomery to accomplish several things: to bring the novel to a satisfactory moral conclusion—Anne is called upon to perform a gesture of self-sacrifice, giving up her college scholarship to stay with Marilla, whose failing eyesight would otherwise necessitate the sale of Green Gables—to insert literary echoes of 'the typical Victorian sacrifice tale' popular at the time of writing, and thus increase the book's marketability; and, not least, to come to terms with 'her own heroic sacrifice, which had gone unrecognized', which is to say her own decision to live with and care for her grandmother Macneill.<sup>18</sup> As alluded to previously, there is an undeniably close connection between Montgomery's novels and her life-writing—both her journals (passages from which frequently appear copied wholesale into her novels) and her autobiography; it is not surprising that a decision which shaped so much of her own life might find itself recorded in a novel, nor is it surprising that it would be cloaked in a pre-fabricated trope of popular fiction.<sup>19</sup> It is, however, interesting for my purposes that this death is presented as, first and foremost, an opportunity for Anne's—and, not incidentally, also Marilla's—moral development.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 355-356.

<sup>15</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 356.

<sup>16</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 357. Commemorative gardening is an ongoing theme in the *Anne* series; see also the repeated references to Hester Gray's garden (often in parallel with references to Matthew's grave): *Anne of Avonlea* (1909, repr. Puffin 1982) 96, 110, 114, 187, 203; *Anne of the Island* (1915, repr. Puffin 1981) 287.

<sup>17</sup> See Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 357; *Anne of Avonlea* 110, 203.

<sup>18</sup> Irene Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables: the story of L. M. Montgomery and her literary classic* (St. Martin's Press, 2008) 186-88.

<sup>19</sup> Nor is it particularly surprising that it would be entirely glossed over in her autobiography, which is perhaps more notable for its omissions than for any of the material it does include.

<sup>20</sup> It is Matthew's death which permits Marilla to finally confess affection towards Anne, breaking through the emotional reticence which has marked her character for the entirety of the novel. See Montgomery,

## THOMAS LYNDE

Matthew's death is quite sudden; there is no proper deathbed scene of the type alluded to by Wilkinson. Montgomery waits until the second novel, *Anne of Avonlea*, to write a death scene of that sort. *Anne of Avonlea's* ending is an inverse echo of *Anne of Green Gables*; Matthew's death at the end of *Anne of Green Gables* pushed Anne to make an heroic sacrifice, where near (though not exactly at) the end of *Anne of Avonlea*, the death of Rachel Lynde's husband, Thomas, frees Anne to pursue the college course she had previously given up, as Thomas Lynde's death leaves Rachel Lynde in a precarious financial position, the best solution to which is her moving into Green Gables with Marilla, taking over Anne's duties as companion and caretaker. Thomas Lynde 'faded out of life' after a long, lingering illness,<sup>21</sup> which provides an opportunity for Rachel's own moral redemption:

Rachel had been a little hard on her Thomas in health, when his slowness or meekness had provoked her; but when he became ill no voice could be lower, no hand more gently skillful, no vigil more uncomplaining.

"You've been a good wife to me, Rachel," he once said simply, when she was sitting by him in the dusk, holding his thin, blanched old hand in her work-hardened one. "A good wife. I'm sorry I ain't leaving you better off; but the children will look after you. They're all smart, capable children, just like their mother. A good mother... a good woman..."

He had fallen asleep then; and the next morning, just as the white dawn was creeping up over the pointed firs in the hollow, Marilla went softly into the east gable and wakened Anne.

"Anne, Thomas Lynde is gone. . ." <sup>22</sup>

Throughout the books prior to this, Rachel Lynde has been characterised as having a forceful, difficult personality, and being somewhat lacking in human sympathy. She is the first character introduced in *Anne of Green Gables*, 'one of those capable creatures who can manage their own concerns and those of other folks into the bargain', observing and ruminating on the comings and goings of the Green Gables family while "Thomas Lynde—a meek little man whom Avonlea people called "Rachel Lynde's husband"—was sowing his late turnip seed on the hill field beyond the barn".<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Lynde's judgemental approach to all that she meets takes on an almost supernatural dimension, as we are told that even the

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*Anne of Green Gables* 355. See also Susan Drain, 'Community and the Individual in *Anne of Green Gables*: The Meaning of Belonging' *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1986) 19.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Lynde's illness is first mentioned in Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea* 170-171; he dies in Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea* 197-198.

<sup>22</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea* 197-198.

<sup>23</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 1.

stream that passes by her door transforms from ‘an intricate, headlong brook’, ‘with dark secrets of pool and cascade’, and becomes, in her presence,

a quiet, well-conducted little stream, for not even a brook could run past Mrs. Rachel Lynde’s door without due regard for decency and decorum; it probably was conscious that Mrs. Rachel was sitting at her window, keeping a sharp eye on everything that passed, from brooks and children up [...]<sup>24</sup>

Later commentaries on her character do not soften the sketch much; even Anne and Marilla privately confess that, while they admire some of her better qualities, they find Rachel Lynde exceedingly difficult to like.<sup>25</sup> While Rachel does have sympathetic moments—for example, conspiring with Matthew to produce a fashionable dress as a Christmas present for Anne—for the most part, she has served as a foil for the main characters, offering an outsider’s commentary on their actions and decisions.<sup>26</sup> It is Thomas Lynde’s dying that brings associations of softness (‘low-voiced’), gentleness, and uncomplaining tenderness to her character, and it is his final benediction that removes Rachel from the ambivalent, mostly outsider, position she has occupied in the narrative, and permits her to move into the Green Gables circle, as a fully sympathetic character, a position she occupies for nearly the rest of the series, not disappearing from notice until *Rilla of Ingleside*. It is his deathbed pronouncement that transforms her into ‘a good woman’; the reader has not been able to identify her as such with any certainty before.<sup>27</sup>

## RUBY GILLIS

Two other death narratives remain to be examined before we turn to *Rilla of Ingleside*, both in *Anne of the Island*. The first is the passion of Ruby Gillis, Anne’s schoolmate, who dies of what Rachel Lynde calls ‘galloping consumption’.<sup>28</sup> Montgomery began writing *Anne of the Island* prior to the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914, but completed it in November of that year; Owen Dudley Edwards and Jennifer H. Lister suggest that Ruby may be

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<sup>24</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 1.

<sup>25</sup> See especially Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 81; *Anne of Avonlea* 199-200.

<sup>26</sup> Even in the case of the dress, however, Rachel Lynde is acting *against* Marilla, and commenting upon Marilla’s inadequacy with regards to childrearing. See especially Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 240-241.

<sup>27</sup> I do not mean to imply that her character itself changes, or the way that Montgomery presents her; she remains as forceful and opinionated as ever, and later books contain just as many narrative jokes at her expense. But the loss of her husband transforms the reader’s view of Rachel Lynde into a far more sympathetic one; *Anne of the Island* shows Rachel Lynde located as one of the two stable, welcoming figures whose love for Anne transforms Green Gables into a permanent home (67).

<sup>28</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 100.



Montgomery's 'first war casualty'.<sup>29</sup> While this may be technically accurate—and this is far from certain, as Montgomery's journals provide very little detail on the progress of her writing, though they do provide a great deal of information on her disputes with the publisher—it is also a rather hyperbolic claim, as the book was completed on 20 November 1914, early enough in the conflict that it is unlikely Montgomery would have yet felt the full force of the war's rearrangement of life and death—especially as casualty lists did not begin to make a regular appearance in the paper until spring of 1915.<sup>30</sup>

Like Rachel Lynde, Ruby is a generally unsympathetic character, whom the others confess to finding it difficult to like.<sup>31</sup> Ruby's great flaw is her flirtatious nature; she sets her own value by her ability to attract men. Montgomery portrays Ruby as, at first, approaching death as blindly as she has lived her life; the narrative of her illness serves to magnify the flaws that have been part of her character throughout the series. Those around her see clear symptoms of her illness:

She was even handsomer than ever, but her blue eyes were too bright and lustrous, and the colour of her cheeks was hectically brilliant; besides, she was very thin; the hands that held her hymn-book were almost transparent in their delicacy.<sup>32</sup>

She, however, is wilfully blind: 'But just see my color. I don't look much like an invalid, I'm sure'.<sup>33</sup> The other characters find visiting her a grim chore, as she refuses all attempts at comfort, continuing to speak heedlessly of dresses and concerts and courting.<sup>34</sup> But the process of dying transforms her: first, her character is reformed, in her final speech, and then her body is purified by death.

Ruby's final words in the novel are not, strictly speaking, a deathbed speech; she dies while all the other Avonlea young people are away at a party—a somewhat ironic end for the character who has previously cared for very little except parties—and her real last words go unrecorded in the novel.<sup>35</sup> Instead, Montgomery relates a conversation between Ruby Anne the night before the former's death. This has some characteristics of a deathbed speech; Ruby looks ahead to what awaits her, and back upon how she has lived,

<sup>29</sup> Edwards and Lister 33.

<sup>30</sup> The completion of *Anne of the Island* is noted in Montgomery's journal entry of 20 November 1914; see Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds, *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery, Volume II: 1910-1921* (Oxford University Press, 1987) 156. For the appearance of casualty lists in Canadian newspapers, see Robert Craig Brown and Donald Loveridge, 'Unrequited Faith: Recruiting the CEF 1914-1918', *Revue internationale d'histoire militaire* 54 (1982) 59.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Anne of Avonlea 206; Anne of the Island 48.

<sup>32</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 100.

<sup>33</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 108.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 129-130.

<sup>35</sup> Although, to take Edwards and Lister's point to heart, her lonely death may reflect Montgomery's growing consciousness of thousands of young men dying far from friends and family.

and there is an element of moral instruction in the exchange. Ruby confesses to Anne that she is afraid to die:

Because—because—oh, I’m not afraid but that I’ll go to heaven, Anne. I’m a church member. But—it’ll all be so different. I think—and think—and I get so frightened—and—and homesick. Heaven must be very beautiful, of course, the Bible says so—but, Anne, *it won’t be what I’ve been used to*.<sup>36</sup>

Anne reflects that this is

sad, tragic—and *true!* Heaven could not be what Ruby had been used to. There had been nothing in her gay, frivolous life, her shallow ideals and aspirations, to fit her for that great change, or make the life to come seem to her anything but alien and unreal and undesirable.<sup>37</sup>

She attempts to rise to the challenge and support Ruby, although she finds herself unable to ‘tell comforting falsehoods’ which might alleviate the burden of anxiety Ruby feels in abandoning the frivolous life which she has led and loved so dearly.<sup>38</sup> The scene ends with Ruby promising to face death bravely, to ‘think over what [Anne] said, and try to believe it’.<sup>39</sup>

Anne leaves Ruby still struggling with the weight of eternity, and the next night, Ruby dies in her sleep, ‘and on her face was a smile—as if, after all, death had come as a kindly friend [...] instead of the grisly phantom she had dreaded’, as if Anne’s counsel to her on the previous night had been efficacious.<sup>40</sup> In death, Ruby’s body is transformed:

Ruby had always been beautiful; but her beauty had been of the earth, earthy; it had had a certain insolent quality to it, as if it flaunted itself in the beholder’s eye; spirit had never shone through it, intellect had never refined it. But death had touched it and consecrated it, bringing out delicate modelings and purity of outline never seen before—doing what life and love and great sorrow and deep womanhood joys might have done for Ruby. Anne, looking down through a mist of tears, at her old playfellow, thought she saw the face God had meant Ruby to have and remembered it so always.<sup>41</sup>

In death, Ruby can shed her ‘earthy’, ‘insolent’, ‘unrefined’ flirtatiousness, and become the perfect creation God intended; dying is a process of moral purification for her, and moral instruction for those who witness it. The perfected body in the coffin is the final sign of this transformation.

<sup>36</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 131. Emphasis in original, in this and all other quotations from Montgomery unless otherwise noted.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 132.

<sup>39</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 133.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 135.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

## GILBERT BLYTHE

The idea of dying as a process of moral transformation is echoed later, in the novel's penultimate chapter, 'A Book of Revelation'. Anne returns to Green Gables from a visit and is informed that her rejected suitor and longtime friend, Gilbert Blythe, is dying of typhoid fever.<sup>42</sup> This is consistent with the climactic structure of the previous books, both of which depended on a death (Matthew Cuthbert's and Thomas Lynde's) to resolve a major portion of their plot—in both cases, to move Anne on to the next stage in her life, first mature self-sacrifice, and then the delayed reward of that sacrifice, a fuller realisation of her individual potential. In this case, a major plot-line of the novel has been courtship; Anne has rejected five proposals of marriage, including Gilbert's own. Gilbert's death cannot advance the plot in the way that Matthew's, or Thomas Lynde's, did. Anne has rejected all of her suitors on their own merits, so Gilbert's absence would not cause another contender for her hand to suddenly become more appealing, and while a remorseful woman dedicating her life to mourning for her spurned lover is a scenario that the younger Anne may have found deeply romantic, Montgomery herself is a pragmatist, and much of the moral development to which she has subjected Anne has been to move her away from precisely that sort of sentiment. Gilbert's actual death would accomplish nothing—and so, breaking the pattern of the previous books, he does not die, but instead recovers the morning after Anne is told of his illness. Nonetheless, his near-death provides the same opportunity for moral development in those who witness it—especially Anne—as Ruby Gillis's actual death did earlier. Faced with the possibility of his death, Anne is able to realise her love for him, and repent of her foolishness in rejecting his earlier proposal. She keeps a miserable vigil through the stormy night, emerging from her room at dawn:<sup>43</sup>

Anne rose from her knees and crept downstairs. The freshness of the rain-wind blew against her white face as she went out into the yard, and cooled

<sup>42</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 283.

<sup>43</sup> An astute reader may note that most of Montgomery's death scenes take place at dawn or twilight—even if the death itself occurs at another time, as with Ruby Gillis and Thomas Lynde, information of it will be communicated at these times; even the dedication of *Rilla of Ingleside* partakes of this trope: 'To the memory of Frederica Campbell MacFarlane, who went away from me when the dawn broke on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919'. Vance notes that dawn (and, to a lesser extent, sunset) typically symbolises the resurrection, 'the promise of a new beginning and of God's infinite good'; while Paul Fussell (who writes in a primarily modern British context, without accounting for social change in the Commonwealth) has argued that after the First World War this symbolism ceased to be used except in an ironic context, Vance maintains that in Canada 'dawn continued to mean what it had meant in 1914' and earlier; this is clear in Montgomery's fiction from the death scene of Captain Jim in *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917, repr. Puffin 1981) 287-288. By contrast, however, Montgomery's *The Blue Castle* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1926) opens with a reference to 'the lifeless, hopeless hour just preceding dawn' (1). See Vance 48-49; Fussell *The Great War and Modern Memory*, repr. ed. (Oxford University Press, 2000) 61-64, esp. 63.

her dry, burning eyes. A merry rollicking whistle was lilting up the lane. A moment later Pacifique Buote came in sight.

Anne's physical strength suddenly failed her. If she had not clutched at a low willow bough she would have fallen. Pacifique was George Fletcher's hired man, and George Fletcher lived next door to the Blythes. Mrs. Fletcher was Gilbert's aunt. Pacifique would know if—if—Pacifique would know what there was to be known.<sup>44</sup>

Anne emerges from her night of prayer and introspection both into enhanced and more mature self-knowledge, and also directly into a tightly-woven web of kinship associations: Gilbert's uncle/next-door-neighbour's hired boy, passing by *en route* to visit his own ailing father, brings news that Gilbert's illness has abated. With any of these connections missing, Pacifique would have been unable to deliver the crucial intelligence. At the moment that Anne finds herself able to undertake what Montgomery presents as the final step into the world of adult responsibility—marriage—she also finds herself dependent upon the social and familial web of the village to provide her with the information necessary for that step. This completes a process of integration that has been ongoing since the first novel, and which, again, has been advanced by the climactic deaths in each book: Matthew's death led Anne to choose to assume familial responsibility for Marilla, and Thomas Lynde's death enabled Rachel Lynde to take over from Anne, adding an element of reciprocity to Anne's relationship with the people of Avonlea—Anne acquires the means to fulfil her individual ambition, but only by also acquiring a deeper dependence upon the community. The tangled web of inter-relation that Montgomery chooses to spell out at the moment of Pacifique's appearance serves to underline the dense structure of relationships into which Anne is about to choose (or has already chosen) to enter fully.

#### AN ANTEBELLUM CONCLUSION

What have we learned from this reading of Montgomery's pre-war novels? In all of the passages examined above, death is a community affair, in which interpersonal relationships are both affirmed and renegotiated. Every narrative save for Montgomery's autobiographical recollection of her mother's funeral contains an element of moral instruction—sometimes, as in the case of Ruby Gillis, for the dying person, but always for those who witness the death, including, perhaps especially, the reader; in the cases where they are available, the last words of a character are especially significant. In all but one of

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<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 285.

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the narratives examined (excepting Gilbert Blythe's non-death), the body of the deceased has a central role; Thomas Lynde's does not, although this is well in keeping with his character, occasionally mentioned by others, but rarely appearing in person and even more rarely with any sense of agency. He is the only character whose funeral service is not described. The death narrative of Matthew Cuthbert places an emphasis on burial in his 'native earth', the land that he had farmed, loved, and taught Anne to love; although the other narratives do not mention the place of burial, it is reasonable to assume that this is because its proximity to the community is taken for granted, and only emphasised in the one instance because of particular resonances between land and character, rather than because the location is in any way unusual. The family's authority over the dead person's body and their memory is undisputed.

Thus, we have a fairly clear picture, though filtered through a literary and nostalgic lens, of what constituted 'normal' death in Canada in the era immediately preceding the First World War; thus far, our picture harmonises with what Wilkinson and Wheeler have to say of normal British death at that time, at least as far as the focus on body and gravesite is concerned. A similar literary examination of *Rilla of Ingleside* will reveal how and to what extent these characteristics were altered during the First World War, and the role that theological language played in the changes.

# RILLA OF INGLESIDE

What was true of poetry was also true of fiction, and the same qualities were expected of a good fictional account of the war; it too had to be ‘suffused with beauty of sentiment, [and] rich in noble ideas’. Few novels approximated this ideal more closely than L. M. Montgomery’s *Rilla of Ingleside* [...]

Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble* 175.

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ontgomery began writing *Rilla of Ingleside* on 14 August, 1919, some nine months after the Armistice.<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Vance notes that, at the time of its release, it was a critical favourite, ‘not for the author’s finely drawn characters or deft handling of plot, but for a very specific reason: it captured the essence of small-town Canada during the war’.<sup>2</sup> Vance goes on to note that, ‘[b]y praising the novel’s verisimilitude, reviewers shifted *Rilla of Ingleside* from fiction to history: it became a ‘true’ record of Canada’s war’.<sup>3</sup> Vance credits the book’s popularity to Montgomery’s ability to tap into the pre-existing popular myth of the war and repackage it for popular consumption. However, he reads *Rilla of Ingleside* and its critical reception in the context of war writing from ‘the 1920s and 1930s’, and fails to account for the early publication date of *Rilla* and the extent to which it may have been actively involved in shaping Canadian memory of the war.<sup>4</sup>

Nor does Vance care to credit Montgomery with any conscious historical accuracy; he attributes the promotion of the book as ‘a “true” record of Canada’s war’ to reviewers, rather than the author herself. However, Montgomery herself strove to present a realistic picture of ‘Canada at war’.<sup>5</sup> In writing *Rilla of Ingleside*, she drew heavily upon her own wartime journal entries; the novel contains an exacting record of newspaper reports and Montgomery’s own reactions to them, filtered through her characters.<sup>6</sup> The book opens with Susan Baker, the Blythes’ housekeeper, reading

a big, black headline on the front page of the *Enterprise*, stating that some Archduke Ferdinand or other had been assassinated at a place bearing the weird name of Sarajevo, but Susan tarried not over uninteresting, immaterial stuff like that [...]<sup>7</sup>

Montgomery’s journal entry of 5 August 1914, the day that England declared war on Germany, recounts that ‘Sometime in June I picked up a *Globe* and read that a Serbian had

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<sup>1</sup> Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 339.

<sup>2</sup> Vance 176. Given Vance’s other remarks about the book, it is safe to assume that ‘finely drawn characters’ and ‘deft handling of plot’ are meant to be read as sarcasm on Vance’s part.

<sup>3</sup> Vance 176.

<sup>4</sup> Vance tells us that the book sold 27,000 copies in Canada between its publication and the outbreak of the Second World War (Vance 176), a rather high figure for the time—as a point of comparison, when the Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion reported on plans for the printing of *The Book of Family Devotion* (Oxford University Press, 1919) in 1915, the proposed print run was only 2,000-5,000 volumes (see the Committee’s report in *Ac&P* 41 [1915] 279-280). As the final novel in the internationally popular Anne of Green Gables series, *Rilla of Ingleside* has been read by several generations of girls at a sufficiently young age (9-13) that they are unlikely to have encountered discussion of the First World War at any length in their schooling.

<sup>5</sup> Journal entry 5 March 1921: Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 404.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Baker is an especially ready mouthpiece for quotations from Montgomery’s journal. See Epperly 124. Epperly also mentions the connection between Montgomery’s journals and *Rilla*, although she does not seem to quite realize the extent to which the journals contribute to the novel’s historical verisimilitude.

<sup>7</sup> L. M. Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* (McClelland and Stewart, 1921; repr. Bantam Books 1992), 1-2.

shot the Archduke of Austria and his duchess. The news was of little interest to me—as to most people on the continent’.<sup>8</sup> Both the journal and *Rilla* go on to detail the enormous significance this seemingly distant and obscure headline would have for Canadian life—and death. However, the book has been generally underappreciated, both as a novel and as an historical document. In the interest of providing a fuller picture of the vocabulary of war and commemoration in Canada between the years 1914 and 1921, I will devote some space to a discussion of themes from *Rilla of Ingleside* which parallel themes from the wider social discourse on the war, before returning to a closer examination of the way that Montgomery portrays death in the novel.

*Rilla of Ingleside* follows Anne and Gilbert Blythe’s youngest daughter, Bertha Marilla Blythe, from the war’s beginning in 1914, when she is fifteen years old, until 1919. The central drama of the novel, however, is not Rilla’s coming of age in wartime, or even her courtship with Kenneth Ford, the son of the beautiful and enigmatic Leslie Moore, whose own courtship story was the main plot of *Anne’s House of Dreams*.<sup>9</sup> Rather, it is Rilla’s brother, Walter, with his struggle to overcome his fear of war’s ugliness, his enlistment, and his eventual death, who provides the main force in the novel.

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<sup>8</sup> Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 150. For more on the link between Montgomery’s wartime journals and *Rilla of Ingleside*, see Epperly 121-122, and for Susan as a mouthpiece for Montgomery, see Epperly 125.

<sup>9</sup> *Anne’s House of Dreams* was also written during the war, and Edwards and Lister argue that Leslie’s story, especially, contains a dark realism that would have been foreign to Montgomery’s pre-war writing, while Leslie herself, depicted with ‘blood-red poppies at her waist’ is an early image of the self-sacrifice of Canadian women for the greater good, which Montgomery aimed to promote in her novels at this time—see Edwards and Lister 33, 43. Thus, the pairing of Rilla with Kenneth is the culmination and reward of two generations of selfless women, Leslie and Rilla.

A brief summary, for those unfamiliar with the books: Leslie was married at a young age to Dick Moore, who was abusive towards her; she consented to the marriage only because he held the mortgage to her mother’s home, and threatened to foreclose otherwise. Dick eventually went away to sea, and did not come home, until a sailor from the same village, Captain Jim, found him in Cuba, apparently suffering from amnesia after a bar fight. Jim brings him home, and Leslie takes him back in and cares for him, appreciating that his temper has become far more mild, although he has very little mental capacity. To supplement her income, Lesley takes in a summer boarder, Owen Ford; the two are strongly attracted to each other, and Owen feels compelled to leave before the situation becomes untenable. Gilbert Blythe, who by this time is the local physician and married to Anne, examines Dick Moore for an unrelated ailment and comes to believe, based on the latest medical literature, that his condition can be cured by an operation. Over Anne’s objections, he informs Leslie of his suspicions, and she is forced to choose whether to allow the procedure, at the risk that if it is successful, her husband will return to his previous abusive behaviour. In a grand gesture of self-sacrifice, she agrees to the operation, which successfully restores the memory of her husband’s nearly identical cousin, George, who brings news that ‘Dick Moore died of yellow fever thirteen years ago’ (Montgomery, *Anne’s House of Dreams* 180). This intelligence frees Leslie to marry Owen Ford, although the village gossips indulge in a small bout of speculation about her character, as she had, albeit unknowingly, cohabited with a man to whom she was not married for over a decade. The ethical twists in the novel, the layers of sacrifice and reward, are extremely complex, and deserving of a much deeper treatment than can be given here; it must suffice to say that Leslie’s story is very much a foreshadowing of the feminine sacrificial *ethos* which Montgomery lays out more explicitly in *Rilla of Ingleside*.



Walter is portrayed as very much his mother's son: sensitive, imaginative, a poet. Both Vance and Edwards and Lister have noted that, in this regard, Walter represents a type, 'a Canadian version of Rupert Brooke'.<sup>10</sup> Where Anne's literary talent wanes over the course of the series into a slightly eccentric hobby that does not threaten her true vocation as a wife and mother, Walter's gift is intimated to be something larger, approaching the true genius that Montgomery only ascribes to men within the *Anne* series.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the novel, he is recovering from typhoid fever, and his family has some concern over whether he will be well enough to attend college in the fall.<sup>12</sup> Both his precarious health and his poetic vision place him in a position perpetually between life and death, from which he speaks with a prophetic authority.

### PROPHECY IN *RILLA OF INGLESIDE*

Walter is one of two characters in the novel given to prophetic visions. The other character with a prophetic gift is the schoolmistress, Gertrude Oliver, whose dreams—often based on dreams Montgomery recorded in her own journal—foretell important events in the war.<sup>13</sup> While Walter's authority derives from his position of disinterest—being not entirely part of the world in which his family dwells, he is able to observe and comment on it with greater clarity—the reasons for Miss Oliver's clairvoyance are ambiguous; the text merely states that 'life had been a struggle for her'.<sup>14</sup> The similarity between her dreams and Montgomery's journals suggests that she is functioning in the text as a stand-in for the author, and Montgomery is investing Miss Oliver's visions with an authority that the wife of a Presbyterian minister in a small Ontario town may have been wary of claiming for her

<sup>10</sup> Vance 175; see also Edwards and Lister 36.

<sup>11</sup> The obvious exception to this is Mrs. Morgan, the author of Anne's favourite romance novels, who appears in *Anne of Avonlea*, but the tone of the episodes surrounding her visit is ultimately comic, and the episodes themselves resurgences of the childish Anne's propensity for 'getting into scrapes' and letting her romantic imagination run away with her (Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea* 119-131, 153-157); there is a trace of implication that Anne's judgment about Mrs. Morgan's literary value (not to be confused with her success as an author) is similarly immature. This is in contrast to Paul Irving, Owen Ford, and Walter Blythe, to whose literary aspirations Anne (and, in the case of Walter, Rilla) plays helpmeet. Walter's poetic genius is mentioned almost as soon as his character is introduced in the novel; see Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 13-14.

My colleague, Elizabeth Anderson, points out that this restriction of genius to men is characteristic of the *Anne* series, rather than Montgomery's work as a whole; the *Emily* series—*Emily of New Moon* (McClelland and Stewart, 1923); *Emily Climbs* (McClelland and Stewart, 1925); *Emily's Quest* (McClelland and Stewart, 1927)—follows a woman with authorial aspirations who does achieve success, and whose writing is presented as serious art.

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 6.

<sup>13</sup> Gertrude Oliver's dreams are related in Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 19, 163, 246; Montgomery's own dreams are recorded in her journal entries dated 22 February 1916 (Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 177-178); 30 October 1917 (227-228); 2 March 1918 (242).

<sup>14</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 12.

own.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the use of prophetic language in the novel lends support to the idea of the war as both divinely sanctioned and inevitable—well in keeping with both the ‘Holy War’ rhetoric which marked much of public discourse, and with Montgomery’s own (somewhat naive) understanding of predestination.<sup>16</sup>

Where Gertrude Oliver’s dreams are of immediate relevance and change depending upon the circumstances of the war, Walter has one recurring waking vision, the meaning of which alters as it is interpreted in different circumstances.<sup>17</sup> This vision first appears in *Rainbow Valley*, written in the midst of the war, and heavy with foreshadowing:<sup>18</sup>

“Some day,” said Walter dreamily, looking afar into the sky, “the Pied Piper will come over the hill up there and down Rainbow Valley, piping merrily and sweetly. And I will follow him—follow him down to the shore—down to the sea—away from you all. I don’t think I’ll want to go—Jem will want to go—it will be such an adventure—but I won’t. Only I’ll HAVE to—the music will call and call and call me until I MUST follow.”<sup>19</sup>

The vision is repeated at the end of that book; the passage is worth quoting at length to emphasize the links between the vision and the war that Montgomery was planting in her readers’ minds, as nowhere in *Rilla of Ingleside* does the narrative voice intervene and draw the connection out so clearly:

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<sup>15</sup> Montgomery’s journal entry of 19 July 1918 sheds some light on her attitude towards the paranormal:

I have never for one moment believed in what is called “spiritualism”. Nothing I have ever seen or read has convinced me for a moment that any communication from the dead is possible by such means. But I *do* believe that the phenomena thus produced is produced by some strange power existent in ourselves—in that mysterious part of it known as the subconscious mind—a power of which the law is utterly unknown to us. But that there is a law which governs it and that the operations produced by that law are perfectly natural could we but obtain the key to them I am firmly convinced.

Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 256. She then goes on to explain the care she took to ensure that no word of her private amusement, ‘making tables rap’, reached the general and skeptical public, for fear of the damage her reputation might endure.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, *The Alpine Path* 6. Vance dedicates an entire chapter to Just War rhetoric at the First World War; see Vance 12-34. He also repeatedly returns to Holy War rhetoric, although he does not identify it as such; see, for example, Vance 35, 44, 65.

<sup>17</sup> In brief, the Piper vision, or reference to it, is repeated in L. M. Montgomery, *Rainbow Valley* (McClelland and Stewart, 1919; repr. 1987) 55, 224-225, and *Rilla of Ingleside* 20, 33, 124-125, 191.

In *Rainbow Valley* the Pied Piper first appears in a book of myths that Walter reads out loud; his first vision comes in the discussion afterwards, prompted by Mary Vance’s categorization of the tales as ‘in’resting lies’; Walter’s speech, intended to frighten Mary into submission, also gives him ‘a queer little chill of some mysterious dread’. The incident is immediately followed by Mary expressing her disbelief in the power of prayer, because the one thing she had been praying for had not been resolved—only to learn, instantly, that it had been, without her knowledge. The references to the vision at *Rilla* 20 and 33 refer back to this first vision, and the debate over providence and prophecy that formed its context, with Walter called to defend the validity of his vision. The second—and last—appearance of the Piper in *Rainbow Valley* comes at the end, foreshadowing the outbreak of war at the beginning of the next book, and the interjection of the narrative voice in that episode removes any doubt regarding the prophetic nature of the vision; the references at *Rilla* 124-125 and 191—as well as the reference to the poem ‘The Piper’ at 167—echo this later vision.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards and Lister’s article is mostly concerned with analysis of *Rainbow Valley* as a product of the First World War, and the parallels between the children’s play scenarios and their eventual fates in the war.

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery, *Rainbow Valley* 55.

“Oh, I wish we had the old days back again,” exclaimed Jem. “I’d love to be a soldier—a great, triumphant general. I’d give EVERYTHING to see a big battle.”

Well, Jem was to be a soldier and see a greater battle than had ever been fought in the world; but that was as yet far in the future, and the mother, whose first-born son he was, was wont to look on her boys and thank God that the “brave days of old,” which Jem longed for, were gone for ever, and that never would it be necessary for the sons of Canada to ride forth

[...] The shadow of the Great Conflict had not yet made felt any forerunner of its chill. The lads who were to fight, and perhaps fall, on the fields of France and Flanders, Gallipoli and Palestine, were still roguish schoolboys with a fair life in prospect before them; the girls whose hearts were to be wrung were yet fair little maidens a-star with hopes and dreams.

[...] Twilight crept over the valley and the little group grew silent. Walter had been reading again that day in his beloved book of myths and he remembered how he had once fancied the Pied Piper coming down the valley on an evening just like this.

He began to speak dreamily, partly because he wanted to thrill his companions a little, partly because something apart from him seemed to be speaking through his lips.

“The Piper is coming nearer,” he said, “he is nearer than he was that evening I saw him before. His long, shadowy cloak is blowing around him. He pipes—he pipes—and we must follow—Jem and Carl and Jerry and I—round and round the world. Listen—listen—can’t you hear his wild music?”<sup>20</sup>

Walter’s early visions convey a sense of the war’s inevitability; he does not foretell any cause or conflict, only a mysterious call which he and all his brothers and playmates will be compelled to answer, willingly or not. The Piper motif, carried between *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*, is both prefigurative and elegaic: in the final chapter of *Rainbow Valley*, it casts the shadow of the forthcoming war over the children at play; in *Rilla of Ingleside*, it casts the shadow of those children over the young men going off to war, from almost the first hint that war may be possible. At the first news of impending conflict, Walter’s brother Jem reminds him of his vision:

“Oh, boy, Germany has declared war on France. This means that England will fight too, probably—and if she does—well, the Piper of your old fancy will have come at last.”

“It wasn’t a fancy, said Walter slowly. “It was a presentiment—a vision—Jem, I really *saw* him for a moment that evening long ago. Suppose England does fight?”<sup>21</sup>

Early in the novel, Walter is put in the position of having to defend the validity of his vision (‘It wasn’t a fancy’; later he writes to his sister ‘I tell you I *saw* him—it was no

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery, *Rainbow Valley* 224-225.

<sup>21</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 20.

fancy—no illusion’)—and, in so doing, assert the seriousness of the war, as well, over voices such as that of Jem, who still would ‘give EVERYTHING to see a great battle’.<sup>22</sup> Walter sees from the first the pain and destruction the war will bring, and recoils from it. When a dance at the local lighthouse is interrupted with the news that England has declared war on Germany, only Walter and Gertrude Oliver immediately grasp the darker implications of the situation:

“God help us, whispered Gertrude Oliver under her breath. “My dream—my dream! The first wave has broken.” She looked at Allan Daly and tried to smile.

“Is this Armageddon?” she asked.

[...] Walter looked at [Mary Vance] and had one of his odd visitations of prophecy.

“Before this war is over,” he said—or something said through his lips—“every man and woman and child in Canada will feel it—you, Mary, will feel it—feel it to your heart’s core. You will weep tears of blood over it. The Piper has come—and he will pipe until every corner of the world has heard his awful and irresistible music. It will be years before the dance of death is over—years, Mary. And in those years millions of hearts will break.”<sup>23</sup>

It is worth noting that while Gertrude Oliver’s dream is her own, and at no point does any character or narrator suggest an outside power is at work in this or any other of her dreams, Walter’s visions are often characterised as ‘something apart from him [...] speaking through his lips’.<sup>24</sup> Gertrude’s dreams are also more private, shared only with a few intimates among the Blythe family (there is no indication, for instance, that Jem is ever aware of them), where Walter’s prophecies are more public, and occasionally, as in the lighthouse scene, openings for political debate. Walter’s pronouncement there is met with the claim that the war will ‘be over in a month or two. England will just wipe Germany off the map in no time’.<sup>25</sup> In his rejoinder, Walter reveals a far stronger awareness of the stakes in the conflict than his opponents have:

“This isn’t a paltry struggle in a Balkan corner, Harvey. It is a death grapple. Germany comes to conquer or die. And do you know what will happen if she conquers? Canada will be a German colony.”

“Well, I guess a few things will happen before *that*,” said Harvey shrugging his shoulders. “The British navy would have to be licked for one; and for another, Miller here, now, and I, *we’d* raise a dust, wouldn’t we, Miller? No Germans need apply for this old country, eh?”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 191.

<sup>23</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 33.

<sup>24</sup> Montgomery, *Rainbow Valley* 224.

<sup>25</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 34.

<sup>26</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 35.

Montgomery presents an interesting dichotomy between Walter and his interlocutors. The other local lads can see no rhyme or reason to the war; they view it as an obscure conflict between European nations into which they are drawn simply as a matter of honour (Jem's response to Walter's 'Suppose England does fight?' is 'Why, we'll all have to turn in and help her [...] we've got to pitch in tooth and claw if it comes to a family row') and a grand opportunity for adventure, besides.<sup>27</sup> Their greatest fear is that peace will come too soon for them to be able to join the battle.<sup>28</sup> Walter, by contrast, sees the war as 'a death grapple', an epic struggle between good and evil, civilisation and barbarism—a holy war, akin to the war against Amalek: ugly, but necessary.<sup>29</sup> His understanding fills Walter with, perhaps, a deeper sense of duty than the young men who rush to enlist at the first opportunity, but also with a deeper terror of the war. He struggles greatly before eventually enlisting, torn between his sense of duty and his fear.<sup>30</sup>

Most of the local youth depicted in the novel are extras, appearing and disappearing around the edges of the action, offering, as Harvey Crawford does above, a few stock phrases where necessary; there is no evidence to indicate whether, or how, their view of the war changes over the next four years. This is not the case with Jem Blythe, whose occasional letters provide the reader with some insight into the development of his thoughts. A letter to the family at Christmastime in 1914, a few short months after he enlisted, reveals that exposure to the reality of war has brought Jem's views into deeper sympathy with Walter's:

One boy—he was a Nova Scotian—was killed right beside me yesterday [...] It was the first time I'd been close to anything like that and it was a nasty sensation, but one soon gets used to the horrors here. We're in an absolutely different world. The only things that are the same are the stars—and they are never in their right places, somehow.

Tell mother not to worry—I'm all right—fit as a fiddle—and glad I came. There's something across from us here that has got to be wiped out of the world, that's all—an emanation of evil that would otherwise poison life for ever. It's got to be done, dad, however long it takes, and whatever it costs, and you tell the Glen people this for me. They don't realize yet what

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<sup>27</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 25.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 25, 35.

<sup>29</sup> It takes less than one hundred pages—and approximately four months of war—for Susan Baker to equate the Germans—specifically the Kaiser—with the devil; see Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 96. The language equating Germany with diabolical forces remains consistent throughout the rest of the novel. This language was commonly used in constructing what Vance has termed 'the myth of the war'; see especially Vance 20-29.

Again, I am not the only person who has noted the undertones of holy war rhetoric in *Rilla of Ingleside*; Epperly notes that 'Since to Montgomery the war against Germany was sacred, a holy cause, we should not be surprised to find the heroine, Rilla, and her war baby depicted as madonna and child' (Epperly 118).

<sup>30</sup> See especially Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 81.

it is has broken loose—I didn't when I first joined up. I thought it was fun. Well, it isn't!<sup>31</sup>

While Jem has not acquired Walter's terror, and, in fact, is capable of seeing 'horrors' as something that 'one soon gets used to', he has both grown past the idea that war is fun and come to appreciate Walter's view of the war as a cosmic conflict. That Walter's view is also Montgomery's own, echoing the sentiments expressed in her journal entries, may have something to do with the speed with which the main characters of the novel recognise its validity, but this does not undermine the fact that the language with which Montgomery and Walter describe the war was also a dominant discourse at the time.

When, in the wake of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, Walter does enlist, Montgomery's description of his last evening home contains another reference to the Piper vision:

Walter looked about him lingeringly and lovingly. This spot had always been so dear to him. What fun they had had here lang syne. Phantoms of memory seemed to pace the dappled paths and peep merrily through the swinging boughs [...] They were all there around him—he could see them almost as plainly as he saw Rilla—as plainly as he had once seen the Pied Piper piping down the valley in a vanished twilight. And they said to him, those gay little ghosts of other days, "We were the children of yesterday, Walter—fight a good fight for the children of today and tomorrow."<sup>32</sup>

Walter's childhood vision of the Piper leading him out of the valley has come true, but on the point of its fulfilment, he receives another vision which, in turn, transforms the Piper's call from the mysterious, inevitable summons of *Rainbow Valley*, or the eerie cry of the death-grapple between good and evil from earlier in *Rilla of Ingleside*, into a plea for the safety and sanctity of children's play.<sup>33</sup> Walter, who has been unable to find the courage to fight in the great struggle between good and evil, finds his courage for the small struggle, and is able to go off to war to defend what is, to him (and Montgomery), familiar and familial.

### 'THE PIPER' AND 'IN FLANDERS FIELDS'

The layering of these two visions, the Piper and the children, drive Walter to acquit himself bravely in combat—he earns a D. C. Medal for rescuing a wounded man from No-man's-

<sup>31</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 97.

<sup>32</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 124-5.

<sup>33</sup> Throughout the novel, Montgomery draws connections between the British/Canadian side of the war and the sanctity of childhood. See, for example, Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 95, 98, and especially 106, in which Jem's letter home (discussed above) draws the same connection. See also Vance 157-159.

land—and bring his poetic gift to fulfilment.<sup>34</sup> Walter composes a poem called ‘The Piper’ which, though never printed (or even quoted) in the novel, becomes to the cast of *Rilla of Ingleside* what John McCrae’s poem, ‘In Flanders Fields’ was (and, to a large extent, still is) to real-life Canadians.<sup>35</sup>

McCrae’s poem is an important piece of literature, both in terms of its historical value and in the pervasive role it has played in remembrance rituals since the war, in Canada as well as abroad. Paul Fussell tells us that it was ‘[t]he most popular poem of the war’ and ‘one reason the British Legion chose that [the poppy] symbol of [...] remembrance’.<sup>36</sup> It has since become fodder for rote recitation by schoolchildren throughout the English-speaking world; quotes from it are inscribed on the back of the Canadian ten dollar

bill, and painted inside the dressing room of the Montreal Canadiens hockey team.<sup>37</sup> The poem was, Fussell points out, written in 1915, during the period when several public figures, including Woodrow Wilson (who is much maligned in *Rilla of Ingleside*), hoped to find a compromise capable of ending the war.<sup>38</sup> Fussell contends that the last stanza especially serves as ‘a propaganda argument... against a negotiated peace’.<sup>39</sup>

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with those who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 167.

<sup>35</sup> John McCrae, ‘In Flanders Fields’, first published in *Punch* 6 December 1915 (see Fussell 249).

Since I first wrote this analysis, a new collection of poetry and short stories about the Blythe family has been published, *The Blythes are Quoted* (Penguin, 2009); ‘The Piper’ is the first piece included in this volume, and actually bears very little resemblance at all to the McCrae poem. However, ‘The Piper’ is accompanied by a note from Montgomery explaining that ‘[i]t has been written recently’ after (and presumably in response to) many requests from readers of *Rilla of Ingleside* and *Rainbow Valley* (*The Blythes are Quoted* 3); and I do not believe the recently discovered existence of one poem negates the textual references made to the other in the novel.

<sup>36</sup> Fussell 248-249; see also John E. Hurst, ‘John McCrae’s Wars’ in *Canada and the Great War: Western Front Association Papers*, ed. Briton C. Busch (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) 76.

<sup>37</sup> See also Vance 199-201; Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007) 72-73.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, the discussion in Arthur S. Link, Review of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson: Volume 35: October 1, 1915-January 27, 1916.*, *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 2 (1983). Montgomery’s treatment of Wilson in particular and the U.S.A. in general was not pleasing to her American publishers; see her journal entry of 5 March 1921 (Rubio and Waterson (eds), *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery* 404).

Although Montgomery implies that Walter’s poem is modelled after McCrae’s, the biographies of the two men could not be more different. McCrae came from a family with a long tradition of both military service and loyalty to the Crown; his father David served in a Canadian militia regiment, seeing action in the 1856 Fenian uprising, an attempt by Irish Americans to invade Canada in the hopes of exchanging it for Irish independence, and helped to found an artillery unit in Guelph. At the outbreak of the First World War, David McCrae raised an artillery unit, but was not allowed to accompany it further than England due to his advanced age. John himself enlisted in a Cadet Corps at a young age, and continued his service through college, university, and his medical training; in fact, this training was

Walter's 'The Piper' is composed around the time of the Battle of Verdun, in 1916, a year later than 'In Flanders Fields', and thus at a remove from the direct charge of propaganda against the specific political issue of a negotiated peace that Fussell levelled against McCrae's poem. However, it seems to still speak to the same central issue as 'In Flanders Fields', an appeal to patriotic fidelity, and Montgomery presents it as a close analogue to that poem. She carefully identifies its author as 'A Canadian lad in the Flanders trenches', calling the title line of McCrae's poem to the mind of her readers.<sup>40</sup> McCrae's poem is three stanzas long; 'The Piper' is described as 'the mighty conflict, crystalized in three brief immortal verses'.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the reaction of a crowd hearing 'The Piper' recited as another group of local men set forth for the war calls to mind the closing lines of 'In Flanders Fields': 'The soldiers cheered her like mad and cried "We'll follow—we'll follow—we won't break faith"', in a clear reference to the third-last line of McCrae's poem.<sup>42</sup> The opening stanza of that poem evokes the same sort of quiet pastoralism as do Walter's letters reminiscing about the beauty of his home.<sup>43</sup> By linking 'The Piper' so strongly to 'In Flanders Fields', Montgomery not only provides an easy point of reference for the degree of poetic popularity Walter achieves, but also suggests the same layering of pastoralism and patriotism evident in Walter's vision of the children overlaid with the memory of the Piper. She suggests that, while the war is a conflict of lofty ideals, these do not inspire the same urge to personal sacrifice as the smaller, more intimate, often familial details of everyday life. This point is made more explicitly in Walter's last letter to Rilla, written the night before he is killed at Courcellette:

I'm not afraid, Rilla-my-Rilla, and I am not sorry that I came. I'm *satisfied*. I'll never write the poems I once dreamed of writing—but I've helped to make Canada safe for the poets of the future—for the workers of the future—ay, and the dreamers, too—for if no man dreams, there will be nothing for the workers to fulfil—the future, not of Canada only but of the world [...] It isn't only the fate of the little sea-born island I love that is in the balance—nor of Canada, nor of England. It's the fate of mankind. This is what we're fighting for.

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interrupted by his service in the Boer War. McCrae thus entered the First World War at the rank of Major, as both a brigade surgeon and the second in command of an artillery brigade, and no stranger to combat. He died in 1918, not in combat, but as a result of pneumonia complicated by meningitis—although his lungs, which had been weak throughout his life, may have been further compromised by gas inhalation. See Hurst 66-77.

<sup>39</sup> Fussell 250.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 167.

<sup>41</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 167. It should be noted that the recently published poem contains only two stanzas.

<sup>42</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 179. See also Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 230. Hurst notes that Moina Michael, who he credits with 'the first sale of the Flanders Fields memorial poppy', was, in 1918, inspired by McCrae's poem not only to begin selling poppies, but to pen her own verse, 'We Shall Keep the Faith', in response (Hurst 75-76).

<sup>43</sup> For the pastoralism of 'In Flanders Fields', see Fussell 249.



[...] I've a premonition about you, Rilla, as well as about myself. I think Ken will go back to you—and that there are long years of happiness for you by-and-by. And you will tell your children of the *Idea* we fought and died for—teach them it must be *lived* for as well as died for, else the price paid for it will have been given for nought. This will be part of *your* work, Rilla.<sup>44</sup>

When Walter dies, he does so with a clear sense of purpose. Both he and Montgomery present his death as a sacrifice, not just for ‘the fate of mankind’, as he argued at the lighthouse dance, but also for ‘the fate of the little sea-born island’, not just for the workers of the future, but the poets and dreamers, those closer to Walter’s own understanding. He fights and dies for a grand *Idea*, but also for that idea to be passed on to his sister’s children, the ‘children of tomorrow’ of his vision.

## SACRIFICE

The theme of sacrifice, and predominantly self-sacrifice, dominates both *Rilla of Ingleside* and more general discourse surrounding the First World War, especially theological discourse.<sup>45</sup> Walter’s life and death epitomize a popular sacrificial narrative, in which one finds fulfilment by surrendering one’s self to something greater. The notion of sacrifice as exchange is extremely important here: if Walter simply died, without dying *for* something, without receiving some sort of personal fulfilment, his death and life could not be analysed

<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 191-192.

<sup>45</sup> A firm line needs to be drawn between the popular notion of self-sacrifice I discuss in relation to the First World War and the more technical understanding of sacrifice within the discipline of Religious Studies. While the former does have a number of characteristics in common with the latter, and almost certainly derives (as a metaphorical extension) from it, the latter involves a very precise system of actions, not all of which are relevant here. Kathryn McClymond breaks religious sacrifice down into seven constitutive elements: selection, association, identification, killing, heating, apportionment, and consumption; see McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: a comparative study of sacrifice* (The Johns Hopkins University Press 2008) 29-33. While she is clear that not every element must be present for a ritual to qualify as a sacrifice, the ability of a number of the ‘self-sacrifice’ narratives I describe here to fit into her scheme is still extremely tenuous. One may describe the death of a soldier in battle with the formal language of McClymond’s system (selection-association-identification-killing), and the question of whether the soldier can function as priest, patron, and victim, or whether some of those roles must be transferred to other actors may be an interesting avenue for investigation, incidents such as Anne’s ‘sacrifice’ of her literary ambition is difficult to fit into a schematic predicated on the manipulation of physical elements. I focus on McClymond’s system here because it is both the most recent and the most flexible attempt at a theory of sacrifice; earlier works tend towards even narrower ritual schematics. See, for example, Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. Peter Bing (University of California Press, 1982); René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*, trans. W. D. Halls (University of Chicago Press, 1964). Theologians have tended to be looser in their use of language, and there is overlap between the technical, anthropological notion of sacrifice and the popular usage (see, for example, my discussion of Bushnell, below); it is from this intellectual tradition that my own use of language here derives.

as sacrificial narratives.<sup>46</sup> As we have seen, this has been a theme throughout Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series—both because, as Irene Gammel has asserted, it was a popular literary theme at the time (even prior to the outbreak of war), and most likely because of the author's own religious convictions. The outbreak of war served to heighten the immediacy of this discourse, and political expedience may have contributed to its gaining a somewhat wider currency.

Where Anne's literary ambitions were a mark of a selfish individuality she had to surrender after Matthew's death in order to integrate herself into the local community, a first step towards her fulfilment as a wife and mother, Walter's literary gift stems from something beyond himself, and reaches fulfilment when he accomplishes his self-surrender. Both the Piper and 'The Piper' come *through*, rather than from, Walter; he says of the poem: 'it *came* to me [...] I didn't feel as if I were writing it—something else used me as an instrument'.<sup>47</sup> Barely twenty-two pages elapse between Rilla learning of the poem Walter has written and her learning of his death, with no news of him appearing in the meantime.<sup>48</sup> There is, then, an implicit relationship between Walter's surrender to the force that brought forth his one great poem and his surrender to death; 'The Piper' (the poem) and the Piper (Walter's visionary gift) appear to come from the same mysterious source. Where Walter's second-last letter brings news of his artistic achievement, his last letter details his final vision:

One evening long ago [...] I saw the Piper coming down the Valley with a shadowy host behind him. The others thought I was only pretending—but I *saw* him for just one moment. And Rilla, last night I saw him again. I was doing sentry-go and I saw him marching across No-man's-land from our trenches to the German trenches—the same tall shadowy form, piping weirdly—and behind him followed boys in khaki. Rilla, I tell you I *saw* him—it was no fancy—no illusion. I *heard* his music, and then—he was *gone*. But I *had* seen him—and I knew what it meant—I knew that I was among those who followed him.

Rilla, the piper will pipe me 'west' tomorrow. I feel sure of this. And Rilla, I'm not afraid. When you hear the news, remember that.<sup>49</sup>

This is not the first instance of Montgomery linking literary accomplishment with the notion of sacrifice; in her autobiography, she not only makes that link explicitly, but also makes an implicit connection between the self-sacrifice of the writer and the soldier:

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<sup>46</sup> See especially McClymond; Marcel Maus, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Arabic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (Norton, 1967); Gregory Alles, 'Exchange', in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, ed. Willi Braun and Russel T. McCutcheon (Academic Press, 1980).

<sup>47</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 167.

<sup>48</sup> The poem is introduced on 167; news of Walter's death comes at pages 187-188. 'The Piper' is mentioned on 179, and Walter mentioned briefly on 185 as Rilla recalls the lighthouse dance, but he is otherwise absent from the narrative at this point.

<sup>49</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 191.

The very day on which these words are written has come a letter to me from an English lad of nineteen, totally unknown to me, who writes that he is leaving for “the front” and wants to tell me “before he goes” how much my books and especially *Anne* have meant to him. It is in such letters that a writer finds meet reward for all sacrifice and labor.<sup>50</sup>

This linkage may appear somewhat odd at first blush, but it has its roots in theology with which Montgomery would likely have been familiar, such as Horace Bushnell’s 1877 work, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*.<sup>51</sup> Bushnell’s book opened with an argument that Christ’s substitutionary atonement involved his ‘bearing of our[sic] sins’ just as a mother bears the ‘pains and sicknesses’ of her child, or

the patriot or citizen who truly loves his country [...] how does it wrench feeling, what a burden does it lay upon his concern [...] when that country, so dear to him, is being torn by faction [...] Then you will see how many thousands of citizens, who never knew before what sacrifices it was in the power of their love to make for their country’s welfare, rushing to the field and throwing their bodies and dear lives on the battle’s edge to save it!<sup>52</sup>

At least two sides of the sacrificial trifecta of Christ, mother, and soldier laid out by Bushnell are illustrated in *Rilla of Ingleside*; the analogy between feminine affection and military service is drawn out explicitly at several points (one of which is in the portion of Walter’s last letter quoted above, in which he refers to Rilla’s work as a continuation of his own), but the linkage between these and the sacrifice of Christ is left undeveloped in the novel. This is not the case in the more general public discourse surrounding the war, in which the analogous relation between the soldier and Christ is drawn out explicitly.<sup>53</sup>

Jonathan F. Vance has already detailed the myriad ways in which this analogy is presented in both discourse during the war and in monuments and memorials produced after the war. In brief, Vance contends that the equation between Christ and the soldier serves both a justificatory and a consolatory purpose. The justificatory purpose, as already mentioned, aligned Britain and the Allied nations with the side of God, transforming what may have otherwise been a rather obscure political conflict into a Holy War, in which

<sup>50</sup> Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 75.

<sup>51</sup> I cannot, of course, speak to what Montgomery may have thought of Bushnell, the controversial American Congregationalist minister; however, his work was sufficiently influential that it is not unreasonable to suppose that her husband would have at the very least have been conversant with the ideas therein.

<sup>52</sup> Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice, Grounded in Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies*, vol. 1 (Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1877) 46-7. Bushnell is presumably writing here in response to the American Civil War, rather than the First World War, which points to an interesting dichotomy between Canadian and American experience entering into the First World War: the American Civil War was the last war fought in North America, and the last war fought by American troops prior to their entry into the First World War. By contrast, Canadians (such as John McCrae) fought under the banner of the British Empire in the Boer War, at the turn of the century. Although the Boer War was geographically more distant, it was a more recent memory of conflict.

<sup>53</sup> Especially notable in this regard is the myth of the crucified (Canadian) soldier, described in Evans 52-58.

Germans and their allies ceased to be viewed as human but instead represented the sin from which Christ died to cleanse the world.<sup>54</sup> The consolatory purpose did not simply align the soldier's sacrifice with that of Christ, but also the soldier's reward; the soldier, like Christ, willingly gave up his earthly life, but in so doing gained the rewards of resurrection and life eternal.<sup>55</sup> This latter treatment of the sacrificial theme grew quickly beyond a mere consolatory gesture and transformed war service into a religious and moral purification, participation in which was highly desirable. This is the attitude which prompted Montgomery's somewhat bizarre equation between her sacrifices as a writer and the soldier about to depart for the front.

The pages of *Rilla of Ingleside* are filled with arguments for women's place in the sacrificial endeavour; when Walter enlists, Rilla protests that 'Our sacrifice is greater than his [...] Our boys give only *themselves*. *We* give them'.<sup>56</sup> This was, until August 1915, quite literally true, as until then Canadian men who wished to enlist required the written consent of their wife or their mother.<sup>57</sup> It was natural, then, that the language of sacrifice would extend to women who actually did sacrifice their loved ones to the war, both to encourage and to acknowledge their contribution, even after the requirement had been lifted.<sup>58</sup> In her study on motherhood and the First World War in Canada, Suzanne Evans notes that some of the earliest war recruiting in Canada and Great Britain relied on images of women and

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<sup>54</sup> See above, note 16. See also Evans 43-76. Note especially Evans 58-60, which discusses the Charles Sims painting *Sacrifice* (c. 1918), from the Canadian War Memorials Fund Collection, which now hangs in the Canadian War Museum at the top of the staircase leading down into the gallery in which the plaster models for the allegorical figures on the Vimy memorial (discussed below) are displayed. The image is dominated by a crucifix, seen from behind, with hints of Christ's legs, arms, and torso peeking out from behind the central beam; beyond that is a pastiche of wartime scenes—figures in civilian dress, mostly women and children, with two elderly men, occupy a narrow strip of snow in the foreground which, judging by the shape of the rustic cabin intruding from the right-hand edge of the frame, as well as the presence of one mother and child figure in First Nations costume, is meant to be Canada; beyond that lies a vast muddy landscape with various scenes of trench warfare; along the top edge of the painting, along the horizontal beam of the cross, is a row nine provincial crests, and immediately below the crests the word SACRIFICE appears in gold lettering. The equation of Canada with Christ (especially through the placement of the provincial crests) or the battlefield with sin, is far from subtle.

<sup>55</sup> Again, Vance dedicates an entire chapter to 'Christ in Flanders'; see Vance 35-72. The emphasis on the soldier's reward of eternal life, and the lengths to which civilians went to claim some connection to the sacrificial endeavour for themselves, seems to imply a background assumption of limited atonement, that Christ's death did not purchase a remission of sins and eternal life for *all* humanity, but only a select portion thereof.

Evans cites a pamphlet put out by the Mothers' Union which instructs mothers whose children are killed in the war that they 'would have "a yet deeper cause for thankfulness that he is among the long roll of English heroes ... [and] far better even than that—the welcome of the King of Kings will greet him—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.'" Maurice Rickards and Michael Moody, *The First World War: Ephemera, Mementos, Documents* (Jupiter Books, 1975) 20, quoted in Evans 85-86.

<sup>56</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 120. See also Epperly 121-122, 125.

<sup>57</sup> Evans 81-82.

<sup>58</sup> Indeed, beginning December 1919, a special medal was struck for wives and mothers of men killed in service to the British Empire: the Memorial Cross. Eventually, an equivalent, and specifically Canadian, medal was struck for mothers only: the Silver Cross. See Evans 101-109.

captions entreating men to fight in their defence.<sup>59</sup> This trope appears several times in *Rilla of Ingleside*; Ken Ford ‘carried the picture of [Rilla] in his heart to the horror of the battlefields of France’, and Walter boards the train that will take him to war thinking that ‘[a]fter all it was not a hard thing to fight for a land that bore daughters like this’.<sup>60</sup> Rilla and her mother consciously strive to embody the image of womanhood that encourages men to fight in defence of the homeland; ‘When our women fail in courage/shall our men be fearless still?’ is an oft-repeated maxim in the book.<sup>61</sup>

The link between the soldier and Christ is clearest in attempts to derive moral meaning from the soldier’s sacrificial death—in much the same way that moral development was derived from attendance at a deathbed prior to the war. However, the latter seemed to require only attendance to be effective; as the war made witnessing death itself, or the moments leading up to it, impossible, survivors had to work harder to derive moral benefit from it. After Walter’s death, Rilla writes in her journal that

my work is here at home. I know Walter wouldn’t have wanted me to leave mother and in everything I try to ‘keep faith’ with him, even to the little details of daily life. Walter died for Canada—I must live for her. That is what he asked me to do.<sup>62</sup>

Just as generations of Sunday School teachers enjoined children to give meaning to Christ’s death by living their lives in accordance with the principles which his sacrifice represented, Rilla and her real-life analogues strive to render the sacrifice of their loved ones meaningful by identifying some principle that they can ‘live for’ as their relatives ‘died for’.<sup>63</sup>

Montgomery, however, also offers an implicit critique of an overly simplistic notion of sacrifice-as-exchange at the end of *Rilla of Ingleside*, when, as the war draws to a close, and Jem Blythe is numbered among the missing (he is in a German Prisoner of War camp, although the Ingleside family have no way of knowing this), Bruce Meredith, the son of the local Presbyterian minister, drowns his beloved pet kitten:<sup>64</sup>

‘Why did you do that?’ Mrs. Meredith exclaimed.

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<sup>59</sup> Evans 78-81; more generally, Evans 77-112. See especially Evans’ discussion of the White Feather Campaign, in which women attempted to shame men into enlisting by presenting them with white feathers, meant to denote cowardice—Evans 82-84; see also J. L. Granatstein and J. M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Oxford University Press, 1977) 39; also Desmond Morton, *Marching to Armageddon* (Lester & Orpen 1989) 27; Morton, *When Your Number’s Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Random House, 1994) 50, 59. Montgomery’s Walter is himself the recipient of a white feather prior to his enlistment; see Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 81, 166.

<sup>60</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 134, 127.

<sup>61</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 40, 116; see also also 162, 221, and especially 247.

<sup>62</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 230.

<sup>63</sup> See especially Vance 50-51, 72, 89, 126, 217, 219.

<sup>64</sup> Montgomery tends to use the motif of a dead kitten to signify a corruption or betrayal of innocence. See also Montgomery, *A Tangled Web* (McClelland and Stewart, 1931) 303-306.

‘To bring Jem back’, sobbed Bruce. ‘I thought if I sacrificed Stripey God would send Jem back. So I drowned him—and, oh mother, it was *awful* hard—but surely God will send Jem back now, ‘cause Stripey was the dearest thing I had [...]

Mrs. Meredith didn’t know what to say to the poor child. She just could *not* tell him that perhaps his sacrifice wouldn’t bring Jem back—that God didn’t work that way.<sup>65</sup>

This passage stands in sharp contrast to earlier passages in which Mr. Meredith himself employed a sacrificial discourse.<sup>66</sup> Young Bruce is portrayed as taking his father’s doctrine too literally, lacking an adult perspective that would enable him to discern between the (national) self-sacrifice his father calls for and the other-sacrifice in which he himself engages.



Figure 2: Cross of Sacrifice, Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery, Neuville-St. Vaast

<sup>65</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 261

<sup>66</sup> e.g., Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 50-51, in which he argues that ‘Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins [...] Without shedding of blood there is no *anything*’.

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## BURIAL

The sacrificial theme carried over into the construction of post-war monuments. When constructing the battlefield cemeteries, the Imperial War Graves Commission strove to maintain a uniform treatment of every grave in every cemetery, obliterating any differences in rank or social standing between the men (and they were almost exclusively men) buried there, emphasizing the equality of each soldier's sacrifice, as well as the commonality of their service to the Empire (in much the same way as the group funerals of 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Athens).<sup>67</sup> Thus, not only were the headstones absolutely uniform in size and shape (though their inscriptions varied widely), the cemeteries themselves each contain roughly the same elements.<sup>68</sup> Graveyards of 1,000 occupants or more include the Stone of Remembrance, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the same architect responsible for the London Cenotaph.<sup>69</sup> The Stone is large, about twelve feet long, and in both its horizontal orientation and its situation on top of three steps is meant to resemble an altar.<sup>70</sup> It bears the simple inscription, chosen by Rudyard Kipling: 'Their name liveth for evermore'. The inscription is from Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 44.

Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.  
 The Lord hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from  
 the beginning. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for  
 their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring  
 prophecies;  
 Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning  
 meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions:  
 Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing;  
 Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations;  
 All these were honoured in their generations and were the glory of their  
 times.  
 There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises  
 might be reported.  
 And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though  
 they had never been, and are become as though they had never been born;  
 and their children after them. But these were merciful men, whose  
 righteousness hath not been forgotten.  
 With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance, and their  
 children are within the covenant.  
 Their seed standeth fast, and their children for their sakes.  
 Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.

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<sup>67</sup> See Hynes 271; Longworth 13-14; Vance 61.

<sup>68</sup> Longworth 34.

<sup>69</sup> 'The Structural Maintenance of the Commission's Cemeteries and Memorials', pamphlet, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Maidenhead.

<sup>70</sup> Longworth 36.

Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore.<sup>71</sup>

The context of the quote chosen for the Stone is nearly as important as the quotation itself; the parallel drawn between ‘famous men’ and those ‘which have no memorial’ in Ecclesiasticus finds concrete expression in the design of the cemeteries put forth by the Imperial War Graves Commission, which does not differentiate between the graves of generals and those of soldiers ‘Known Unto God’. In spite of the scriptural source of the quotation, however, the Stone is, generally speaking, a fairly nondescript and religiously neutral memorial; it promises eternal life, but no bodily resurrection; it makes no appeal to any specific faith.<sup>72</sup> In this, it is unlike the Reginald Blomfield designed Cross of Sacrifice, which is present in every cemetery, regardless of size, ‘a tall finely proportioned stone cross, with a symbolic sword of bronze attached to its face, thus emphasising both the military character of the cemetery and the religious affiliation of the majority of the dead’.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, however, the conflation of sword and cross emphasizes the link between the soldier’s sacrifice and that of Christ, suggesting that the eternal life promised by both the Christian faith and the inscription on the Stone of Remembrance was directly linked not just to the soldiers’ ostensibly voluntary surrender of their lives, but to the militant context in which that surrender occurred. In the larger graveyards, where the Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance are both present, there is usually an area of tension between them, a line of sight from which the headstones radiate outwards—a wide spread of death between resurrection and eternal life. In the Tyne Cot Cemetery at Passchendaele, the largest of the Commission’s cemeteries, there is a clear line of sight between the Stone, the Cross, and the entrance gate. The Cross stands at the centre of this configuration, clearly visible from either end of the cemetery, but obscuring the view between the Stone and the entrance.

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<sup>71</sup> Ecclesiasticus 44:1-14, King James Version. I have chosen here to refer to the translation from which Kipling took his quote, rather than the more technically accurate NRSV.

<sup>72</sup> Indeed, James Stevens Curl notes that ‘[m]uch of the classical language used for the cemeteries was criticized for being pagan’; see Curl, *A Celebration of Death: An introduction to some of the buildings, monuments, and settings of funerary architecture in the Western European tradition* (Constable, 1980).

<sup>73</sup> Longworth 36.





*Figure 3: Stone of Remembrance, Canadian Cemetery No. 2, Neuville St. Vaast*

## MOURNING THE ABSENT

As we have seen, Montgomery's war writing tends to utilize language and imagery that was quite common to the more general Canadian (and, indeed, British) discourse regarding the war, in both the wartime and the post-war years. It should not be a surprise, then, that her images of death and mourning in *Rilla of Ingleside* also represent, or hint towards, a set of images and experiences more common to Canadians in general than specific to one (fictional) family on Prince Edward Island. While Walter's life is filled out with unusual details such as his poetic and prophetic gifts, his death is narrated sparingly, with very little detail to distinguish him from the hundreds of thousands of other young men who died in combat.

The striking elements which distinguish the narration of Walter's death from the deaths in previous novels are delay and distance.<sup>74</sup> Five days pass between Walter's death and his family hearing of it; a further unspecified length of time passes before Walter's last words are delivered to Rilla—along with a letter from his commanding officer, assuring the family that 'he had been killed instantly by a bullet during a charge at Courcellette'.<sup>75</sup> Vance notes that such letters were sent to comfort rather than inform; they were 'more often than not used to hide from relatives the horror of the facts. After the war, this subterfuge was accepted as reality'.<sup>76</sup> He goes on to note the common trope of the soldier dying with a smile on his face: 'The beauty of the passing, manifest in a beatific smile, grew out of a sense of deep satisfaction of a job seen through to the end', the same sort of satisfaction expressed by Walter in his final letter to Rilla (discussed above).<sup>77</sup>

The events of Walter's death are exactly reversed from the events of Montgomery's pre-war death narratives. His final words do not precede his dying, but rather arrive a considerable time afterwards. His body is entirely absent, save for the brief mention of his 'painless' passing in his commanding officer's letter, which Montgomery may have intended sincerely, but a contemporary reader conscious of the trope behind the letter cannot read as an honest representation of Walter's demise. There is no funeral, and no memorial service is recorded in the novel. Walter has no grave.

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<sup>74</sup> The other death which features these elements is that of Dick Moore, whose death in Cuba went unreported for thirteen years (see above, note 9) in *Anne's House of Dreams*, the other novel Montgomery wrote during the War.

<sup>75</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 190.

<sup>76</sup> Vance 99.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

Instead of the body and grave which were the focus of Montgomery's earlier death narratives, Walter is mourned through words. Rilla carries his last letter 'unopened to Rainbow Valley and read it there, in the spot where she had had her last talk with him'.<sup>78</sup> Where Anne's sight of Matthew's body opened her eyes to the reality of his death, Rilla's contact with Walter's final letter convinces her of his eternal life:

For the first time since the blow had fallen Rilla *felt*—a different thing from tremendous hope and faith—that Walter, of the glorious gift and the splendid ideals, *still lived*, with just the same gift and just the same ideals. *That* could not be destroyed—*these* could suffer no eclipse. The personality that had expressed itself in that last letter, written on the eve of Courcelette, could not be snuffed out by a German bullet. It must carry on, though the earthly link with things of earth were broken.<sup>79</sup>

The repetition of 'earthly/earth' in the final line here is reminiscent of the description of Ruby Gillis's body before it underwent the purification of death: 'her beauty had been of the earth, earthy'.<sup>80</sup> Walter has no body in which this purification may be observed; rather, it is his personality that is cleansed—primarily cleansed from fear, as detailed in the final letter that Rilla holds in her hands. The letter becomes a substitute for Walter's body, the site at which the morally instructive effects of his death may be observed. It also substitutes for his body as the site at which those who mourn him can make their final contact with him, as Montgomery did by kissing her dead mother's cheek. Rilla shares the letter with Una Meredith, a childhood friend who she strongly suspects was in love with Walter; moved by Una's silent grief ('her eyes were the eyes of a woman stricken to the heart, who yet must not cry out or ask for sympathy'), Rilla offers her the letter to keep, and 'Una took the letter and when Rilla had gone she pressed it against her lonely lips'.<sup>81</sup> It is worth noting that through all of this, Rilla and the rest of the Ingleside family do manage to maintain the role of gatekeeper to Walter's memory that is accorded to family members in Montgomery's earlier death narratives, although they must defend that role against outsiders who attempt to ascribe alternate meanings to Walter's death.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 190.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* Compare with the sources quoted in Vance 44-47.

<sup>80</sup> Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 108.

<sup>81</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 193.

<sup>82</sup> See especially Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 189, in which Susan argues with a neighbour who refers to 'Pore, pore Walter', maintaining that 'He was *not* poor. He was richer than any of you. It is you who stay at home and will not let your sons go who are poor—poor and naked and mean and small—pisen poor, and so are your sons [...]', and 194-195, in which the one of the village girls criticises Rilla's refusal to don full mourning as indicative of a lack of feeling.

Montgomery's patriotic Blythe family defend Walter's memory from being used to undermine the state, whereas Antigone and Klara Becker from *The Stone Carvers*, discussed below, attempted to defend their loved ones' memories from being appropriated *by* the state; in all cases, however, the principle is that the family of the dead person must defend their right to ascribe meaning to that person's death.

Anne planted a rosebush on Matthew's grave, and returned frequently, often at significant points in the narrative (and her life) to tend the bush and the grave. Rilla, instead, sits in church as the war draws to a close, 'looking up at the memorial tablet on the wall above [the family] pew, "sacred to the memory of Walter Cuthbert Blythe,"' and feels 'filled anew with courage', and the certainty that 'Walter could not have laid down his life for naught'.<sup>83</sup> Rilla seeks consolation from the tablet much as she might have from a grave; the notable difference between the two is that Walter's body is in no way present at the tablet.

Walter's body is unavailable as an object of consolation not simply because of the difficulty involved in recovering it from France, but because in 1915 or 1916 the British government determined that no soldier's body should be repatriated, whether they be English, Canadian, or Australian; instead, the soldier was to be 'buried on the spot where he falls'.<sup>84</sup> At first, this practice was simply a practical response to the realities of combat; Fabian Ware's unit began its work of registering graves simply to have a record of where bodies were, so that when hostilities ceased they could be interred in a more permanent fashion—most likely in a common ossuary, as were Athenian soldiers in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>85</sup> However, as the war progressed from a race to capture territory into the trench warfare that characterised the majority of action on the Western Front, 'burials became concentrated rather than scattered', and Ware began to feel pressure to seek a more permanent solution to the problem of burial.<sup>86</sup> He eventually negotiated a permanent grant of land from France for British cemeteries; the death of British soldiers bought the Empire the right to the land on which they fell.<sup>87</sup>

The negotiations over the land France granted for cemeteries reveals the importance accorded to gravesites. The French government originally proposed to provide both the land and the maintenance of the cemeteries; Ware objected to this 'since, in providing for

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<sup>83</sup> Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 235. It should go without saying that the sense in which Montgomery uses 'memorial' here is to indicate a commemorative marker, rather than in the technical sense which I proposed in Chapter One.

<sup>84</sup> *MT, Hilkebot melakhim*, 6:12 (Hershman 223)--although it is highly unlikely that the British authorities were thinking of Maimonides when this decision was made. Samuel Hynes, who dates this decision to 1916, notes that 'the spot where he falls' was a rough guideline only; 'there were more than twelve hundred patches of soldiers' graves in France alone at the end of the war, and these were eventually consolidated'. See Hynes 271. The 1916 date is also cited by Curl 319. Phillip Longworth suggests that the decision against repatriation originates in a March 1915 order issued by Marshall Joffre 'banning exhumations during the period of the war', and that eventually this order took on more permanent force; see Longworth 14.

<sup>85</sup> Longworth 1-2, 11, 14.

<sup>86</sup> Longworth 11.

<sup>87</sup> Longworth 11-12.

upkeep it might have prevented Britain from caring for the graves of her own soldiers'.<sup>88</sup> The activity of tending a grave, as Anne did Matthew's, or as Antigone wished to do for Polynices', was understood to be significant enough that ensuring that those who did the tending were of an appropriate relation to the deceased (even if the relation was no stronger than 'fellow citizen') entered into an international negotiation as a major concern. However, there does not appear to have been a similar drive to ensure that those whose particular relationship to the deceased (ie, familial) would, by custom, entitle them to tend the grave were able to do so. In this regard, the military burial practices of the British Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century CE are a strong parallel to the military burial practices of the Athenian Empire in the mid 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. And just as in Athens, the public reaction was mixed. At least one body was disinterred and repatriated during the war, in spite of the general order to the contrary; Ware became concerned that this might set a precedent that 'would increase the demand at home for repatriation'.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, Vance recounts two separate instances of Canadians attempting to reclaim their relatives' remains after the war. In both cases, the bereaved relations (parents of the dead soldiers) eventually travelled to France to dig up their sons' graves in the hopes of personally transporting their remains back to Canada; both attempts failed.<sup>90</sup>

While public demand for repatriation may have been high enough to concern Ware, the majority of public concern was directed at the gravesites, rather than the bodies themselves. Providing photographs of graves—images of names—became part of the Graves Registration Commission's regular work from March 1915 onwards.<sup>91</sup> By August of that year, demand was such that the Commission had developed a standard system for responding to such requests: letters of enquiry were answered with a photograph that showed four graves, one of which would be the grave of the soldier enquired about (photographing the graves in groups of four permitted a more efficient use of time and film than would photographing individual graves), and a card on which 'were given certain particulars, including the best available indication as to the situation of the grave and, when it was in a cemetery, directions as to the nearest railway station which might be useful for those wishing to visit the country after the war'.<sup>92</sup> The demand for these photographs indicated a concern for the care and upkeep of the graves, but also points towards the

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<sup>88</sup> Longworth 12.

<sup>89</sup> Longworth 14; the body was 'of a British officer, a Lord Lieutenant, and a grandson of W. E. Gladstone'; it was 'disinterred under fire at Poperinghe and sent home "in obedience to pressure from a very high quarter"'.  
<sup>90</sup> Vance 62-63.

<sup>91</sup> Longworth 15.

<sup>92</sup> Fabian Ware, introduction to Sidney C. Herst, *The Silent Cities* (Methuen 1929) vii, quoted in Longworth 15.

development of a system of substitutionary mourning.<sup>93</sup> Where a body and grave were unavailable, mourners compensated with artefacts (such as letters) and images of the grave.

### *PRAYER FOR THE DEAD*

Mourners in the British Empire did not compensate for the inaccessibility of the body of the deceased soldier through material memorials alone. Alan Wilkinson informs us that ‘In 1914 public prayer for the dead was uncommon in the Church of England; by the end of the war it had become widespread’.<sup>94</sup> As the elaborate Victorian system of public mourning steadily eroded, public prayer for the departed gained popularity.<sup>95</sup> While Montgomery omits mention of prayer from *Rilla of Ingleside*, a similar, though not identical, move is evident in the worship resources produced by The Presbyterian Church in Canada (to which Montgomery belonged) at the time; while there are still no prayers *for* the dead present in Canadian Presbyterian post-war liturgy, there is a marked increase in prayers which mention the dead and appeal to their memory as a moral exemplar.<sup>96</sup>

In June 1914, prior to the outbreak of war, the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion reported that a volume which would eventually be printed as *The Book of Family Devotion* was ‘on the way to completion’ and may be ‘ready for June or October’.<sup>97</sup> Although the book was not actually published until 1919, due largely to the interruptions of the War, its form was mostly set before war was declared. It contains only one prayer that mentions the dead at all, ‘A Memorial of those who are at Rest’, under the heading of ‘Occasional Prayers/Within the Family’:

O Thou Lord of all worlds, we bless thy Name for all those who have entered into their rest and reached the Promised Land where thou art seen face to face. Give us grace to follow in their footsteps, as they followed in the footsteps of thy holy Son. Encourage our wavering hearts by their example, and help us to see in them the memorials of thy redeeming grace and pledges of the heavenly might in which the weak are made strong. Keep alive in us the memory of those dear to ourselves whom thou hast called out of this world, and make it powerful to subdue within us every

<sup>93</sup> Concern for upkeep of graves led to the development of a horticultural program as early as 1915; see Longworth 15-16, 20-21; Vance 61.

<sup>94</sup> Wilkinson 176.

<sup>95</sup> See Wilkinson 173.

<sup>96</sup> In both the case of the Church of England and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, however, caution should be exercised to avoid confusing the available documentary evidence with the totality of liturgical practice—ministers may have composed *ex tempore* prayers of which there is no remaining record. See Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500-2000* (Ashgate, 2008) 139-140. The following discussion refers only to the official resources published by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and makes no attempt to account for liturgical innovation on the part of individual ministers.

<sup>97</sup> *A&P* 40 [1914] 279.

vile and unworthy thought. Grant that every remembrance which turns our hearts from things seen to things unseen may lead us also upwards to thee, till we, too, come to the eternal rest which thou hast prepared for thy people.<sup>98</sup>

By contrast, the 1922 *Book of Common Order*, the preparation of which began during the war, contains a prayer of thanksgiving or remembrance for the departed in every morning and evening service, as well as including three different prayers of Special Intercession under the heading ‘Commemoration of Those Faithful Unto Death for the Commonweal’, and inserting mention of the dead into one of the prayers of General Intercession.<sup>99</sup> Although the dead are mentioned with a much greater frequency, the language of the prayers is mostly consistent with that of the single prayer in the 1919 *Book of Family Devotion*, with the focus falling on expressions of gratitude to God for the lives of the departed, and petitions that their memories may continue to set examples of faithful living to those who remain. However, several prayers are clearly influenced by the events of the war: a prayer in the First Morning Service, and the first two Special Intercessions for ‘Those Faithful Unto Death’.

The ‘Thanksgiving for the faithful ’departed’ in the First Morning Service is remarkable primarily for the militance of its language:

Blessed Lord, with whom do live the spirits of those departed in the faith, and who hast said unto us by Thy Spirit, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: enable us to be followers of them as they were followers of Christ; and so to run our race with patience, and to fight the good fight of faith, that, our course being finished and our warfare accomplished, we

<sup>98</sup> *The Book of Family Devotion* 59.

<sup>99</sup> The preparation of the book was recommended in the 1915 Report of Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion, *A&P* 41 [1915] 279. The prayers mentioned may be found in the *Book of Common Order for use in Church Services and Offices* (Oxford University Press, 1922) 14 (First Morning Service), 21 (First Evening Service), 28 (Second Morning Service), 34-35 (Second Evening Service), 64 (General Intercession), 89-90 (Special Intercessions).

It should be noted that, unlike what Wilkinson claims for the Church of England, the Church of Scotland’s liturgy (on which The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s liturgy was partially based) included a very brief prayer of remembrance in the ‘Short Form of Intercession especially for use when there is a celebration of Holy Communion’:

We remember before Thee all those departed in the faith; the holy apostles and prophets, the evangelists and pastors; the blessed martyrs and confessors; and all Thy saints who have gone before.

See *A Book of Common Order: Being Forms of Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Ordinances of the Church*, fifth edition (William Blackwood and Sons, 1884) lxxiv. This prayer appears, unchanged, in the twelfth edition of the same book, published 1929. No such prayers appear in the Free Church’s *A New Directory for the Public Worship of God: founded on the Book of Common Order (1560-64) and the Westminster Directory (1643-45) and prepared by the Public Worship Association in Connection with the Free Church of Scotland*, second edition (MacNiven & Wallace, 1898). However, James Ferguson, *Prayers for Common Worship: Morning and Evening Every Lord’s Day Throughout the Course of the Christian Year* (Allenson & Co., 1936) treats ‘The Remembrance of the Blessed Departed’ as a distinct moment in the order of prayers (following, as it does in the Canadian *Book of Common Order*, the general Intercessions); while Ferguson did not compile his volume at the behest of any church committee, this does indicate an eventual increase in the importance ascribed to such prayers of remembrance.

may join the innumerable company of the redeemed: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who ever liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end.<sup>100</sup>

The petition for aid to ‘fight the good fight of faith, that, our course being finished and our warfare accomplished, we may join the innumerable company of the redeemed’ is strikingly similar to the just war rhetoric employed by preachers during the war—as well as an invocation of the specific memory of the soldiers who died in the war, rather than the more general population of the dead (those who died primarily of illness or old age).<sup>101</sup> The desire expressed to be ‘followers of them as they were followers of Christ’ constructs an analogical relationship between ‘the dead which die in the Lord’ and Christ.<sup>102</sup> This analogy is that of a moral exemplar, in which Christ’s example of self-sacrifice leads others to emulate it, just as the ‘Memorial of those who are at Rest’ in the 1919 *Book of Family Devotion* included a petition to ‘Give us grace to follow in their footsteps, as they followed in the footsteps of thy holy Son’. In both cases, the example of the dead points the living towards the example of Christ, turning their hearts from things seen to things unseen and leading also upwards to God; the striking difference is that the 1922 *Book of Common Order* appeals specifically to a violent exemplar. It is, however, a bloodless violence; nowhere does the prayer indicate that ‘to fight the good fight of faith’ or to ‘accomplish’ warfare might involve inflicting actual physical damage upon another person’s body, or suffering the infliction of physical damage upon one’s own body—although, by 1922, the presence of veterans returned home with missing arms, legs, or eyes (to name but a few of the more immediately obvious physical injuries that marked veterans) may have been a sufficient reminder of the actualities of warfare that there would be no need to elaborate further.

The language of the first two Special Intercessions for ‘Commemoration of Those Faithful Unto Death for the Commonweal’ is, theologically speaking, a far greater departure from earlier forms. The second of these makes recourse to the language of John 15, but subtly shifts the emphasis away from God’s action through humanity (and especially the dead) and onto the actions of the dead:

O Lord, who hast taught us that man hath no greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends: grant that their devotion may bear good fruit in us and in the generations coming after them, that we leave not their work unfinished, but in the might of such love likewise ever strive for a cleaner earth and a closer heaven.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> PCC *Book of Common Order* 14.

<sup>101</sup> Vance 36-36.

<sup>102</sup> In formal terms, the relationship is [congregation : dead :: dead : Christ].

<sup>103</sup> PCC *Book of Common Order* 89-90.



The role of God in this prayer is to guarantee the success of the mission begun by the dead: ‘grant that their devotion may bear good fruit in us [...] that we leave not their work unfinished’, rather than to engage in any form of ‘work’ directly or through the congregation (the line is not ‘that we leave not *Your* work unfinished’, or even ‘that we leave not the work You began through them unfinished’). Likewise, the first of the three Special Intercessions under the heading offers praise to God ‘for all those through whom Thou hast blessed us in our earthly welfare’, including

those who gave themselves mightily in defence of freedom, mercy and good faith among the nations; especially for comrades and dear kindred whom we remember before Thee with undying affection; for those who in life and death have quickened our lives, and through whose sacrifice we live.<sup>104</sup>

This is a sharp shift from the idea of Christ and the dead—especially the war-dead—as co-workers of atonement, twin moral exemplars. Instead, the soldiers ‘who gave themselves mightily in defence of freedom, mercy, and good faith among the nations’ are figured as offering a substitutionary atonement; it is they, rather than Christ, ‘through whose sacrifice we live’.<sup>105</sup>

The conflation of the dead soldier with Christ was an understandable move during and immediately after the war, when the familiarity of the sacrificial discourse could help to reassure an unusually large number of mourners that, in spite of the widespread disruption of accepted and expected structures of grief, some portion of the world retained a semblance of normalcy.<sup>106</sup> However, the sacrificial narrative became suspect as the years

<sup>104</sup> PCC *Book of Common Order* 89.

<sup>105</sup> This language remains in use in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, especially in Remembrance Day services—see the two sample liturgies available through the PCC’s website: ‘A Liturgy for Remembrance Day’ <[http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm\\_send/269](http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/269)> accessed 11 August 2009; ‘A Remembrance Day Service for November 11, 2007, Theme: The way to peace’ <[http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm\\_send/899](http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/899)> accessed 11 August 2009.

<sup>106</sup> The progression of discourse about the war can be analysed according to stage models of grieving, such as those put forth by J. Bowlby and C. Parkes, ‘Separation and Loss’, in *The Child and His Family: vol. 1, The International Yearbook of Child Psychiatry and Allied Professions*, ed. E. J. Anthony and C. Koupernik (Wiley, 1970) 197-216 [numbness, yearning/protest, disorganization/despair, reorganization] or Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (Tavistock, 1973) [denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance]—although Kübler-Ross’s work focused on the stages of a population of terminally ill patients’ acceptance of their own deaths, rather than grief over other people’s deaths. Recent research has problematised the stage model; see Paul K. Maciejewski, Baohui Zhang, Susan D. Block, and Holly G. Prigerson, ‘An Empirical Examination of the Stage Theory of Grief’, *Journal of the American Medical Association* 297, no. 7 (2007). Maciejewski et al. argue that the process of mourning is not as clear-cut a progression as the image of distinct stages would imply; each of the classic ‘stages’ are present to a certain extent throughout the process of mourning, with disbelief or denial declining sharply over the first year post-loss.

At the beginning of the grieving process, when numbness/denial are prevalent, the impulse to maintain the status quo comes to the forefront; this, as well as the yearning impulse identified by Bowlby and Parkes, is apparent in the development of the system of substitution which I have discussed above. The interest in photographs of gravesites—and the drive to make these gravesites as attractive as possible—can be read not as an attempt to deny the traumatic nature of the war, or the reality of death, but as an attempt to maintain a link to both the absent body and to the customs that previously

passed on and the majority of society moved from an expression of grief based primarily in denial and yearning to one mostly characterised by anger and disillusionment.<sup>107</sup> The result of this is a marked contrast between what the First World War memorials were designed to convey and the way that contemporary visitors read them. This contrast will be explored in the final chapter of this section.

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characterised the normal course of life and death. The engagement with sacrificial discourse serves a similar purpose; Vance has argued that such language primarily served to assure the civilian public that ‘whatever concerns they may have had about the losses of war, God was in his place and all was right with the world’ (Vance 65). The progression beyond these early stages to the point at which protest, despair, and anger are prevalent is apparent in the shift to the literary discourse of disillusionment chronicled by Watson.

This is an imperfect analogy, as the models of grieving processes cited above are oriented towards individuals, and the transformation of mourning in the First World War was a broader cultural shift. However, just as individual models of memory have provided a framework for describing social and cultural memory, the language of grieving stages provides a framework for describing the way a society copes with large-scale loss.

<sup>107</sup> This shift is apparent even within Montgomery’s work; the second half of *The Blythes are Quoted* is a collection of vignettes from after the First World War; it concludes with the following exchange between Anne and Jem:

ANNE, *steadily*:- “I am thankful now, Jem, that Walter did not come back. He could never have lived with his memories ... and if he had seen the futility of the sacrifice they made then mirrored in this ghastly holocaust ...”

Jem, *thinking of Jem, Jr., and young Walter*:- “I know ... I know. Even I who am a tougher brand than Walter ... but let us talk of something else. Who was it said, ‘We forget because we must’? He was right.”

Montgomery, *The Blythes are Quoted* 510.

# MAKING MEMORY SOLID:

## JANE URQUHART AND THE CANADIAN NATIONAL VIMY MEMORIAL<sup>1</sup>

The moon sank lower into a black cloud in the west, the Glen went out in an eclipse of sudden shadow—and thousands of miles away the Canadian boys in khaki—the living and the dead—were in possession of Vimy Ridge.

Vimy Ridge is a name written in crimson and gold on the Canadian annals of the Great War. “The British couldn’t take it and the French couldn’t take it,” said a German prisoner to his captors, “but you Canadians are such fools that you don’t know when a place can’t be taken!”

So the “fools” took it—and paid the price.

L. M. Montgomery, *Rilla of Ingleside* 208.



Montgomery's fiction provides a useful window into the way that practices and understandings of death, mourning, and commemoration shifted from before the First World War to the period immediately following the war. However, the view from that window is necessarily limited: it is the perspective of one woman, close to the events about which she writes. However influential *Rilla of Ingleside* has been in terms of carrying and constructing the memory of small-town Island life during the First World War, and in the minds of young girls (the intended audience of the *Anne of Green Gables* series) throughout the world, it does not tell much about the way that the memory of the war has changed over the decades since its end, nor does it tell us much about the ways in which the dominant narrative of the war (of which *Rilla* is very much a part) has been contested or undermined.

Montgomery, for example, recognises that 'Vimy Ridge is a name written in crimson and gold on the Canadian annals of the Great War', but was in no position to predict the mythology of nation-building that sprang up surrounding the Battle of Vimy Ridge in the years following the war. The assault on Vimy Ridge the morning of 9 April 1917 marked the first time the Canadian Corps fought together as a unit, and therefore, according to a pamphlet put out by the Canadian Battlefield Memorials Commission, marked 'the first appearance of [a] young nation in arms'.<sup>2</sup> The post-war years were dominated by the need to demonstrate that the war had been fought—and won—for a purpose; Vance notes that, on the whole, 'Historians have been only too happy to aid and abet this process by articulating a vision of the war as a nation-building experience of signal importance', and the battle of Vimy Ridge has been widely figured as the root of that nation-building experience.<sup>3</sup>

Vance suggests that Vimy's place at the centre of the Canadian nation-building myth is as much a result of the post-war monument-building activity as the decisions made by the CBMC were reflective of the historical and military significance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The original commemorative scheme put forth by the CBMC called for

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<sup>1</sup> A much earlier—and shorter—version of this chapter appears under the same title in *Bringing Landscape Home in the Writings of Jane Urquhart*, ed. Dorota Filipczak (University of Łódź Press, 2009); while my reading of *The Stone Carvers* has not altered significantly, my understanding of the monument has benefitted from additional historical and archival research. I hope I may be forgiven for re-using the title, which I have found to be too apt an expression of the themes under examination to abandon.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission (CBMC), *Canadian Battlefield Memorials*, (King's Printer, 1929) 80-81; quoted in Vance 67.

<sup>3</sup> Vance 9-10. See also the essays collected in the volume edited by Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci, Mike Bechthold, eds., *Vimy Ridge: a Canadian Reassessment* (Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), especially Hayes, Iarocci, and Bechthold, 'Afterthoughts' 313-317. See also Pierre Berton, *Marching as to War*, (Doubleday Canada, 2001) 178; John Martenson, *We Stand on Guard: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Army* (Ovale, 1992) 154.

identical monuments at the eight battlefields (including Courcellette, where Walter Blythe was killed) put into that Commission's charge by the Imperial War Graves Commission.<sup>4</sup> A general competition for the design of all the monuments, announced in December 1920, yielded two entries which 'were of too high a standard to be rejected and were too original to be repeated eight times'.<sup>5</sup> One of these was an entry by the Ontario sculptor Walter Allward.

Allward described his design in a letter to André Ventre, the Chief Architect of the French Historic Monument Commission, as follows:

I am enclosing a description of the Memorial which accompanied my model in the competition.

[...] The long walls are intended to suggest a line of defence, and also to be in harmony with the long and clean cut line of the Ridge.

The two Pylons were an endeavor to create an outline against the sky, that would not be easily confused with towers or other landmarks, also, the pylons and walls suggest the upper part of a Cross. In the afternoon when a shaft of sunlight will break through the space between the pylons, and, illuminating part of the sculptures, will suggest a cathedral effect.

[...] From my youth I have admired the qualities in the work of your great sculptors, and in making my design for Vimy, I endeavored to erect a memorial which might be acceptable to your people, fully appreciating their high regard for Art, and consequently the necessity for something artistic spiritual and broadly human in its expression<sup>6</sup>

This letter suggests that Allward's original design was drafted with Vimy Ridge in mind, contrary to Vance's recounting of the Commission's competition and deliberations; the copy of Allward's original competition submission available on the Veterans Affairs Canada website shows a design not substantially different from the monument that now stands, although the entry does note that it is 'intended for Vimy Ridge or any site on high ground or a slight grade – base of pylons can be altered to suit perfectly level sites'.<sup>7</sup>

The papers stored in the Allward Archive at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario include a large number of sketches, showing what appear to be iterative re-workings of the concept for the Vimy memorial, varying the number of pylons and their

<sup>4</sup> Vance 66; Laura Brandon, *Art or Memorial? The forgotten history of Canada's war art* (University of Calgary Press, 2006) 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Vance 67.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Allward to Ventre, dated 12 April 1926, from the Walter S. Allward Archive, Queen's University, Kingston, ON. I have taken the liberty of correcting obvious typing errors.

<sup>7</sup> <[http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/images/vimy90/galleries/04\\_monument/01\\_competition/compete20\\_lg.jpg](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/images/vimy90/galleries/04_monument/01_competition/compete20_lg.jpg)> Accessed 20 January 2010. The alterations from the proposal are very slight: in the final structure, the area of the platform behind the pylons is enlarged to permit visitors to approach from behind the monument, and all the figures are carved out of marble, rather than cast in bronze as originally proposed.

Other entries in the competition may be seen at <[http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=memorials/ww1mem/vimy/sg/04\\_monument/01\\_competition](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=memorials/ww1mem/vimy/sg/04_monument/01_competition)>.

spatial relationship to one another, shifting their orientation from horizontal to vertical, and altering the location of the figure groups on and around them.<sup>8</sup> As Allward was not in the habit of dating or labelling his sketches, it is impossible to determine which of these are preliminary and which represent him reworking the visual elements of the Vimy memorial at a later date, either for his own amusement or as a beginning point for other projects.<sup>9</sup> The sketches do, however, speak to certain formal and symbolic preoccupations which governed Allward's creative life.

Allward's letter to Ventre maintained that his goal in constructing the two pylons was 'to create an outline against the sky, that would not be easily confused with towers or other landmarks', but his sketches tell a slightly different story. He arranges and rearranges clusters of rectangular pylons in forms that are reminiscent of the skyline of a medieval cathedral city. In the final monument, this effect is less obvious, but still evident in the stepped shaping at the tops of the pylons.

Allward's praise of French artistry in his letter to Ventre is no empty platitude; both his sculptural work and his figure drawings reflect a strong awareness of the conventions of French academic art, in sharp contrast to the modernism that was making its mark on the art world at the time.<sup>10</sup> His employment of classical idiom made him an extremely popular

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<sup>8</sup> Jay Winter's essay in the forthcoming volume, *Memory, Mourning and Landscape*, ed. Elizabeth Anderson, Avril Maddrell, Kate McLoughlin, and Alana Vincent (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010) proposes a distinction in the symbolism between horizontal and vertical axes, in which 'The horizontal is the axis of mourning. The vertical is the axis of hope'. This distinction holds well both in Allward's sketches and in the final memorial (the 'Mourners', for example, and the 'Helpless' female figure, recline along a horizontal axis, while the allegorical figures stand in triumph on top of the very tall, vertical pylons).

<sup>9</sup> There is, for example, a strong resemblance between the Vimy sketches and a set of sketches for an unrealised monument to Sir Fredrick Banting (who discovered insulin), and a similarly unconstructed monument to the Second World War. The Banting monument is more horizontal in orientation, but there is at least one sketch with an arrangement of horizontal elements similar to sketches positively identified as Banting sketches by the Queen's archivist, and with lettering on the front suggesting it is meant to be a monument to the Great War.

The lack of dates on the sketches is not the only difficult puzzle in the Allward archive; his son, Hugh, records in a letter to E. A. Gardner dated 19 November 1968 that 'On return from England, probably with a sense of frustration or even fury, I believe Dad in all or in part edited and destroyed correspondence relating to the Memorial'. The correspondence which survives sheds some light on the creation of the memorial, but, like the sketches, or Montgomery's journals, should be approached with caution, and by no means as a complete record. A majority of the letters from Allward, for example, survive without signature, indicating that they are quite probably drafts and may differ slightly from what was actually sent. (The reliability of Hugh Allward's allegation is itself undermined, as he goes on to say that his father 'had no office in London only the Studio and hence his letters were written longhand', a remark which is belied by a fair number of typewritten letters with letterhead from Allward's studio at 16 Maida Vale, London.

<sup>10</sup> Evans 124; see also Vance 102-110. Modernism was rendered especially unpopular by the war; the art critics of Britain and Canada 'linked modern painting to German *Kultur*, then, after the October Revolution, to Bolshevism', Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War* (University of Toronto Press, 1984) 6. Hynes notes a 'War Memorials Exhibition' held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, 1919, which 'amounted to a demonstration of what *tradition* meant; here were the forms in which the dead had been memorialized over the past two thousand years, and here was evidence that those forms were still alive [...] And no doubt the grieving families [...] took comfort in the fact that their memorials looked like the others that commemorated earlier deaths in earlier wars' (Hynes

designer of public monuments, and lent a comforting veneer of familiarity to projects which may otherwise have been too complex, costly, or avant-garde.<sup>11</sup> The Vimy memorial project was all three. Its construction took sixteen years, and its final cost severely over-ran the original budget.<sup>12</sup> The twin pylons are reminiscent of the classic cenotaph form, but their proximity causes them to resemble, especially from a distance, a cenotaph cleft down the middle—a fractured monument.<sup>13</sup>

Allward's design was, as indicated in his letter to Ventre, intended to convey the ideas of sacrifice (the horizontal and vertical elements of the monument representing 'the upper part of a cross', the entire monument suggesting a cathedral, and the 'Spirit of Sacrifice' stretched out cruciform on the altar between the two pylons) and unity (the twin pylons representing the continuing allegiance and goodwill between Canada and France). The form of the monument, however, the large cleft running down the centre of the 'united' pylons, undermines these ideas, just as the years since the monument's design and construction have brought a change in popular understanding of the war. The disillusionment that Watson charted through English literature can be readily read into the imagery of the monument; walking through the site brings the visitor into contact with not only the high ideals which characterised the discourse of the war, as recorded by Montgomery, but also the transformation those ideals have undergone in the decades since.

It is somewhat telling that the unity that Allward and the CBMC were most concerned with expressing at the Vimy monument was between France and Canada, rather than between the French and English populations within Canada. Nowhere in the correspondence archived at Queen's is there any expression of concern that the monument

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273). However, Hynes is unconvinced that the standard vocabulary of war monuments was truly satisfying to postwar society, moving quickly from his discussion of the V&A exhibit to an investigation of 'new' forms of memorials, such as books and paintings, which were generated after the war. One might, however, recall works such as Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, or Turner's 1824 painting of the Battle of Trafalgar (or even Benjamin West's depiction of the death of General Wolfe at the battle of the Plains of Abraham, which appears at the opening of the previous chapter), and question how truly new these forms were; Hynes is more convincing when he turns his attention to an exhibit entitled 'The Nation's War Paintings' and the critical incomprehension which greeted images by men who had served in the war, concluding that '[w]hat the "War Paintings" show demonstrated was that the war's paintings could never be made to constitute a monument in the customary sense, that such a collection would continually refute itself, continually shift, in any viewer's eyes, from monument to anti-monument, from glory to death' (Hynes 275). What Hynes finds fatal to 'a monument in the customary sense', the ability for a work's meaning to exist in a constant state of renegotiation with its audience, is precisely what I find compelling about memorials such as Vimy.

<sup>11</sup> See Brandon 11-12.

<sup>12</sup> Vance 68-69.

<sup>13</sup> Brandon also notes the similarity of the Vimy memorial's structure to more traditional monument forms, and further notes that 'the most traditional memorial in Canada was a column—for example, that to Generals Wolfe and Montcalm in Quebec City' (Brandon 11).

be hospitable or comprehensible to French Canadian soldiers or their families.<sup>14</sup> Rather, the memorial, and the committee behind it, relies on the assumption of a united Canada. Vance writes that

on a domestic level, historians have had to admit that the Great War was as divisive as it was unifying. Four years of battle, both in the trenches and at home, did not create a single nationalism, but instead strengthened the two nationalisms of French and English Canada; both societies gained a greater appreciation of their separate identities from the experience of war.<sup>15</sup>

The division between French and English Canada was apparent from the earliest stages of the war. The first wave of 36,267 volunteers to sail for England with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, beginning 29 September 1914, included only 1,245 French Canadians.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, only 9,635 of the others were English speakers born in Canada; the rest were immigrants, primarily from the British Isles. While provincial borders are not a sure guarantee of ethnicity, it is still notable that the percentage of the adult male population that enlisted from Quebec—the main centre of French Canadian population—was not terribly different from the percentage that enlisted from Ontario (0.7, compared to 0.9).<sup>17</sup> However, as the war wore on, the numbers of volunteers from Quebec dropped sharply in relation to the other provinces.<sup>18</sup> By 1917, the proponents of the Military Service

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<sup>14</sup> By contrast, there are a number of letters concerned with the monument's reception in France. In addition to the above cited letter to Ventre (in which Allward indicates that 'because of the sympathy which existed between the French, and the Canadian soldiers, and the people, I have taken the liberty of introducing the Fleur-de-lis on a corner of the second wall'), there is a letter from Walter Allward to Colonel Osborne, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1927; Osborne to Allward 6<sup>th</sup> December 1928; Allward to Osborne 16<sup>th</sup> December 1928. Two letters discuss the necessity of repeating inscriptions in both English and French (Allward to Osborne, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1929; Osborne to Allward, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1935) with no mention made of why this repetition was deemed necessary.

<sup>15</sup> Vance 10.

<sup>16</sup> Granatstein and Hitsman 23.

<sup>17</sup> Nearly half (15,232) of the first contingent of the CEF were English, with an additional 7,979 volunteers of Scots, Irish, and Welsh origin—see Granatstein and Hitsman 23. Percentages of adult male population to enlist taken from Brown and Loveridge 78, Chart F. Brown and Loveridge base their percentages on the population figures from the 1913 *Canada Year Book*, which measured male population 15-44 years old in 1911; the lower end of that spectrum would have been old enough to be eligible for military service by the time war broke out in 1914.

<sup>18</sup> Only 2.4% of the adult male population of Quebec volunteered during the militia recruiting conducted 1914-1915, compared to 3.6% of the adult male population from the Maritime Provinces (including Prince Edward Island), which had the next lowest volunteer rate (and, in fact, had the lowest rate of volunteers—0.4%—in the initial wave). In the period from 1915-1917, only 1.6% of the adult male population of Quebec volunteered, compared to 6% from the Maritimes, which again had the next lowest volunteer rate. By the end of the war, even after conscription, only 9% of the adult male population of Quebec had served, half the 18% of adult male population that served from the Maritimes (the Western Provinces—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia—had the highest rate of military service, with 20% of the adult male population serving by the end of the war). See Brown and Loveridge 78, Chart F.

Incidentally, these figures (as well as other literature on military volunteerism and conscription at the time) suggest that Montgomery's Blythe family, who, without prior militia affiliation or close ties (within two generations) to the British Isles, sent all of their sons into the military by the end of the war, were somewhat unusual for Prince Edward Island.



Act were able to put forth a compelling argument that the Act would, by introducing conscription, ‘at last, force French Canadians to assume their share of the military burden’.<sup>19</sup> The battle of Vimy Ridge itself was fought by a volunteer army, but a mere thirty-eight days afterwards, the threat of conscription caused riots in Montréal.<sup>20</sup> The deeply divisive Parliamentary election of 1917 was fought mostly over the issue of conscription, and the eventual victors, Robert Borden and his Union Government, ‘deliberately set out to create an English-Canadian nationalism, separate from and opposed to both French Canada and naturalized Canadians’.<sup>21</sup> The schism between the pylons, though originally meant to represent the mutual accord between Canada and France, also appears, however unintentionally, to represent the schism in relations between French and English Canada that was deepened by the war, and especially by the conscription crisis.<sup>22</sup>

The ambivalence of the monument extends beyond the two pylons, however. The figures on and around the pylons also tell, perhaps, more than the story that Allward originally intended. As a visitor approaches the monument from the back (the main approach, although it is unclear whether this is by Allward’s own design, or an unintended consequence of the layout of the rest of the memorial park in which the monument is situated), they pass between two reclining figures, one male and one female ‘mourner’.<sup>23</sup> The female holds an open book in her lap, although the pages appear blank (the plaster

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Granatstein and Hitsman argue that the roots of volunteerism or lack thereof go back to the local militias of the 1700s, and that *Québécois* antipathy to service in the military of the British Empire was a long established cultural phenomenon. See Granatstein and Hitsman 5-19.

<sup>19</sup> Brown and Loveridge 64; see also Granatstein and Hitsman 44-46. Granatstein and Hitsman note that animosity between French and English Canada was particularly high at the war’s beginning, and thus divisive political maneuvers would have been particularly effective in that political climate; in 1911, Wilfred Laurier

had been driven from office [as Prime Minister] on the grounds that he, as a *Québécois*, was disloyal to Empire [...] Then in 1912 and after came the Ontario Bilingual Schools Question; as French Canadians across the country perceived it, the provincial government was trying to eliminate the French language in Ontario by destroying it in the schools (Granatstein and Hitsman 27).

See also Morton, *Marching to Armageddon* 28.

<sup>20</sup> Hayes, Iarocci, and Bechthold 316.

<sup>21</sup> Granatstein and Hitsman 78. In turn, the harsh rhetoric directed against Quebec led to an upsurging of *Québécois* nationalism; a motion ‘That this house is of the opinion that the province of Quebec would be disposed to accept the breaking of the Confederation Pact of 1867’ was introduced to the Quebec legislature in January 1918 (Granatstein and Hitsman 82).

<sup>22</sup> This impression is deepened by the placement of all French language inscriptions on the east side of the monument and all English language inscriptions on the west.

<sup>23</sup> The landscaping of the park around the memorial is discussed in a memo Walter Allward’s son, Peter, dictated into his personal file, dated 9 November 1971:

Main approach by 24’ gravel walkway is to the “rear” of the monument; “front” faces the old plain, i.e. the long occupancy by Germans during the siege of the ridge. “Somebody” has levelled and sodded the plain side of the monument and as a result, during wreath laying ceremonies dignitaries have to climb an approximate thirty degree slope to reach the centre of the ceremonies.

If information is not available, it is necessary for D.V.A. to modify on their own and under their own design.

model of the figure on display at the Military Communications and Electronics Museum in Kingston, Ontario, shows a Greek cross on what is, from the figure's vantage point, the top left-hand corner of the page, but either this detail was not included in the final carving or it has weathered away at the monument itself—see figures 4 and 5).<sup>24</sup> The Angel of Knowledge (figure 6), a highly androgynous figure holding a closed book under one arm, looks down from the west pylon; opposite, above the male mourner, the Angel of Truth (figure 7) adorns the east pylon, clutching an olive branch in her right hand. Walking around to the front of the platform from which the pylons rise, the visitor sees the lone, bent figure of Canada in stark outline against the sky (figure 8); turning to face the pylons, there is only a short staircase between the visitor and the figures of the Torchbearer and the Spirit of Sacrifice (figure 9).<sup>25</sup> There are other figures clustered on the top of the pylons. At the top of the eastern pylon is the allegorical figure of Justice, almost hidden behind the large, unbroken sword held in the figure's arms (figure 10); below that figure are Faith and Hope, both with their gaze, and left hands, uplifted; Faith's arm stretches fully above her head, while Hope's is bent at the elbow, the hand level with her shoulder. Faith's right hand clutches a small cross to her heart (figure 11), while Hope's right hand rests by her side, on a larger cross inscribed in the marble behind her (figure 12). On the western pylon, Peace holds a triumphant olive branch above her head, echoing the pose of the torchbearer

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<sup>24</sup> The three plasters at the Military Communications and Electronics Museum—the male and female mourners and the figure of Canada—are kept in very different condition from the ones housed at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Where the curators at the latter have chosen to preserve the pencil marks employed by the sculptors at Vimy, and the grime that accumulates in the wax coating used to seal plaster models, the plasters at the Communications Museum appear to have been treated to a generous coat of slightly glossy white paint, which no doubt renders them more presentable, but has the unfortunate effect of obscuring most traces of the sculptor's hand and the passage of time.

Brandon writes that '[a]n article published just before the memorial's unveiling claims that the mourning figure at the back holding an open book is reading the "roll of death"' (Brandon 14), though she ventures no explanation of the other books on the monument.

<sup>25</sup> Evans reads the figure of Canada, especially, as an example of classical iconography, with her half-bared breast reminiscent of Greek literature, in which it represented the bond of nourishment between mother and son (she also reads the bared chest of Charity in this way, although she fails to account for the similarly exposed breast(s) of Hope, Honour, Truth, or Peace in her scheme); her cowl resembles a mourning veil, and also refers to 'many depictions of Mary', and her gesture, 'reminiscent of Rodin's *The Thinker*', lends her an air of contemplation. More interestingly, Evans notes the proximity between Canada and the Spirit of Sacrifice as highlighting 'the sacrificial element of her character'. See Evans 124-126. Brandon reads the figure of Canada solely as a Mater Dolorosa figure, although she acknowledges the Greco-Roman influences in other figures—as well as the influence of Rodin; see Brandon 12-13. The resemblance between Allward's figures and those of Rodin is also noted by Robert Shipley, who contrasts the neo-classical style of figure evident on the Vimy memorial, with the 'naturalistic' style of figure evident on Allward's earlier Toronto Boer War Memorial; see Shipley, *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials* (NC Press Limited, 1987) 134.



*Figure 2 (above): Female Mourner, Canadian National Vimy Memorial*



*Figure 3 (left): Female Mourner (plaster figure, 1/2 scale), Military Communications and Electronics Museum, Kingston, Ontario.*

*Note the small Greek Cross on the corner of the book held by the plaster figure, and its absence from the book held by the figure in situ on the monument itself.*



*Figure 6: Angel of Knowledge (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



*Figure 7: Angel of Truth (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



*Figure 8: Figure of Canada, Canadian National Vimy Memorial, France.*



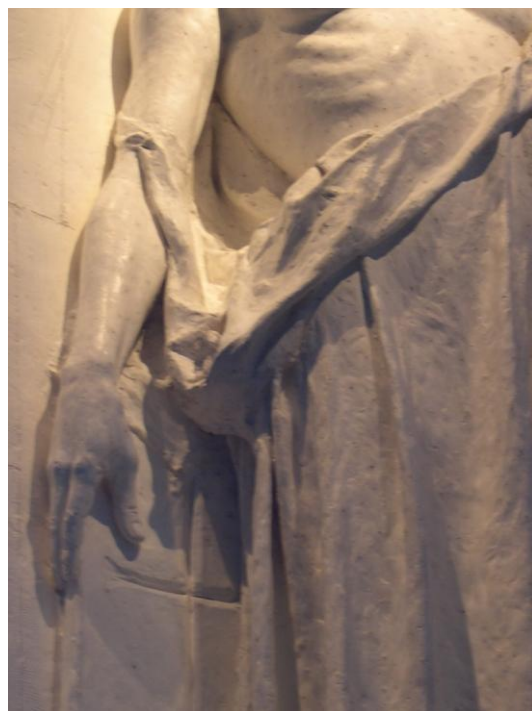
*Figure 9: Torchbearer and Spirit of Sacrifice, Canadian National Vimy Memorial.*



*Figure 10: Justice (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



*Figure 11: Faith (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario. Note the pencil marks, which were used to translate the design from the plaster to the full-scale marble carving.*



*Figure 12: Hope (detail of plaster 1/2 scale model). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



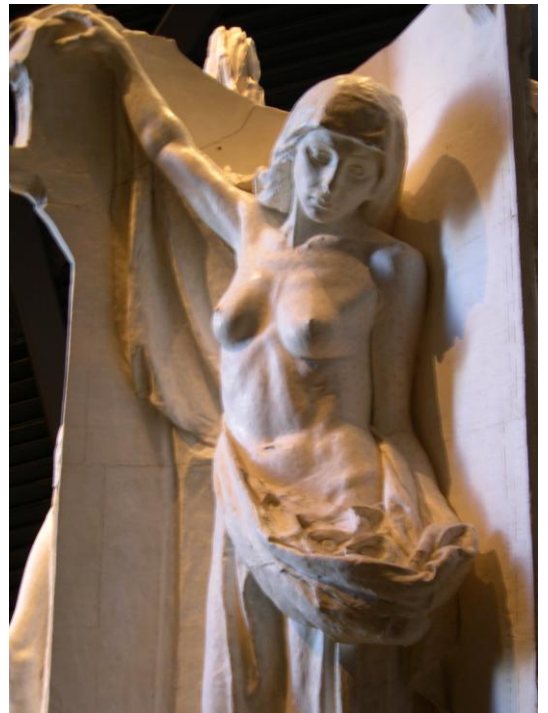
Figure 13: *Peace* (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.



Figure 14: *Torchbearer* (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.



*Figure 15: Honour (plaster figure, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



*Figure 16: Charity (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.*



*Figure 17: Canadian National Vimy Memorial, front view.*





Figure 18 (above): *Breaking of the Sword* (plaster, 1/2 scale). War Museum, Ottawa, Ontario.

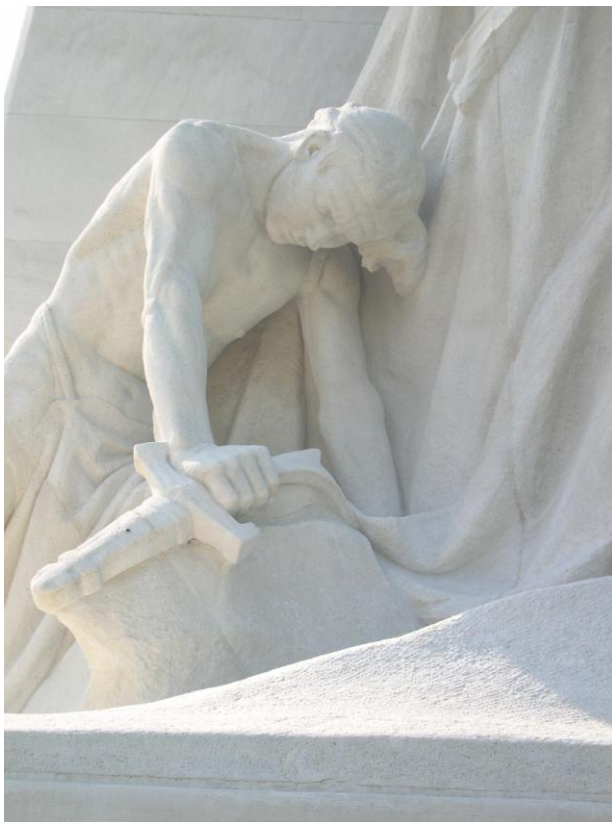


Figure 19 (left): *Break of the Sword* (detail), Canadian National Vimy Memorial.



*Figure 20: Sympathy of the Canadians for the Helpless, Canadian National Vimy Memorial. Note also the cannon, top left.*



*Figure 21: Symbolic coffin with allegorical figures (Canada and pylon groupings), Canadian National Vimy Memorial.*



*Figure 22: Closeup view of the figure of Canada, Canadian National Vimy Memorial.*



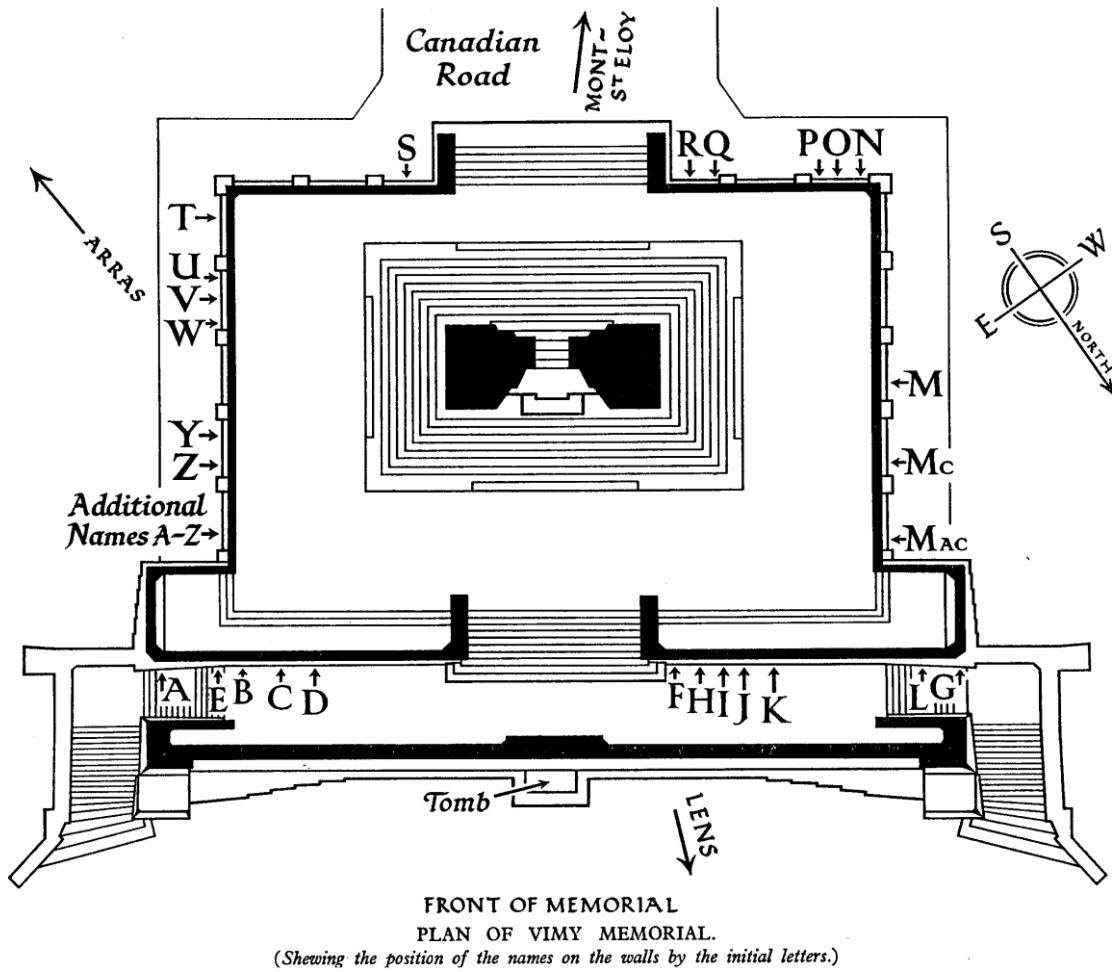


Figure 24: Site diagram of Canadian National Vimy Memorial, courtesy Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

below (figures 13 and 14). She is supported by Honour, holding yet another book, open to reveal blank pages (figure 15), and Charity, with a basket full of poppies (figure 16).<sup>26</sup>

The visitor has to proceed along the upper rampart and down a flight of steps before being able to view the monument in its entirety, from the front (figure 17). From this vantage point, four more important elements come into view. From the upper rampart, the barrels of two cannons, draped in laurel garlands, point out towards the plain—and the viewer. The rear of these cannons is also visible from the upper rampart, but their place in the overall design of the monument is not clear until they are viewed from the front. Two large figure groups stand at either end of the base of the rampart. To the south is the *Breaking of the Sword* group (figure 18): two heroic male figures gaze off towards the centre point of the monument, while behind them, a smaller and less well-clothed man strains to bend a sword over a rock (figure 19). To the north is the *Sympathy of Canadians for the Helpless* (figure 20): one heroic male figure stands tall, gazing out over the plane, with a supporting arm around a smaller male figure, half kneeling, with gaze directed up, though not quite at the central figure; to the other side, a seated male holds a bowl over the head of a huddled, naked female figure. At the centre of the wall, underneath the gaze of the figure of Canada on the wall above, is a stone sarcophagus, symbolic of all the Canadians who died in the war (figure 21).

The pervasiveness of carved poppies around the site, as well as the centrality of the Torchbearer figure, call to mind the last stanza of John McCrae's poem, 'In Flanders Fields'. On the surface, Allward's design appears to support the inherent rightness of McCrae's argument, showing Peace triumphant, yet inescapably supported by both the scenes of sacrifice and mourning that adorn the base of the monument and by the other allegorical figures that adorn the pylons. One might also note that there is no allegorical figure of Mercy to be found anywhere on the monument. Jonathan F. Vance has presented an extremely convincing, historically contextualised reading of the Allward corpus as representative of the militant triumph of civilisation over the forces of barbarism, of pacifism as a privilege that could only be won at the point of a sword.<sup>27</sup> However, the monument also undermines this allegorical argument. The carved vegetation—even the poppies—appears wilted. The books held by three of the figures hold out the promise of knowledge, or understanding, but what they offer is a blank page, or a permanently sealed

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<sup>26</sup> The details of the figures at the top of the pylons are almost impossible to discern from the ground; even with the aid of binoculars or a telephoto lens, the angles of the monument mask most of the figures' upper bodies. In this regard, the plasters at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa are an invaluable aid.

<sup>27</sup> See Vance 27; 32-33.

binding.<sup>28</sup> A certain weariness and strain seems to settle around the shoulders of even the most heroically posed figures. The figure of Canada mourning her dead seems startlingly old to be placed on a memorial to ‘the first appearance of [a] young nation in arms’ (figure 22).<sup>29</sup>

The triumph here seems muted, the hope held out a distant one—as, indeed, Vance maintains Allward intended. Peace is not shown immediately triumphant, but rather supreme long after the memory of the current struggle has faded from view. But the belief in a war to end all wars is fainter, now, than it was in the 1920s and 1930s, when Allward created the monument; the signs of decay built into the design speak of abandonment, of precisely the broken faith that McCrae’s poem warned of, rather than the eschatological lying of lions with lambs that a simpler reading of the monument would suggest. The hope expressed at the end of the First World War is tarnished by a contemporary viewer’s awareness of the horrors of the Second World War, begun a scant three years after the monument’s completion, and of all the other wars that have been fought since then, with no end any longer in sight. The monument is a memorial; it brings forth the idealism that characterised the discourse of the First World War out from the realm of history and into the visitor’s own immediate, lived experience, but it does not do so without also bringing forth some of the cynicism and awareness of failure that the intervening decades have attached to those ideals.

The double-image produced by the memorial, of both high ideals and the failure of those ideals, is nowhere so haunting as when the viewer’s gaze is directed at the 11,285 names which adorn every vertical wall around the outside of the monument’s base save for the very front (figure 22). These are the Canadian soldiers who went missing from the battlefields of France—whose bodies were either never found, or else found but never identified, but buried under headstones bearing the inscription ‘A Soldier of the Great War Known Unto God’ (figure 23). The names were the last element of the monument to be decided upon, and much of the correspondence in the archive at Queen’s involves a debate over how they ought to be incorporated into the overall design.<sup>30</sup> Allward himself originally

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<sup>28</sup> This could also be read as an invitation to the viewer to create their own text from the disparate elements of the memorial.

<sup>29</sup> CBMC 80-81.

<sup>30</sup> As noted above, the functions of the Vimy memorial evolved over time. Jacqueline Hucker has argued that the finished monument has three distinct functions: (1) marking the site of the battle of Vimy ridge, (2) to be ‘this country’s principal monument in Europe honouring the valour of all Canadians who fought in the First World War’, and (3) to ‘serve as testament to those Canadians who lost their lives in France and whose bodies were never identified’. She notes that it was designed with function (2) in mind, its location was determined by function (1) (not until 1922, according to Brandon 9), and function (3) was decided upon only after the design and location were finalised. See Hucker, ‘“After the Agony in Stony Places”: The Meaning and Significant of the Vimy Monument’ in Hayes, Iarocci and Bechthold 284.

favoured carving them into the floorstones, after the fashion of gravestones in European cathedrals, although he was overruled by the rest of the committee. In the final design, the list of the missing begins on the southeast corner of the wall immediately behind the front rampart, and continues in horizontal lines, counterclockwise, around the outside of the base of the structure (see figure 24). The layout of the names is unusual; most local monuments, and the Menin Gate at Ypres, where the names of Canadian missing from Belgium are inscribed, list names in vertical columns. By carving names across, rather than down, each wall, Allward achieved a far more uniform, textural effect; the names bleed into and become part of the structure itself—just as the bodies of the missing soldiers became part of the landscape.<sup>31</sup>

It is easy to read these names as a reproach, rather than a roll of honour.<sup>32</sup> It is difficult to find a comfortable balance between the collective identity represented by the monument and the individual identities represented by each name. It is at this point that a return to fiction once again becomes helpful—not, as was the case with Montgomery’s work, for its historical value, but as a way of imaginatively reconstructing the balance between individual and collective, of grappling once again with the tension between civic and familial identity, body and name, that formed the subtext of *Antigone*.

## THE STONE CARVERS

Jane Urquhart’s novel, *The Stone Carvers*, is a family drama that begins in Shoneval, a fictional small town in southern Ontario (based loosely on the real town of Formosa), but reaches its climax at the site of the construction of the Vimy memorial.<sup>33</sup> The book

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<sup>31</sup> This way of laying out the names was inspired by the ‘Soldiers’ Tower’ built in the early 1920s at the University of Toronto; see letter from Colonel H. C. Osborne to Allward, 18 October 1926. The decision was, however, as much practical as it was aesthetic; carving the names horizontally permitted more names to fit into a space that was not originally designed to accommodate them, as attested by an undated letter from Allward to Osborne (to which the 18 October letter appears to be a reply).

The bodies of missing soldiers did not fade into the landscape simply as a consequence of their lack of burial; the landscaping of the memorial park surrounding the Vimy monument continually suggests battered bodies in the negative space of the shell craters that have not been ploughed level as the rest of the surrounding countryside—and the land immediately surrounding the monument itself—has. The land is as wrinkled as a mountain range seen from the air, as puckered as the skin of a burn victim. The velvety texture of the grass and the sensuous play of light across the curves of the earth draw attention to the fact that this is the land after 90 years of wind and rain have had time to soften the edges of the craters; the connection to what the land must have looked like during the war, and what artillery that could do this to the landscape must have done to the bodies of the soldiers there, is immediate and visceral.

<sup>32</sup> This division over the meaning given to memories of the war is not unusual. For a discussion of this in relation to Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers*, discussed below, see Anna Branach-Kallas, ‘Carving the Names of “Not-Persons”’: Ex-centric Perspectives on Community In Jane Urquhart’s *The Stone Carvers*, *Central European Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d’Études Canadiennes en Europe Centrale* 3 (2003), 69.

<sup>33</sup> Jane Urquhart, interview by Linda Richards, *January Magazine* (June 2001); <<http://januarymagazine.com/profiles/urquhart.html>>, accessed 22 August 2009.

enforces, to some extent, popular myths of the war, such as the memory of an all-volunteer army. All three of the Canadian soldiers described in its pages enlisted well before the passing of the Military Service Act; Tilman Becker, one of the main characters, lost his leg at the battle of Vimy Ridge. However, the high ideals that are given such a prominent place in Allward's monument have little place in the novel's narrative. Eamon O'Sullivan, the lost lover of Tilman's sister, Klara, enlists in spite of protestations from her and from his family (his Irish father threatens to disown him if he goes to fight for the English king) because he wants to learn how to fly an aeroplane.<sup>34</sup> The stories of the other two—Tilman and his friend Giorgio—are far less concerned with reasons than they are with consequences, the toll that the decision to enlist has on the men and their families.<sup>35</sup>

However, Urquhart also subverts these myths. Nobody else in the village that Tilman, Klara, and Eamon come from served in the war; they all received agricultural exemptions.<sup>36</sup> The novel implies that this may have as much to do with political ambivalence, or the desire to remain well outside of European conflicts, in a village settled by mostly German immigrants, as it does with the actual need for farm workers in the area, though this never moves beyond implication, as very few villagers from outside Klara and Tilman's family appear in the book. There is no honour or glory won on the battlefield, least of all at Vimy Ridge, where Tilman loses his leg and Eamon his life. The soldiers' sacrifices do not partake of Christ's resurrection or immortality; as the story opens, Klara's demands for a village war memorial are dismissed by her neighbours as the permissible eccentricity of an unhappy spinster.<sup>37</sup> Later on, Tilman tells of his rather inglorious life as a disabled, unemployed veteran, carving prosthetic limbs for other disabled veterans until

<sup>34</sup> Urquhart 137-138. Eamon's desire for flight is an echo of that which guides Anne and Gilbert Blythe's youngest son, Shirley, to enlist near the end of the war in *Rilla of Ingleside*. However, Montgomery's character successfully navigates the many hurdles on the way to enlistment in the Flying Corps (for a discussion of which see Morton, *Marching to Armageddon* 30-31); Urquhart's, whether due to the difference in timing (Shirley enlists near the end of the war, Eamon at the beginning), socio-economic status (Shirley is the son of a country physician, and his family is well-to-do enough to afford live-in domestic help and send to every child so inclined to college; Eamon's parents are Irish immigrants, farmers, and markedly less well-off than their neighbours), or the historical situation and disposition of the author behind the character, dies having 'never got anywhere near an aeroplane' (Urquhart 162). This is one of many instances in which Urquhart takes an aspect of the popular myth of the war and subtly undermines it.

<sup>35</sup> In fact, although the historical timeline is wrong, Urquhart writes as though the shadow of conscription does hang over Tilman and Giorgio; when war is declared, Giorgio's father, Nicolo, who speaks in negatives at times of great stress, saying the opposite of what he means, says 'It's not war that has been declared in Europe [...] You will *not* have to go'. However, the prophetic tension in this statement (Giorgio and Tillman do not *have* to go at that point; they choose to enlist before conscription would have forced them to) is undermined by the boys' reaction; they 'jumped to their feet with excitement', following in the trope of war as a great adventure (Urquhart 218).

For a lengthier discussion of Nicolo's speech disorder, see Branach-Kallas, 'Carving the Names of "Not-Persons"' 68.

<sup>36</sup> Urquhart 253.

<sup>37</sup> Urquhart 29.



even that work vanishes and he is forced to return to the childhood home he ran away from years before.<sup>38</sup>

In presenting stories that defy, in one way or another, the popular myth of the war, the novel helps to bridge the gap between the idealised image of the faceless, nameless citizen-soldiers of ‘In Flanders Fields’ and the particular, embodied lives represented by the names on the Allward monument.<sup>39</sup> The tension between the two is brought into sharp focus towards the end of the novel, as Klara, having disguised herself as a man in order to travel to France where both she and her brother obtained employment in Walter Allward’s work crew, seeks to use the monument as a means of release from the grip Eamon’s memory has held on her life:

No matter how much it is cherished, an absent face that is a fixed point of reference becomes tyrannical, and tyranny eventually demands revolt, escape. Klara had fled from the memory of Eamon’s face over and over, his bright eyes and perfect skin, now almost two decades younger and more perfect than her own. She had [...] by a fierce act of will [...] almost succeeded in turning him into a faceless ghost, until all that was left was the vaguely human, dark shape of his absence. [...]

Now she would have to remember the bones under the skin, the scar on his left temple, the beautiful, full mouth, his upturned glance and radiant expression when searching the sky for a kite, an aeroplane. Each detail. [...] He had been only a boy, the inquisitive child he had been had never left his face. He must hold the torch aloft, yes, but because this figure would become Eamon and would be looking up toward his beloved ether, his expression must be one of astonishment and joy at finding himself, at last, forever reaching toward the sky. [...] She stood on the ladder, eyes squeezed shut, scraping these images from the deepest recesses of her memory as if using a sculpting tool on the inner curve of her skull. Then she began.<sup>40</sup>

Klara’s imposition of her personal memory onto the monument is disruptive to its function as a nationally unifying memorial; later on in this same scene, Urquhart’s fictional rendition of Walter Allward enters, and, upon discovery of her carving, accuses her of vandalism.<sup>41</sup> The universal, Allward implies, cannot be reached through the particular. The memory of a single, specific face not only cannot encompass the memory of all lost faces, it actually

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<sup>38</sup> Urquhart 231-235; Branach-Kallas, ‘Carving the Names of “Not-Persons”’ 71.

<sup>39</sup> *The Stone Carvers* is by no means the only Canadian postwar novel to challenge the myth of the war, although its connection to the Vimy memorial renders it particularly interesting in the current context. For other Canadian novels with a similar approach—especially to the postwar years—see Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road* (Penguin, 2005); Jack Hodgkins, *Broken Ground* (McClelland & Stewart, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Urquhart 332-333.

<sup>41</sup> Urquhart 336.

works against the ability of any future mourner to project their own particular, absent face onto the monument.<sup>42</sup>

It can be argued, however, that an instance of particularity is necessary to offset the attempt at universal expression which, otherwise, becomes too distant, too impersonal; there must be room to remember the soldier as a brother, a son, a husband, rather than simply as a faceless servant of the Empire. Urquhart's fictional Allward comes to this realisation himself, at the conclusion of the scene:

The face was becoming a portrait, he could see that, but beyond that the expression had about it the trustfulness of someone who did not know he would ever be missing, lost from the earth. This woman had brought a personal retrospection to his monument, and had by doing so allowed life to enter it.<sup>43</sup>

While the introduction of the particular breathes life into Allward's monument, it is only the first step towards easing Klara's own grief. Interjecting her memory of Eamon's physical presence into the monument does not abrogate the actuality of his body's absence. It neither satisfies her yearning nor enables her to find release from the crippling burden of memory that she carries. It does, however, permit Klara to begin to distinguish her own physicality from Eamon's, and to experience her own bodily existence and her sexuality without his mediation. After Eamon's death, we are told, '[h]er body, once awakened, had gone back to sleep, folding in on itself, the skin recognizing only the change of external temperature, or the touch of cloth [...] Anything else she had simply willed away, refused to remember or even dream'.<sup>44</sup> The combined event of the carving and Klara's discovery free her mind from the tyranny of Eamon's remembered face and her body from the restrictions she has imposed on it, first in her life as a respectable spinster, and then in the masculine disguise she adopted to facilitate her journey to the monument.

There are problems with this reading, of course. Klara does not actually reclaim her gender identity willingly, but has it re-imposed on her by the men around her. It is not Klara's choice to abandon her disguise after Allward discovers both her carving and her gender. Klara resists the suggestion that her living quarters be moved out of the men's dormitory, wishing instead to remain with her brother. The worksite supervisor has to insist that she move into the office, '[n]ow that you're a woman'.<sup>45</sup> The gender confusion Klara undergoes in this passage is like that of a young girl, re-learning the boundaries

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<sup>42</sup> It is interesting, perhaps, that Urquhart chose the figure with the least visible face of any on the monument onto which to project her own narrative.

<sup>43</sup> Urquhart 340.

<sup>44</sup> Urquhart 344.

<sup>45</sup> Urquhart 342.

between male and female, re-discovering the limitations her body places on her even as she is freed from the limitations her disguise has placed on her body. However, it is only the renewal of these boundaries that permits Klara to breach the divide between male and female again, by embarking upon another love affair.

It is noteworthy that two of the characters discussed in this section, Klara and Antigone, transgress (or are perceived as transgressing) gender boundaries in their pursuit of proper commemoration for their loved ones.<sup>46</sup> In Klara's case, the transgression is both more overt—her appropriation of masculine dress and mannerisms—and more subtle—her appropriation of Allward's creative prerogative. It is not just Klara's carving that blurs gender boundaries—although she acquired the skill as a side-effect of her grandfather's mostly frustrated attempts to teach Tillman, an early (and small) appropriation of what was meant to be her brother's birthright—but the *success* of her carving, her ability to transform the monument into something richer than Allward intended, which renders her threatening and thus necessitates her firm removal to a more securely female realm.<sup>47</sup> Allward's reflection on Klara's carving emphasises her gender, as if to emphasize the contrast between her gender and her actions: 'This *woman* had brought a personal retrospection to his monument, and had by doing so allowed life to enter it' (emphasis added). However, in the same sentence that contrasts femininity with creative achievement, Klara the childless spinster is endowed with the safely feminine characteristic of life-giving.

This is, however, an ironic statement; Klara's carving may have breathed life into Allward's monument, but it failed to breathe life into Eamon. Klara has the skill to create and alter many different bodies, from the Abbess she carves out of limewood under her grandfather's instruction, to her own gender transformations, but she cannot create the body she most desires. Upon first hearing of Eamon's death, Klara gropes for some physical artefact to serve as a substitute for his body. Her first, failed, attempt at a symbolic substitution to aid her mourning is the re-creation of the red waistcoat she made for him at the beginning of their courtship.<sup>48</sup> We are told that '[s]he believed that once she began to

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<sup>46</sup> Creon is quite concerned not only at Antigone's gender transgression, but at the degree to which her masculinity undermines his own: 'Indeed, now I am no man, but she is a man, if she is to enjoy such power with impunity' (Sophocles 47; ln. 484-485); 'But while I live a woman shall not rule!' (Sophocles 51; ln. 525); 'If we must perish, it is better to do so by the hand of a man, and then we cannot be called inferior to women' (Sophocles 65; ln. 679-680).

<sup>47</sup> As if to underline the gender transgressions inherent in Klara's carving, Urquhart links Klara's first experience of carving with her grandfather's story of the Infant of Prague: 'Klara was delighted by the idea of a boy doll, holy or otherwise, wearing dresses, and she set to work immediately carving the body from an abandoned porch pillar [...]' (Urquhart 96-7).

The gender play around the act of carving in *The Stone Carvers* both relies upon and undermines the gendered idea of creative genius put forth in the *Anne of Green Gables* series.

<sup>48</sup> Urquhart 161, 163.

pull the scarlet thread through the wool, once she was involved in the act of reconstruction, some of her anguish would abate'.<sup>49</sup> She sews the waistcoat as she might have sewn Eamon's pall, and in so doing calls up an echo of the prediction Eamon himself made about the use to which the original waistcoat would be put.<sup>50</sup> Unlike a pall, however, the recreated waistcoat has no ritual purpose; it is not laid in the ground with Eamon's body (it cannot be), but remains in Klara's keeping. It does not, and cannot, grant Klara any release from her grief, its presence instead serving to reinforce the stark fact of Eamon's absence, its outline pointing to the shape of, but not giving form to, the body that fails to fill it. Klara carries that absence, the resultant anguish, and her exacting attempt to reproduce Eamon's physicality, across the ocean with her, just as insistently as she carries the recreated waistcoat.<sup>51</sup> Her carving at the monument is, then, a second attempt at bringing to the absent body enough solidity that she can bury it, and fulfil the mourning ritual that the War interrupted.<sup>52</sup>

The failure of Klara's portrait carving to erase her grief is, in a larger sense, a failure of the pre-existing paradigm of loss and grief to accommodate the experiences of the wartime generation. Mourning rituals focused on the body and gravesite deepen, rather than mitigate, the sense of loss felt when the body and gravesite are inaccessible or non-existent, just as the second waistcoat Klara sews heightens, rather than diminishes, her awareness of Eamon's absence—not simply his absence from her present life, which she has lived with for several years, but also, and perhaps even more, his absence from her future life: the elimination of any possibility of his return or of a reconciliation between them. The emotional void of this double absence is too great to be contained by and disposed of through physical representation. However detailed and memory-laden such representation may be—the waistcoat recalling the awkward hesitancy of early courtship,

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<sup>49</sup> Urquhart 164.

<sup>50</sup> Urquhart 80-81.

<sup>51</sup> Urquhart 258-259.

<sup>52</sup> The obvious question here is why Klara's grief is continually seeking a better substitute for Eamon, where Rilla is capable of fulfilling her mourning with little more than a letter and a commemorative plaque on the family pew. It is not a simple difference of religion—while Rilla is Presbyterian and Klara Catholic, both are quite devout and should be equally capable of being comforted by the promise of eternal life (though it may be a difference in religion on the part of the authors, Urquhart's reticence in regards to her own religious belief prevents this from being anything other than speculation); it may be a difference in the circumstances surrounding Walter's and Eamon's deaths, as Klara's quarrel with Eamon remains unresolved, and she has no final letter by which to be comforted. However, especially in light of the gender transgressions discussed above, I would suggest that another answer to this question is simply that Rilla represents the paradigmatic 'good woman', who never strays from her prescribed role, where Klara, like Antigone, represents the 'bad woman', incapable of being satisfied by the limited role and rituals she is socially permitted. See Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Assumptions and the Creation of Meaning: Reading Sophocles' *Antigone*' *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 109 (1989) 140.

the upturned face of the Torchbearer recalling the reasons behind their quarrel and parting—it cannot contain the full depth and breadth of the absent loved one’s being.

Representation is necessarily finite. It is a collapsing, a flattening, of the real into the symbolic—this is one of the reasons frequently cited for the prohibition against images in Judaism (and Islam).<sup>53</sup> Some forms of representation do this more than others. Klara’s carving, for example, is a highly detailed physical representation; it may even be an exact reproduction of her memory of Eamon’s face. But a representation of a memory of the real thing is not the thing itself, and much less so the person; it is at least one flattening too many. Klara’s attempts at mourning through representation are ineffective because representation itself is fundamentally ineffective for this purpose. What Klara (and, I would argue, the rest of her generation) requires is, instead, abstraction. A carving of Eamon’s face quickly becomes simply a carving of a face, a single representative of the collective generation of doomed youth in whose honour the carving was created, because Eamon’s essence is no longer corporeal. Rather, the corporeality of his essence has been transfigured, and is no longer borne by flesh, or capable of being represented by stone, but can most effectively be contained and approached as word. Eamon’s own face may be lost forever, and a representation of that face may fade from particularity into anonymity, but Eamon O’Sullivan remains Eamon O’Sullivan. The uniqueness of his being is, finally, represented by his name, by a particular arrangement of a series of abstract symbols representing sounds (letters), rather than by a realistic representation of his physical, fleshly, characteristics.

Klara’s refusal to speak his name, to give physical form, however ephemeral, to the idea represented by the symbols, attests to her instinctive appreciation of this fact. So long as Eamon remains unspoken, Klara remains the guardian not just of his memory but of his essence; her intimacy with him is thus considerably greater than it ever could be with Giorgio, and much more bound up in the structure of her own self-identity: ‘[s]he felt that to release the syllables [of his name] into the air all these years later would be a kind of amputation, a violent removal of a part of the self.’<sup>54</sup> The release of this bond, and the culmination of Klara’s mourning, form the dual climax of the book.

After being revealed as a woman, Klara embarks on an affair with her brother’s friend, Giorgio, who is employed at the monument primarily to carve the names of the missing onto its side. Her physical contact with another person enables her understanding of Eamon’s death to move beyond the mostly physical level at which she had experienced

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<sup>53</sup> For a more in-depth discussion, see Jacobs 10.

<sup>54</sup> Urquhart 360-361.

his absence for much of the book. The consummation of their relationship undermines Klara's previous understanding of the war and its costs. In the tunnel system that lies beneath the land on which the monument is being built, 'like extended tangled roots reaching up to the monument above, feeding its construction by their very existence', she begins to learn to release her insistence on the absolute uniqueness of Eamon and his fate.<sup>55</sup> Just as the intimacy she shares with Giorgio in these tunnels demonstrates that Eamon was not the only possible mediator for her sexuality, the carvings that she and Giorgio discover on the tunnel walls demonstrate to the reader that Eamon's fate, however tragic, was shared by many: "I carved the letters of this boy's name yesterday," [Giorgio] whispered, pointing to the second inscription. He shook his head. "And the other... the other was found under the rocks when they cleared the entrance to Grange Tunnel. He was scratched from my list."<sup>56</sup>

The face of the torchbearer became a portrait; the portrait, in turn, fades and takes its place amongst the other allegorical figures that adorn the monument. A certain amount of distance has been imposed between the living and the memories of the dead. Klara, however, continues to cling to her position as the guardian of Eamon's particular memory, supported in this by the silence that she relied upon to insulate her since he went away to the war.<sup>57</sup> Her insistence on maintaining this silence, even against Giorgio's direct questioning, shields her not only from the pain of fully acknowledging Eamon's loss, but also from the vulnerability of fully entering into a new relationship.<sup>58</sup> She can admit Giorgio to the knowledge of her own body, but not to the knowledge of her past; she can display Eamon's face for all the world to see, but she cannot bring herself to speak his name in another person's hearing.

The first of the book's two climaxes comes when Klara does finally speak Eamon's name out loud, and this in itself occurs in two parts: first, her unwitnessed whisper into the dark and, eight pages later, the performance of the speech act in front of Giorgio. It is worthwhile to note that both of these utterances mark a break in the narrative, which picks up afterwards from a different point of view. It is also worthwhile to note that, while the first whisper is presented from Klara's viewpoint, the second vocalisation is seen through Giorgio's eyes; we readers are given only clues as to how and why Klara chooses to speak. The two speech acts are nearly identical: "Eamon," she [whispered/said]. "Eamon

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<sup>55</sup> Urquhart 356.

<sup>56</sup> Urquhart 356.

<sup>57</sup> Urquhart 160, 163.

<sup>58</sup> Urquhart 360.

O’Sullivan.”<sup>59</sup> In the first instance, however, the narrative break occurs immediately after the utterance; in the second, Klara continues to speak: “‘Poor boy [...] He was so young.’” She paused. “And so much time has passed.”<sup>60</sup>

The causal link between the passage of time and Klara’s ability to speak is implicit, but deceptive. While it is true that Eamon has been gone for many years, no more than a few weeks have passed since Klara and Giorgio quarrelled over her initial refusal release Eamon’s name, and in so doing release her hold on his memory (and his memory’s hold on her). What has changed is not time itself, but Klara’s recognition of time. Her journey across the ocean, her carving of the portrait, her experiences with Giorgio, her encounter with the reality of other lives lost, all of these have worked to convince Klara of the distance between her self-identity and her role as the guardian of Eamon’s memory-identity, to make it possible for her to release the syllables of his name into the air, where she can not protect or control them, without committing a violent removal of a part of her self. The days or weeks (the exact amount of time that elapses is unclear) between the two speech acts can be read as the time it takes for Klara to recognise what has, in fact, already happened, and reconcile herself to this new kind of loss, which is also a gain.<sup>61/</sup>

Klara’s release is not yet complete, however: a second act of naming must occur, the final climax of the book. Nicola King has suggested that a final release occurs when a memory is transformed into text.<sup>62</sup> This certainly appears to hold true in the case of Klara’s second naming of (and second attempt to carve) Eamon. Where a representation of his physical characteristics proved unsatisfactory, the abstract shapes of letters are capable of bringing his essence into a form physical enough for Klara to relinquish her hold on his memory:

Klara knew this would be the last time she touched Eamon, that when they finished carving his name all the confusion and regret of his absence would unravel, just as surely as if she had embraced him with forgiving arms.<sup>63</sup>

In carving Eamon’s name on the memorial, Klara not only brings him into sufficient solidity to effect a reconciliation with his memory, she also places him irrevocably in the care of the national collective, a sharp contrast to her earlier attempts to guard and maintain his identity as an individual, or a member of her family unit. To Antigone, the individual personality of a body faded in the face of its overwhelming symbolic

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<sup>59</sup> Urquhart 362, 370.

<sup>60</sup> Urquhart 370. This last sentence is also an echo of an earlier statement by Tilman (Urquhart 366).

<sup>61</sup> A more detailed reading of Klara’s inner transformation can be found in Branach-Kallas ‘Exploring the Dark Tunnels of Memory’, especially pp 64-65.

<sup>62</sup> King 175.

<sup>63</sup> Urquhart 376.

significance. In the Vimy memorial, and other monuments to the First World War, the body itself fades from view, to be replaced by a name which both asserts and obscures individual identity; even in the Imperial War Graves cemeteries, where the normalcy of graves and bodies is preserved, the uniformity of the tombstones overrides the differences in their inscriptions. The carved names do not simply represent the missing; in their ability to contain the complexities and nuances of unique lives, they, at least functionally, have become the bodies of the missing. The arrangement of these names on the Vimy memorial achieves something similar to Klara's experiences in the tunnel, undermining any perceived uniqueness in the manner of each death, even as each carved name embodies the individuality of the life it represents.



## I INTERLUDE:

### BLOTTING OUT AMALEK

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, less than three years after he had returned to Canada, Allward reacted with panic and rage. He deluged the Department of National Defence with telegrams begging for reports and demanding that the memorial be sandbagged against aerial bombardment. As the weeks passed and he received no replies, he retreated into an inner landscape of great bleakness, pacing the house in the middle of the night, imagining the worst [...]

With sharp coloured pencils he began a series of small, secretive drawings, each one more violent, more angry than the last. Tangled bodies littered torn landscapes, burning clots of brimstone rained down from a savage sky. And, in the background, tiny, almost insignificant in the drama, the wreckage of the monument [...]

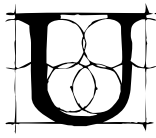
The drawings seemed to feed his belief in catastrophe, his certainty that there was absolutely nothing on earth not subject to vicious attack. In his imagination, and on the rice paper he used, the allegorical figures of his sculptures stepped away from their fixed positions to engage in appalling dramas. Always with the ruins of the memorial smoking in the distance, he drew embracing lovers impaled by a single sword, cairns composed of lifeless bodies, a naked man straddling the torn, prone torso of a woman from whose chest he had snatched her bleeding heart. Allward knew, even before he had completed this particular drawing, that it was his own heart the man held aloft, a trophy steaming in his desperate hands.

He had spent fifteen years of his life obsessed by perfection and permanence [...] He had believed that he was making memory solid, indestructible, that its perfect stone would stand against the sky forever. With this certainty threatened, his world collapsed.

Jane Urquhart, *The Stone Carvers* 380-381



*Figure 25: Tim Davies, European Drawings (2007). Used by permission of the artist.*



Urquhart ends *The Stone Carvers* not with the completion of the Vimy memorial, but with images of its destruction. Working from sketches filed in the Allward Archive as ‘War Cartoons’, she imagines how he became obsessed with the catastrophic scenarios that his own imagination spun out, making drawing after drawing of the monument reduced, or in the process of being reduced, to rubble. The fear of destruction that Urquhart attributes to Allward alone was, in actuality, echoed by the general Canadian public; both the Montreal *Daily Star* and the Toronto *Globe and Mail* published lurid, though ultimately erroneous, accounts of the memorial’s destruction at the hands of German bombers.<sup>1</sup> Both the British and Canadian military attempted to obtain intelligence regarding the memorial’s condition throughout the German occupation of France, hoping to either boost morale with news of its continued endurance, or else derive propaganda value from its wreckage.<sup>2</sup>

‘The calculated barbarism that has characterized post-1939 conflicts has made us loath to admit that there can be anything positive about war’, writes Vance.

Even Canada’s social memory of the Second World War, as just a war as the modern world has seen, is dominated by overtones of negativity. Notions of individual heroism, self-sacrifice, and fighting in a good cause have been pushed to the background by a dominant memory that has come to emphasize mismanagement, injustice, failure, and cupidity.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of this, the Second World War did not itself bring a great challenge to commemoration. In Canada and Great Britain, most localities that had constructed monuments to the First World War simply added another inscription to extend the monuments’ reach over the Second, as well. The great upheaval of the Second World War was not entirely felt until the war’s end, when details about activity within German-occupied territories began to become fully and irrefutably known. The great challenge to the accepted order of the world brought by the years 1939-1945 was not the mass death of soldiers in war, but the mass death of civilians: the Holocaust. While death in the First World War could be folded into a religiously supported Just War narrative, death in the Holocaust defied—and continues to defy—attempts at theological response.

What the sketches Urquhart describes really depict is not the destruction of the memorial itself, nor of the monument-making culture which produced it, but of the dominance of that culture, of the high ideals—and idealism—that the memorial enshrines.

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<sup>1</sup> Serge Durflinger, ‘Safeguarding Sanctity: Canada and the Vimy Memorial during the Second World War’, in Hayes, Iarocci and Bechthold; see especially 293-298.

<sup>2</sup> Durflinger 296-7.

<sup>3</sup> Vance 10-11.

Although there is nothing to identify the figures in the war cartoons as the figures from the monument, the link Urquhart draws between the two, having Allward sketch ‘the allegorical figures of his sculptures stepped away from their fixed positions to engage in appalling dramas’, accentuates the degree to which the Second World War undermined belief in the grand principles the figures represent. Urquhart’s fictional Allward, in despair over the loss of those principles precipitated by the outbreak of another war, engages in an imaginative, visual deconstruction of his own monument, an attempt to blot out the memory he had so carefully constructed.

A similar attempt to blot out the memory of the past—not just the constructed monuments, but the ideas they represent—can be seen in the Welsh artist Tim Davies’s recent series, *European Drawings*. The individual drawings in the series are presented without titles, but are displayed as a long row of identically mounted and framed images of presumably famous landmarks, united as much by their anonymity as by the uniformity of the graphite on their surface. As the viewer walks along the row, one or two familiar sites may come into view: here the London cenotaph, there a familiar face from along the Somme. But then the viewer moves on, the angle of the light shifts, and the surface becomes mirror-like, completely obscuring the image beneath it.

These are not drawings as one normally thinks of drawings. The pencil lines do not conspire to construct any sort of recognizable image. The most readily available visual point of reference is actually the paper beneath the drawn surface, a digital print which has then been furiously scratched out by thick, dark pencil lines. It is not unreasonable to say that the drawing, in fact, works *against* the image. But this is not an act of deconstruction; there is no attentive disassembling of component parts; the pencil lines betray no care for the way either the photograph or the monument which it depicts is composed. Instead, it reads as a deliberately failed attempt at obliteration—I say deliberately failed because the acts of selecting the photograph, of enlarging and printing it, of framing it and placing it on a gallery wall to be viewed, draw to the image the same attention that the graphite overdrawing seems meant to deflect or frustrate.

One wonders what exactly is being obliterated—the image itself, or the monument to which it refers. Or is the hand holding the pencil attempting to reach even further back, beyond the image, beyond the monument, to erase history itself? This last is impossible, and the mind behind the hand must surely know it to be so. However, it is precisely that reach for the impossible that Davies has portrayed. The drawings are a protest against the neatness and finality indicated by the memorial structures themselves. A press release from

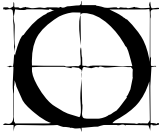
the Collins Gallery, Glasgow (where I first saw these images) quotes Davies saying that he used the drawings as attempt ‘to get my head around the concept of loss and futility’.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of futility is enforced by the second, smaller set of ‘drawings’ in the series. Rather than building up a drawn surface in front of them, Davies has pierced the images from behind, with the pattern of pin-pricks focused most heavily around the figurative element of whichever monument is portrayed. The pin-pricks are like shrapnel wounds. Inside each one is a tiny drop of red, as though the image of the memorial has taken on, or been given, some of the characteristics of the wounded flesh to which it attests. The injury of the absent injured body is brought back into view, even while its absence is underscored by the substitution of an image of a memorial figure for a body, or even an image of a body. The second set of drawings enforces the futility of the exercise undertaken by the first: what has been done cannot be undone; history cannot be blotted out; some losses are, in the end, irretrievable.

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<sup>4</sup> Collins Gallery, ‘Tim Davies: Cadet 31 March-5 May’, press release (2006).

position God's memory Rosie University time may  
 face past place still however death  
 outside reading Image  
 within Vera ed. Molmann  
 humanity Evil relationship presence  
 Oxford Ravel made rather Raphael Ben's  
 suffering image church also towards covenant  
 critique essay Maya's liturgy even Anthony family like  
 language final theurgy years Judaism text  
 Berlin Israel though theological work Roth's John New  
 school another Patrick liturgical way old  
 Jakob life Part Three museum  
 Encountering home Blumenthal's Davis later people  
 community book just Rubenstein  
 Coventry one example World  
 tower hope Blumenthal children attempt  
 space first especially narrative encounter end  
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 Theodicy two Jews German Ben especially see experience tradition  
 part world present Jews German Ben especially see experience Post-Holocaust  
 worship never  
 See However  
 human Holocaust Cathedral story



n a quiet street of what was formerly East Berlin, not terribly far from Checkpoint Charlie, a crowd shuffles through the door of an old courthouse.<sup>1</sup> A few at a time, they pass through a narrowly-guarded gate, down a steep and twisting flight of stairs (figure 26), into a sloping corridor with tiled floors, dully reflecting the glare of the institutional fluorescent lights overhead. The angles at which this corridor is cut across by two other, nearly identical, passageways are more reminiscent of a funhouse than a hospital (figure 27). These intersections seem to provide the visitors a multitude of potential destinations, though all are dead ends—even the recommended route up another long, steep flight of stairs is only the beginning of a long digressive path that will eventually deposit the visitor right back in the subterranean maze.

The journey, in this case, is as important as the destination. Following the stairs up into the permanent exhibition space of the Daniel Libeskind-designed Jewish Museum Berlin propels visitors through a chronological recounting of the entire two thousand year history of German Jewry, from the earliest settlers, through the flourishing of Medieval Ashkenaz, to the Enlightenment and the Jewish Reform movement, the First World War, and beyond. This approach is a deliberate strategy on the part of the museum's curatorial team to present the German Jewish experience in terms that extend beyond 'Auschwitz and guilt.'<sup>2</sup> The overarching meta-narrative of the historical presentation is one of 'continuous struggle'; in this respect, the Holocaust is integrated into the narrative, rather than being figured as an interruption, or a terminus.<sup>3</sup> The gallery presentation is complex and nuanced, drawing out individual narratives as counterpoints to the anti-Semitic stereotypes which characterise common historical images of the German Jew, emphasizing instead the close integration between Jewish and German cultural identities.<sup>4</sup>

All of this combines to enhance the sense of loss felt by the visitor when they return to the underground corridors and choose between the remaining destinations—three dead ends. They may walk up the sloping corridor to the outdoor Garden of Exile, with its dizzying, disorientingly tilted pillars, symbolically abandoning the rich cultural heritage they have only just learnt to appreciate. This is the path of escape; the other two options each lead to one of the 'Voids' for which the building is famous, both of which house representations of the Holocaust.

The first of these, the 'Memory Void', houses a work by Menashe Kadishman, entitled 'Fallen Leaves'—a floor littered with thousands of pieces of iron, in various states

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<sup>1</sup> Rolf Schneider, 'The Jewish Museum Berlin', *Die Neuen Architekturführer* no. 2 (1999) 21.

<sup>2</sup> Museum director W. Michael Blumenthal, quoted in Kathrin Pieren, "Being Jewish is more than the Holocaust experience": What visitors see at the Jewish Museum Berlin' *Social History in Museums* 29 (2004) 79.

<sup>3</sup> Pieren 82.

<sup>4</sup> Pieren 81.

of rust, cut to resemble human faces; it resembles the infamous piles of shoes on display at Auschwitz (figure 28).<sup>5</sup> A plaque near the entrance to the void invites visitors to walk across the floor, over the faces; few even attempt it, and most of those manage only one or two hesitant steps before retreating. This space feels like the climax of the entire journey: the wall of the tower is perforated by openings on all the building's other floors, and so the room has drifted in and out of visibility as visitors have made their way through the exhibit, with each subsequent encounter bringing the room closer, rendering its contents more visible. This room, however, is but the final preparation for the last void. Down a different corridor, an attendant waits to usher visitors through a heavy door into another concrete tower. Unlike the 'Memory Void', this one is nearly windowless (indirect light leeches in from somewhere near the top of the room) and completely unadorned (figure 29). Libeskind has referred to this space as a 'voided void'; it is the ultimate blank wall on which to project memories of all the experiences that preceded it. The effectiveness of the space as a memorial specific to the Holocaust depends upon the presence of Kadishman's work in the Memory Void, and upon the visitor's encounter with it; without that final, visceral encounter with human figures piled up like detritus, the voided void would risk becoming an overly stylized image of loss, much like the Mémorial de la Déportation in Paris (figure 30). In the latter, a visitor appreciates the symbolism of descent and entry into an enclosed space; here in Berlin, they experience the sense of hopelessness and captivity that the Parisian memorial alludes to.

The integration of a museum component to memorial sites is a particular feature of Holocaust memorials. Auschwitz has been transformed into a museum, as has Dachau; even the most cursory internet search for 'Holocaust Memorial Museum' reveals, in addition to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Montreal, and the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., countless similar sites scattered throughout North and South America, Europe, and Australia. Not two kilometres away from Libeskind's site stands The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a field of concrete stellae designed by Peter Eisenman (remarkably similar to the pillars which sprout up from the Garden of Exile) which rises over a hidden, subterranean museum complex (figure 31).<sup>6</sup> The heart of this museum is the Room of Names, a dark room, empty save for a few benches in the middle, upon the walls of which are projected, one at a time, the names of Holocaust victims, along with their dates of birth and death, if known (figure 32).

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<sup>5</sup> Schneider 26.

<sup>6</sup> See Eisenman, 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe', *Materials on The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, published by The Foundation for the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Nicolai, 2005) 10-13.



As each name is projected, a brief biography—sometimes little more than place of birth and date of deportation—is read in German and English. Just as Liebeskind’s voided void depends upon the visitor carrying the experience of the museum into the space with them, the impact of the Room of Names depends not just on the preceding two rooms of the museum, but on the thousands of concrete stellae that the visitor had to walk through before descending into the museum at all.<sup>7</sup> Sitting in the Room of Names for any length of time, or reading the family histories housed in the room that precedes it, impresses upon the visitor the absolute, terrifying unremarkability of the lives commended to communal memory: they are as indistinguishable as the concrete grid above.

The prevalence of museum-memorials points to the crucial distinction between memorialisation of the First World War and of the Holocaust. The former arose in response to the disruption of communal mourning rituals caused by the absence of a body or gravesite; they support, through a series of substitutionary gestures, the continued expression of normalised narratives of loss and grief. The latter arises, profoundly, in the absence of not only body and gravesite, but in the absence of the normal community of mourners. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe documents entire families and villages wiped out; a sizeable portion of the individuals commemorated in the Room of Names had no surviving relatives. The memorial museums first create a sense of attachment to the dead as members of one’s own community—whether that community is defined by shared religion, shared nationality, or shared humanity—in order to give the visitor a reason to mourn, only later providing space in which that mourning might occur. This is Jewish liturgical space, both in the sense of λειτουργία, the public duty owed by one segment of the Jewish community (the living) to another (the dead), and in the sense that these memorials fulfil the same function as do more recognisable, textual forms of Jewish liturgy, providing a space of encounter between present-day individuals and their collective past.<sup>8</sup>

I began this study with an examination of collective memory transmitted in a liturgical context: the reading and interpretation of Parshat Zakhor in a synagogue on the Sabbath before Purim. I noted the multiple ways in which that memory has been used to shape Jewish understanding of the community and circumstances in which it has been

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<sup>7</sup> For an account of the contents of each room in the museum, see Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, ‘The Design Concept for the Information Centre’ <<http://www.denkmal-fuer-die-ermordeten-juden-europas.org/en/thememorial/informationcentre/design>> (Accessed 16 October 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Of course, as Laura Levitt has pointed out, the Holocaust is the direct inheritance of only a relatively small number of European Jews; it has, however, grown in cultural significance, to become a defining historical event in Jewish collective identity. See Levitt, *American Jewish Loss after the Holocaust* (New York University Press, 2007).

recalled over the centuries—including as a legal justification for war. I then turned to an examination of the ways in which theology, expressed through a cultural medium, shaped the memorialisation of the First World War. In this, my concluding section, I will show that this shaping action works both ways, that historical memory has also had a profound impact upon theology in the 20<sup>th</sup>, and now the 21<sup>st</sup>, centuries. At the heart of this impact are questions of relationship between God and humanity, and questions about liturgical expressions of relationship.



*Figure 26: Jewish Museum Berlin.*



*Figure 27: Jewish Museum Berlin.*



*Figure 28: Menashe Kadishman, 'Fallen Leaves', Jewish Museum Berlin.*



*Figure 29: 'Voided Void', Jewish Museum Berlin.*



*Figure 30: Mémorial de la Déportation, Paris.*



*Figure 31: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin.*



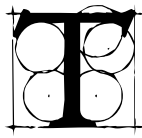
*Figure 32: Room of Names, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin.*



FRAGMENTED WORSHIP:  
CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH  
THEOLOGICAL RESPONSES  
TO THE HOLOCAUST



*Figure 33: Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Berlin (night view).*



he first thing you see is blue. A surprisingly warm, inviting blue glow radiates from the centre of an otherwise dark square, beckoning you away from the shrill neon glare of the Kurfürstendamm and into its quiet embrace. Suspended between twin pools of blue there hovers, lit by yellow-tinted floodlights, a tall, crumbling stone structure, a rectangular base from which an octagonal tower protrudes, ornamented with the dark arches of empty windows, blind eyes peering back out into the darkness. A spire rises from the top of the tower, the sides sloping as if to converge at a point, but their journey is interrupted halfway; the roof terminates in a jagged edge.<sup>1</sup>

This is the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, originally built in the last decade of the nineteenth century as a monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I by his grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II.<sup>2</sup> In its first incarnation, under the architectural direction of Franz Schechter, it ‘took a neo-Romanesque style, rich in reference to Germanic medieval empires’; it served as ‘church, museum, and monument’, richly decorated with lavish mosaic floors and ceilings depicting scenes from the Bible and from the life of Wilhelm I.<sup>3</sup> These—the ones which remain—are largely reminiscent of the mosaics in Byzantine Imperial churches, such as those at San Vitale, in Ravenna, locating the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche firmly in a long tradition of imperial church architecture and decoration.<sup>4</sup>

After the end of the monarchy in 1918, the building's popularity declined, and it came to be viewed largely as ‘an obstruction to traffic’, a lonely island in the midst of a busy theatre district, a discarded relic of the imperial past afloat on the sea of modernity.<sup>5</sup> However, the building survived the interwar years, and remained a landmark of note, as

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<sup>1</sup> The three main buildings of the complex are, according to tourist guides, nicknamed ‘the powder box’ (the main sanctuary), ‘the lipstick’ (the campanile), and ‘the hollow tooth’ (the ruined tower from the old church)—see, for example, Douglas Stallings et al., eds., *Fodor's Eastern and Central Europe*, 21<sup>st</sup> ed. (Fodor's, 2008) 351; see also Gerhard Kabierske, ‘(Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) Berlin, 1956-63’, in *Egon Eiermann (1904-1970) Architect and Designer: The Continuity of Modernism*, ed. Annemarie Jaeggi (Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2004) 172-177; 173. I hope I may be forgiven for eschewing the popular terminology, mainly on the grounds that I find it neither descriptively accurate nor aesthetically compelling.

<sup>2</sup> James N. Retallack, *Imperial Germany 1871-1918* (Oxford University Press, 2008) 118.

<sup>3</sup> Retallack 118; see also Rudy Koshar, *From monuments to traces: artifacts of German memory, 1870-1990* (University of California Press, 2000) 112.

<sup>4</sup> For the relation between the design of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche (hereafter KWG) and Kaiser Wilhelm II's sense of the German Empire's place in history, see Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, rev. ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000) 89. See also Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II: Emperor and Exile, 1900-1941* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 44; Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (Croom Helm, 1981) 225.

<sup>5</sup> Much of the information on the site's history is taken from the rather thorough museum housed in the old church tower. See also Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales, *Representing the German Nation* (Manchester University Press, 2000) 68-69; Henry Maximilian Pächter, *Weimar études* (Columbia University Press, 1982) 95-96. Also see Sabine Hake, *Topographies of class: modern architecture and mass society in Weimar Berlin* (University of Michigan Press, 2008) 27, 137. Hake suggests the post-WWI distaste for the church was also linked to anti-imperial sentiment.

well as a reasonably prestigious congregation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer preached several important sermons from the church in the early 1930s;<sup>6</sup> later, the church's regular pastor, Gerhard Jacobi, became an influential figure in the Confessing Church's resistance against the Nazi regime.<sup>7</sup> The church was not, however, an unambiguous symbol of resistance; it was also used as the centrepiece of a 1928 essay by Joseph Goebbels, who was later to become Hitler's propaganda minister, which decried the theatres and cabarets that had sprung up in the area around the church, contrasting sacred German history with the contemporary commercial corruption that he linked unambiguously to Jewish business interests.<sup>8</sup>

Even today, the church sits in the middle of a busy commercial centre; at night, the rotating Mercedes-Benz logo on top of the Europa-Center building is far more visible than the small gold cross on top of the campanile, and patrons spill out of nearby bars to congregate on the Breitscheidplatz around it. By day, a small collection of market stalls occupy the raised platform that separates the church complex from the rest of the plaza—a relatively recent attempt on the part of the congregation to cut down on vagrancy in the area and improve connections between the church and the local immigrant community.<sup>9</sup> The campanile, situated at the eastern side of the complex, houses a fairtrade shop at ground level; tourists crowd around that tower, the market, and into the bottom of the central tower, which now houses a small museum, illustrating the church's history.

By day, it is apparent that this structure was not meant to be square, but is, in fact, a remnant of a much larger building, and what appeared to be windows at ground level are actually arches that lead from the central portion under the tower off into naves and transepts that no longer exist. The old church was destroyed in the Second World War, first by a series of air raids and then by street fighting; by the end of the war, the wrecked

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<sup>6</sup> See Eberhard Bethge and Victoria Barnett, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Fortress Press, 2000) 236, 282; Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002) 35; Scott M. Langston, *Exodus through the centuries* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006) 247; F. Burton Nelson, 'The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. deGruchy (Cambridge University Press, 1999) 22-49, 32, 45.

<sup>7</sup> According to Victoria Barnett, the KWG was never officially a Confessing Church parish; rather, Jacobi carried on a Confessing Church ministry privately, while remaining officially affiliated to the 'German Christian' movement, until 1939, when he succumbed to pressure to join the military. See Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford University Press, 1998) 168-9; Matthew D. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Indiana University Press, 2004) 132.

<sup>8</sup> Koshar 112-113. See also Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (University of California Press, 2001) 181, 183

<sup>9</sup> I am greatly indebted to Gerrit Wegener, an architecture student, volunteer tourguide, and member of the KWG's congregation, for the information he provided on the current activity of the congregation in the course of a tour of the site on 5 August 2008.

central tower was all that remained standing.<sup>10</sup> Its continued presence is an accident of history and of urban planning: although the parish passed a resolution to rebuild the church in 1947, no steps were taken towards the selection of an architect for the project until 1956.<sup>11</sup> In the intervening years, much of the rubble that characterised Berlin at the end of the war had been cleared away, leaving the tower as a rare remnant of the wrecked cityscape, and one capable of attracting a certain degree of affection.<sup>12</sup> Public pressure prevented the tower from being demolished completely, and it was instead incorporated into the complex of new buildings which were designed by Egon Eiermann and constructed entirely of glass, set in the modular cement latticing that is his signature material.<sup>13</sup>

The church offices sit at the westernmost side of the complex, and small chapel is in the northeast corner; each of these buildings echoes the rectangular base of the central structure. In the centre, the sanctuary to the west and campanile to the east surround the ruined tower, imitating the octagonal shape of its upper extremities, clasping it from either side like a tension-set jewel. There is some indication that Eiermann was opposed to the ruin's continuing presence on the site, but the visual and symbolic tension achieved by the commingling of old and new imbues the church complex as it currently exists with a richness that would have been impossible to achieve by other means.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Memorial Hall, permanent exhibit (visited 5 August 2008). Hereafter referred to as KWG (MH).

<sup>11</sup> Kabierske 173. Much like Allward and the Vimy memorial, Eiermann submitted the winning design to a competition, and further adjustments were made later on; see Kabierske 173-174.

<sup>12</sup> Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (University of Chicago Press, 1997) 176-177. See also Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: the Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford University Press, 1993) 75; Thomas Sieverts, *Cities Without Cities: Between Place and World, Space and Time, Town and Country*, trans. Daniel de Lough (Routledge, 2003) 27.

<sup>13</sup> Eiermann also employed the concrete lattice structure in Matthäuskirche (Church of St. Matthew) in Pforzheim, a private residence in Baden-Baden, and the Chancery of the German Embassy in Washington D. C.; see Heidi Fischer, 'Matthäuskirche (Church of St. Matthew), Pforzheim, 1951-53' in Jaeggi, *Egon Eiermann*, 156-159; Clemens Kieser, 'Hardenberg Private Residence, Baden-Baden, 1958-60' in Jaeggi, *Egon Eiermann*, 178-181; Annemarie Jaeggi, 'Chancery of the German Embassy, Washington, D. C., 1958-64' in Jaeggi, *Egon Eiermann*, 186-7.

<sup>14</sup> Eiermann's dislike of the ruined tower has passed down anecdotally through the congregation of the KWG, and was related to me in rather forceful terms by Mr. Wegener; it is also alluded to in Kabierske 173, Sieverts 27, and, more obliquely, in the multiple references to the public outcry that was necessary to keep the tower intact—see above, note 12.

This is an odd place for a Jewish theologian to begin a reflection on the memory of the Holocaust. However, the contrast between this church and the open-air cathedral of Allward's Vimy memorial provides a useful bridge between theological reflection on the First World War and the Holocaust. The church, to the extent that it is presented as a memorial at all (and while it cannot avoid its landmark status, nor the steady stream of tourists that results, the majority of the informational materials at the site focus firmly on its role as a church with an active congregation), is a memorial to what Germans—and, in particular, members of the Confessing Church—endured during the Second World War; the little it has to say about the Holocaust focuses almost exclusively on baptised Jews who were members of the congregation.<sup>15</sup> This is unsurprising when the church is considered within the larger context of Christian theological reactions to the Holocaust.



Figure 34: Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Berlin.

<sup>15</sup> In KWG (MH).

## CHRISTIAN GESTURES TOWARDS A POST-HOLOCAUST THEOLOGY

It is difficult to argue that the years 1933-1945 (the total span of Nazi rule in Germany) have much to do with Christian theology, at least in the way that the shattered tower of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche would suggest. Looking from the outside of the tradition, it would appear that the events of the Holocaust, when they enter into the worldview of Christian theologians at all, have tended to be figured as confirmation of the Christian message of salvation. For example, there is Jürgen Moltmann's famous reading of Eli Wiesel, in *The Crucified God*. Wiesel recounts an incident at Buna (one of Auschwitz's sub-camps) in which three men are hanged; two die quickly but one, a young boy, remains alive and struggling for some time.

‘Where is God? Where is he?’ someone asked behind me. As the youth still hung in torment in the noose after a long time, I heard the man call again, ‘Where is God now?’ And I heard a voice in myself answer: ‘Where is he? He is here. He is hanging there on the gallows.’<sup>16</sup>

To this, Moltmann adds the following commentary:

Any other answer would be blasphemy. There cannot be any other Christian answer to the question of this torment. To speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon. To speak here of an absolute God would make God an annihilating nothingness. To speak here of an indifferent God would condemn men to indifference.<sup>17</sup>

Wiesel's work is complex; he declares his fury at God in one moment and prays to that same God for strength the next. Moltmann, however, is quick to turn Wiesel's struggle into a vehicle through which to proclaim the proper ‘Christian’ response to suffering.<sup>18</sup> Wiesel's image of the death of his faith (however ambivalent he may be about that death) becomes, for Moltmann, neither more nor less than a pure affirmation of what he terms the *theologia crucis*, in which God, through Christ,

<sup>16</sup> Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway (Penguin, 1981) 77.

<sup>17</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 274.

<sup>18</sup> I say that Moltmann uses Wiesel as a vehicle for the Christian message because I assume, contrary to what the text itself seems to indicate, that Moltmann has not, in fact, forgotten that Wiesel himself is Jewish and presumably had no intention of articulating a Christian response of any kind. Wiesel does come to the image of God suffering alongside Israel—particularly in *All Rivers Run to the Sea: Memoirs* (Schocken Books, 1995); it is a concept with strong roots in the Rabbinic tradition. That Wiesel later adapted this vocabulary for his own in no way excuses Moltmann from his misreading of his much earlier work, *Night*, where the predominant attributes of God are absence, silence, and indifference.

humbles himself and takes upon himself the eternal death of the godless and godforsaken, so that all the godless and godforsaken can experience communion with him.<sup>19</sup>

The death of Jews on the gallows at Auschwitz is, for Moltmann, merely an echo, or a subtype, of the death of a Jew on a cross at Calvary; the lesson of the latter applies to the former, as well.<sup>20</sup> Moltmann's Jews function much like the soldiers of the First World War, pointing the way towards human participation in Christ's sacrifice, though without the theological danger that they might be mistaken for Christ himself.<sup>21</sup>

Of the works that do attempt to address the Holocaust as though it makes a claim for the alteration of Christianity's religious imagination, many are cosmetic, not to mention circular, in nature, focused on the issue of Christian antisemitism as something which must be addressed because its consequences have proven to be undesirable, out of an impulse of charity towards other peoples, rather than because it is theologically flawed in its own right.<sup>22</sup> Such critiques involve three distinctive themes, although any one work of 'Christian response to the Holocaust' is likely to combine several of these. There is (1) a very simple critique of the language of Christian scripture and its use in preaching, in which Israel or

<sup>19</sup> Moltmann 276. Moltmann, like the Jewish theologian Melissa Raphael (whom I discuss later), points to the Shekinah as an instance of God's capacity to suffer alongside Israel. It should be noted now that I find Raphael's use of the Shekinah also uncomfortable and verging into problematic territory; however, her rendering, unlike Moltmann's, remains (mostly) grounded in the theology of *image*, and does not trespass into *incarnation*.

<sup>20</sup> Dorothee Soelle also reads the exact same passage from Wiesel, with similar results, although she goes on to note the potential danger of such an interpretation, to which Moltmann remains oblivious:

To interpret this story within the framework of the Christian tradition, it is Christ who suffers and dies here. To be sure, one must ask the effect of such an interpretation, which connects Christ with those gassed in Auschwitz and those burned with napalm in Vietnam. Wherever one compares the incomparable—for instance, the Romans' judicial murder of a first-century religious leader and the fascist genocide in the twentieth century—there, in a sublime manner, the issue is robbed of clarity, indeed the modern horror is justified.

Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*, trans. Everett Kalin (Fortress Press, 1975) 146.

<sup>21</sup> If I appear too hard on Moltmann, he finds a ready defender in Stephen R. Haynes, *Prospects for Post-Holocaust Theology* (Scholars Press, 1991), esp. 114-122. Haynes wishes to give Moltmann credit for the depth of his engagement with Jewish sources—not just Wiesel, but also with elements of the rabbinic tradition—and search for a re-orientation of the relation between Judaism and Christianity, especially in light of the personal horror he experienced upon learning of the events of the Holocaust while interned as a German prisoner of war in Scotland. Haynes has persuaded me to acknowledge the probability of Moltmann's good intentions. However, this does not render what he has actually written in this passage any less problematic. See also A. Roy Echardt, 'Jürgen Moltmann, the Jewish People, and the Holocaust', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44, no. 4 (1976).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Harry James Cargas, *Shadows of Auschwitz: A Christian Response to the Holocaust* (Crossroad Publishing Co., 1990); Alan T. Davies, *Anti-Semitism and the Christian Mind: The Crisis of Conscience after Auschwitz* (Herder and Herder, 1969); Darrell J. Fasching, *Narrative Theology After Auschwitz: From Alienation to Ethics* (Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992); Stephen R. Haynes, *Reluctant Witness: Jews and the Christian Imagination* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Franklin Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to Understand the Jewish Experience* (Harper & Row, 1975); see also the essays collected in Darrell J. Fasching, ed., *The Jewish People in Christian Preaching* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1984); Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *"Good News" After Auschwitz? Christian faith within a Post-Holocaust World* (Mercer University Press, 2001).

‘the Jew’ is figured as an agent of active opposition to the Christian message.<sup>23</sup> This is often accompanied by (2) a broader critique of the doctrine of supersessionism, which transforms Judaism into an outmoded belief system and Jews into subjects for conversion.<sup>24</sup> Finally, a number of writers engage in (3) an historical critique of Christianity's complicity in, or failure to protest against, the Holocaust.<sup>25</sup>

I do not mean here to downplay the degree to which antisemitism has been entwined with Christianity for much of the latter's history, nor to suggest, contrary to my argument elsewhere, that what is said and done in liturgy is separable from doctrine, is vestigial to ‘real’ theology. However, a critique of what German, or even European, churches did or failed to do in the 1930s and 1940s reveals flaws in those churches at that time; it does not necessarily undermine the Christian message as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a

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<sup>23</sup> The work of Davies, Haynes, and Fasching falls mainly into this and the following category, as does Gregory Baum's early work, *The Jews and the Gospel: a re-examination of the New Testament* (Bloomsbury, 1961), as well as a number of official publications by church groups, such as *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II Declaration of the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (1965), or the various statements collected in Allan Brockway et al., eds., *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and Its Member Churches* (WCC Publications, 1988).

Michael B. McGarry notes that, while *Nostra Aetate* ‘committed the Church to a posture of dialogue with no mention about missions to the Jews’, in the other Vatican documents, ‘where reference is made to the Jewish people, Christ is presented as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes’; in other words, the correction of what is presented in *Nostra Aetate* as a cosmetic flaw, a slight error of language, goes no further than that document itself—either the flaw is too slight to merit correction elsewhere (in which case why was *Nostra Aetate* necessary?), or else it is not really cosmetic at all, and changing the language of the other documents would have imperilled their message. See Michael B. McGarry, ‘The Path to a Journey’ in *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism*, eds. John C. Merkle and Walter J. Harrelson (Liturgical Press, 2003), 152. One might further note that the 2000 Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus*, while acknowledging the ongoing import of inter-religious dialogue proposed by *Nostra Aetate*, seeks to re-establish the supremacy of the revelation through Christ for all people, warning against pluralism and relativism within inter-religious dialogue—suggesting that the correction of language put forth in *Nostra Aetate* should be read as the barest cosmetic concession possible. For a brief gloss on the controversy surrounding *Dominus Iesus*, see the introduction to Rittner and Roth ix-x.

<sup>24</sup> See especially the discussion of Barth, Moltmann, and van Buren in Haynes, *Prospects*.

<sup>25</sup> The work of Cargas and the essays in Rittner and Roth are fairly representative of this position. See also Robert P. Ericksen and Susannah Heschel, eds., *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (Fortress Press, 1999), and especially the essay in that volume by Micha Brumlik, ‘Post-Holocaust Theology: German Theological Responses since 1945’. There is also a large volume of work on the Catholic Church's, and particularly Pope Pius XII's, role in the Holocaust; this work in particular tends to be extremely contentious and ideologically driven, all too often providing a convenient platform for anti-Catholic rhetoric, and will not be reviewed here.

<sup>26</sup> This is not to dismiss the body of historical work that has revealed a global system of indifference which contributed to the severity of the Holocaust—for example, see Victoria Barnett, *Bystanders: conscience and complicity during the Holocaust* (Praeger, 1999); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (Vintage Books, 1997); Itamar Levin, *His Majesty's Enemies: Great Britain's War Against Holocaust Victims and Survivors*, trans. Natasha Dornberg and Judith Yalon-Fortus (Greenwood Press, 2001); Carol Ritter and John Roth's introduction to “‘Good News’ After Auschwitz? Christian faith within a post-Holocaust World”—however, that historical work seldom crosses over into theological critique except in the most roundabout fashion. The implication seems to be that Christianity now needs to atone for what Christians did then—and, insofar as atonement involves self-correction to ensure that such does not happen again, it is a noble impulse. However, one is also reminded of Hannah Arendt's critique of post-war German ‘guilt’ in her essay ‘Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship’:



critique of antisemitic *language*, regardless of the circumstances in which that language occurs, critiques the symptoms and ignores the underlying cause, the aspects of the belief system which requires such language to validate itself.<sup>27</sup> This is the point made by Rosemary Radford Ruether, in her seminal 1974 work *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*.<sup>28</sup>

### ROSEMARY RADFORD RUETHER'S FRACTURED CHRISTOLOGY

Ruether distinguishes between anti-Judaism, which she treats as a purely theological position, and anti-Semitism, which she treats as the (undesirable) social outgrowth of that theological position.<sup>29</sup> She argues that anti-Judaism was a necessary position in Christianity's early self-definition, calling it 'the left hand of Christology'.<sup>30</sup> It is this link between antisemitism and Christology, between an undesirable social outcome and a core theological principal, which distinguishes Ruether's work from the critiques I outlined above. Although Ruether's own critique is based in a critique of language, she acknowledges that language itself is only a symptom of a deeper issue in Christian theology, and that to eliminate antisemitism requires a re-thinking of the entire theological system, not simply a change in vocabulary:

To reaffirm Jesus' hope in his name, then, is not to be able to claim that in Jesus this hope has already happened, albeit in invisible form. Nor does it mean that it is now only in his name that this hope can be proclaimed. It is simply to say that, for those who were caught up with him in that lively

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The result of this spontaneous admission of collective guilt was of course a very effective, though unintended, whitewashing of those who *had* done something: as we have already seen, where all are guilty, no one is [...] if young people in Germany, too young to have done anything at all, *feel* guilty, they are either wrong, confused, or they are playing intellectual games. There is no such thing as collective guilt or innocence; guilt and innocence make sense only if applied to individuals.

(Arendt, 'Personal Responsibility' 28-29.)

<sup>27</sup> My critique of this body of Christian post-Holocaust theology is similar to Judith Plaskow's critique of the male-dominated Jewish tradition in 'God: Reimagining the Unimaginable', *Standing Again at Sinai* 121-69.

<sup>28</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (The Seabury Press, 1974). The impact Ruether's work has had on later Biblical scholars is traced in George M. Smiga, *Pain and Polemic: Anti-Judaism in the Gospels* (Paulist Press, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> This is a common distinction to draw, between objecting to the Jewish faith as incapable of providing redemption, and objecting to Jews as people incapable of being redeemed; the former leads to the Inquisition, in which Jews are able to save their lives by conversion and assimilation, and the latter to Auschwitz, where Jews are permitted their Jewishness—and, indeed, many from assimilated families, whose parents or grandparents may have converted to Christianity, have it forced, or reinforced, upon them—but can do nothing to save their own bodies. What Ruether and others who make this distinction and treat anti-Judaism as the lesser of two evils (though still evil) fail to grasp is that both anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism attack Jews at the very core of their being, and aim to rob them of a vital component of selfhood. The distinction to be drawn, then, is not between what each does, that one is more damaging or less escapable than the other, but rather the way that each does it.

<sup>30</sup> This phrase is used by Gregory Baum in his introduction to the book; it is otherwise a frequently-banded shorthand for Ruether's argument, although it does not, so far as my reading has uncovered, actually appear in Ruether's text itself.

expectation, it is now in his memory that they reaffirm his hope. They are sure that his death was not in vain. Ultimately, God will vindicate his hope, by revealing that victory over all the oppressive forces of evil for which he lived and died. It is now in his name that *we* (those who inherit the memories of this first community of Jesus' companions) reaffirm this hope, and it is in his name that this victory will be finally manifest for us [...] This is the theological content behind the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection [...] In this proleptic experiencing of the final future of mankind in advance, we reaffirm Jesus' hope in his name. He becomes the mediator of this hope to us and to our descendants. But this hope was not finally fulfilled either in his lifetime or in his death. The Resurrection reaffirms his hope, in the teeth of historical disappointment, that evil will be overcome and God's will be done on earth. The messianic meaning of Jesus' life, then, is paradigmatic and proleptic in nature, not final and fulfilled.<sup>31</sup>

This is a rather radical position, and were I a Christian I suspect I would be deeply dissatisfied with Ruether's revised Christology.<sup>32</sup> The transformation of Jesus from the son of God, the 'true God from true God' of the Nicene creed, who died to cleanse humanity from its oppression by the forces of evil, and into a man who died *in the hope* that God will someday cleanse humanity from its oppression by the forces of evil certainly makes him a far less ambivalent figure for Judaism (and for Jews) than he has been for the past two thousand years. In fact, it makes him almost indistinguishable from any other person who has ever died in the hope that God will someday cleanse humanity from its oppression by

<sup>31</sup> Ruether 149.

<sup>32</sup> Ruether's conclusions in *Faith and Fratricide* have certainly not gone uncriticised; for a summary of reactions to her work, see John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes towards Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 24-34; also Donald J. Dietrich, *God and Humanity in Auschwitz: Christian-Jewish relations and sanctioned murder* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995) 24-26; Thomas A. Idinopulos, *Betrayal of spirit: Jew-batred, the Holocaust, and Christianity* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 2007) 55-71; Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) 130-131. For a broader critique of Ruether (more focused on her feminist theology), see also Margaret Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990) 35, 158; Deborah F. Sawyer, 'Gender' in *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture*, ed. John F. A. Sawyer (Maldon. MA, and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006) 464-479, 472. Stephen Motyer, 'Bridging the Gap: How Might the Fourth Gospel Help Us Cope with the Legacy of Christianity's Exclusive Claim over against Judaism?' in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008) 143-167, 148, is also highly relevant here, although his focus is not on Ruether but on Tina Pippin, who has drawn conclusions similar to Ruether's.

Discussion of Ruether's Christology typically focuses upon her innovations in feminist theology, which also centres on a Christological question, the now famous query 'Can a male saviour save women?' See, for example, Kathryn Greene-McCreight, *Feminist reconstructions of Christian doctrine: narrative analysis and appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 78-80. For a connection between Ruether's work with Christian anti-Semitism and feminist Christology, see Lisa Isherwood, *Introducing Feminist Christologies* (London: Continuum, 2007) 33-37.

There are, however, a (relatively small) number of Christian theologians who have found Ruether's conclusions in *Faith and Fratricide* compelling—for example, Douglas John Hall, *Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 90. Wesley J. Wildman uses Ruether as an example of what he terms a 'Modest Christology', a non-absolutist, non-universalising doctrine; in this, he sees similarities between her position and that of Ernst Troeltsch, James M. Gustafson, and Tom Driver. See Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility: Modest Christologies in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998) 270; see also Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: post-Holocaust church theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993) 167.

the forces of evil: a noble figure, but not quite worth founding a religion on. Ruether herself seems rather hard pressed to argue for faith in this drastically reduced Christ; she writes that his death and resurrection ‘is a paradigm for those for whom it has become a paradigm.’<sup>33</sup> While Ruether does begin from a charitable impulse, from the assumption that antisemitism has been shown to have undesirable results, and therefore doctrine which leads to antisemitism must be incorrect, the degree of the upheaval evident in her Christology is indicative of the depths to which she finds antisemitism entwined with the Christian tradition, contrary to the historically contextualized, Jewish Jesus that she reads between the lines of the gospels.

### *JOHN ROTH’S FRACTURED THEODICY*

The fracture in Ruether's Christology is deep, but she maintains an ultimately hopeful outlook. Jesus died in the hope of a final redemption; his memory conveys that hope to the community of believers who have allowed themselves to be caught up in his story. While it has not happened yet, God *will* heal the brokenness of the world. There is, however, another movement in Christian theology which sees in the Holocaust a proof against precisely this hope, undermining belief not in the divinity of Christ or the finality of the redemption offered by his sacrificial death, but in the ultimate goodness of God's own self. This strand of thought is typified by John Roth, who coined the term ‘Protest Theodicy’ as the title of his essay in *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*.<sup>34</sup> Roth argues that the event of the Holocaust necessitates a reconsideration of traditionally held assumptions about God's ability to ultimately redeem the world. Roth criticises God as ‘wasteful’, and protests against attempts to justify this wastefulness as somehow necessary in the larger scheme of creation.<sup>35</sup> In his view, to take seriously God's sovereignty and omnipotence leads necessarily to the conclusion that God has been, and continues to be, capable of preventing, and therefore responsible for, the enormous loss of human life that has characterised the past century of human history. In light of this, he ultimately concludes that while God may be good, God cannot reasonably be considered to be perfectly good.<sup>36</sup> As the critical responses to his essay indicate, this position is a sharp departure from the traditional Christian view. In fact, Roth, in his attempt to take seriously what he sees as the

<sup>33</sup> Ruether 250.

<sup>34</sup> Not to be confused with *Protest Theology*, coined by David Blumenthal, which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

<sup>35</sup> John K. Roth, ‘A Theodicy of Protest’ in Stephen T. Davis, ed., *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Westminster John Knox, 2001) 1-20, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Roth 34.

radical evil manifest in the Holocaust, arrives at a theological position quite similar—and sympathetic—to the Jewish sources he draws upon.

The respondents to Roth's essay, a group of his colleagues from the Claremont Schools in California, represent 'virtually all the available Christian options on the Theodicy problem' according to the book's editor, Stephen T. Davis. Thus, an examination of their critiques of Roth is helpful in illuminating exactly where Roth's theological response to the Holocaust stands *vis à vis* the Christian tradition. D. Z. Phillips, whose own contribution to the volume argues (in a vein similar to Roth's) that theodic language ought to be rejected, as it forces its proponents into untenable positions, makes the claim (correctly refuted by Roth as 'weak'—both in terms of the God it presents and the argumentative strength of the claim itself) that Roth fails to 'consider the possibility that God's only sovereignty is the sovereignty of love.'<sup>37</sup> Phillips posits a divine withdrawal (a hypothesis that would be familiar to a Kabbalist, though neither he nor Roth makes this connection) to create space for humanity's freedom as the ultimate act of God's love—but in so doing fails to address the extent to which a truly sovereign God must still be held to account for the consequences of such a withdrawal.<sup>38</sup>

John Hick, who later on characterises his own position as 'An Irenaean Theodicy',<sup>39</sup> objects that

If Roth were to give serious attention to the eschatological dimension of the religions, he would see options other than the unattractive idea of heavenly compensation for the ills of earth. The alternative is the ultimate fulfilment of human potential through a long and often painful process of moral and spiritual growth in a universe that is, in Bonhoeffer's phrase, "*etsi deus non daretur*" ("as if there were no God").<sup>40</sup>

Note that in critiquing Roth here, Hick also falls back on the hypothesis of a divine withdrawal. His larger point, however, consistent with his self-professed Irenaean position, is that the evils of this world are justified through the 'moral and spiritual growth' that results from them (and that they are the result of), and that this justification can only be

<sup>37</sup> D. Z. Phillips, Critique of John K. Roth's 'A Theodicy of Protest' in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 23-25, 24.

<sup>38</sup> D. Z. Phillips, 'Theism Without Theodicy', in Davis, *Encountering Evil*, 145-164. Roth's critique of Phillips charges that he 'has not rejected theodicy but disguised it', noting that to define God—as Phillips does—as simply excluding any negative capacity ('divine withdrawal' is, according to Phillips, 'an act of love') is 'to enforce silence that gives evil privileges it does not deserve.' See John Roth, 'Critique' of D. Z. Phillips's 'Theism without Theodicy' in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 170-174.

<sup>39</sup> John Hick, 'An Irenaean Theodicy' in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 38-52.

<sup>40</sup> John Hick, 'Critique' of John K. Roth's 'A Theodicy of Protest' in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 30. I will quibble slightly with Hick's Latin, here; the more accurate translation would be 'as if God were not a given', more commonly rendered as '*even* if there were not a God' (emphasis added), both of which are subtly different from 'as if there were no God'; the latter's weight falls on a presumption of atheism, where both of the former suggest a cautious, somewhat agnostic theism.

understood in eschatological terms. It is the issue of eschatology (or, rather, its absence) that Hicks finds most problematic about the position Roth expresses in his essay.<sup>41</sup>

This objection is shared by Stephen T. Davis, who concludes that

real solidarity with the victims and sufferers is telling them the truth. And the truth is that the Christian message of hope through the love of God as expressed pre-eminently in Christ is good news for all people, even those who suffered and died unjustly, maybe *especially* for them. Part of that truth is that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18).<sup>42</sup>

Roth correctly characterises this notion as ‘obscene’, stating that it ‘may get high marks as religious hyperbole, but it scarcely seems like solidarity with the victims.’<sup>43</sup> I myself am disinclined even to give it credit as religious hyperbole; it seems, instead, a complete—and completely irresponsible—retreat from the reality of suffering in this world. I find this assessment confirmed when the same unfortunate claim is repeated in Davis’s own contribution to the volume, ‘Free Will and Evil’, which otherwise embraces a roughly Augustinian position in order to place the fault of evil squarely on human shoulders (much in the way that Phillips does, though without the explicit assumption of a divine withdrawal).<sup>44</sup> In his own essay, however, he uses as the example of suffering fading into insignificance not the Holocaust, but an episode from his own life when, in the ninth grade, he suffered severe embarrassment after his mother sent him to school wearing an unfashionable pair of trousers.<sup>45</sup> ‘That episode’, he writes, ‘is now more amusing than painful’, and so, he suggests, will all earthly pain be, at the end of time, when ‘the vision of the face of God that we will then experience will make all previous suffering such that the pain will no longer matter.’<sup>46</sup> Such a blithely narcissistic equation of the suffering endured by the victims of the Holocaust with the embarrassment endured by a schoolboy wearing

<sup>41</sup> Roth contends in his rejoinder that his thought does include an eschatological dimension which (one presumes) was simply inadequately expressed in his original essay—though Roth insists that the essay addresses eschatological issues ‘by implication’; he agrees with Hicks that an eschatological view is ‘crucial, because without it, history’s slaughter-bench debris accumulates without redemption’ (Roth, ‘Rejoinder’ in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 30-37, 31). Roth, as I read him, admits the possibility of, and continues to hope for, an eschatological redemption; he simply discounts total certainty in such a redemption, or the expression thereof, as an ethically valid theological strategy at the present time.

<sup>42</sup> Stephen T. Davis, ‘Critique’ of John K. Roth’s ‘A Theodicy of Protest’ in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 20-23, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Roth, ‘Rejoinder’, 33.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen T. Davis, ‘Free Will and Evil’ in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 73-89, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Davis, ‘Free Will and Evil’ 84-85.

<sup>46</sup> Davis, ‘Free Will and Evil’ 85. A similar hypothesis is put forth by Miroslav Volf, in *The End of Memory*—the major difference being that Volf, having personal experience of suffering beyond mere embarrassment, does not move so quickly to such an easy dismissal of pain. Rather, he acknowledges and wrestles with the difficulties posed to eschatological ‘forgetting’ by issues such as the continuity of personal identity (recall my discussion of Locke from Chapter One). In the end, I do not find Volf convincing—though this is largely because I do not share his religious presuppositions. Neither, however, do I find him offensive (as I do Davis), nor easy to dismiss out of hand.

unfashionable trousers seriously undermines Davis's claim to take seriously, or to be taken seriously regarding the theological problems posed by evil and suffering.

The more reasonable objection to Roth's position posed by Davis is that the God Roth posits, lacking the characteristic of *complete* moral goodness, is not worthy of worship.<sup>47</sup> This objection is also put forth by Hick (who writes that 'if Roth really believes that the situation is as bad as he depicts it, then the God he still seems to believe in is the Devil'),<sup>48</sup> and the final contributor to the volume, the process theologian David Ray Griffin. Griffin especially objects to Roth's assertion that 'God must be a mixture of good and evil', stating that

I see no basis for hope that a partly evil deity could be led to repent. The moral defect in God is presumably eternal, and many philosophers, from Aristotle to Hartshorne, have held that the eternal and the necessary are identical. In the first edition of this book, Roth replied to this point by saying: "If God's power is bound only by his own unnecessitated will..., then God can change his ways." However, the traditional doctrine that God's will is not necessitated by anything outside of God did not entail that God's basic character or will could change. [...] It seems a rather desperate hope that, assuming that God has had a mean streak for not only the past 15 billion years but from all eternity, our protests in the next century or so will bring about a change.<sup>49</sup>

Griffin's own essay posits a relatively weak God, creating the universe from pre-existing chaos, and therefore never fully accountable for the result.<sup>50</sup> Given the emphasis he places upon divine power as 'shared power', on God's creation as always an act of compromise and co-creation, it is curious that he cannot imagine the possibility that God may choose to change, or that human protest may bring about such change.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Griffin's objection here seems less a general failure of imagination, and more a specific inability to reconcile the process deity that he envisions with the sovereign deity presumed by Roth.

The problem of worship brought up by Roth's critics presupposes that God is, by definition, that which must be worshipped—and, conversely, a being that they cannot bring themselves to worship cannot be God. By positing a God who lacks—or must be assumed to lack—the attribute of perfect goodness, Roth has departed from what his interlocutors recognise as theological speculation and into a position from which they find

<sup>47</sup> Davis, Critique of John K. Roth's 'Theodicy of Protest' 22.

<sup>48</sup> Hicks, Critique of John K. Roth's 'Theodicy of Protest' 29.

<sup>49</sup> David Ray Griffin, 'Critique' of John K. Roth's 'Theodicy of Protest' in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 25-28, 26. Griffin's assumption that the only point of protest against God is to 'bring about a change' is problematic. As I shall argue later, there are other valid reasons for protest—not the least of which is to avoid complicity. It is this latter type of protest which I believe Roth intended.

<sup>50</sup> David Ray Griffin, 'Creation out of Nothing, Creation out of Chaos, and the Problem of Evil' in Davis, *Encountering Evil* 108-125.

<sup>51</sup> Griffin, 'Creation out of Nothing' 122.

his continued profession of faith barely tenable; he has, from their vantage point, ceased to believe in God.<sup>52</sup> That Roth himself continues to find worship not only possible but necessary seems to fall outside the boundaries of what is possible within the Christian tradition; his theology has fractured past recognisability.

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<sup>52</sup> Hick makes this criticism explicitly, though gently; the others hedge it off with protestations about their personal knowledge of Roth's character and religious commitment, leaving only implicit the suggestion that if they did not know him so well, their response to his stated position may not be so charitable.

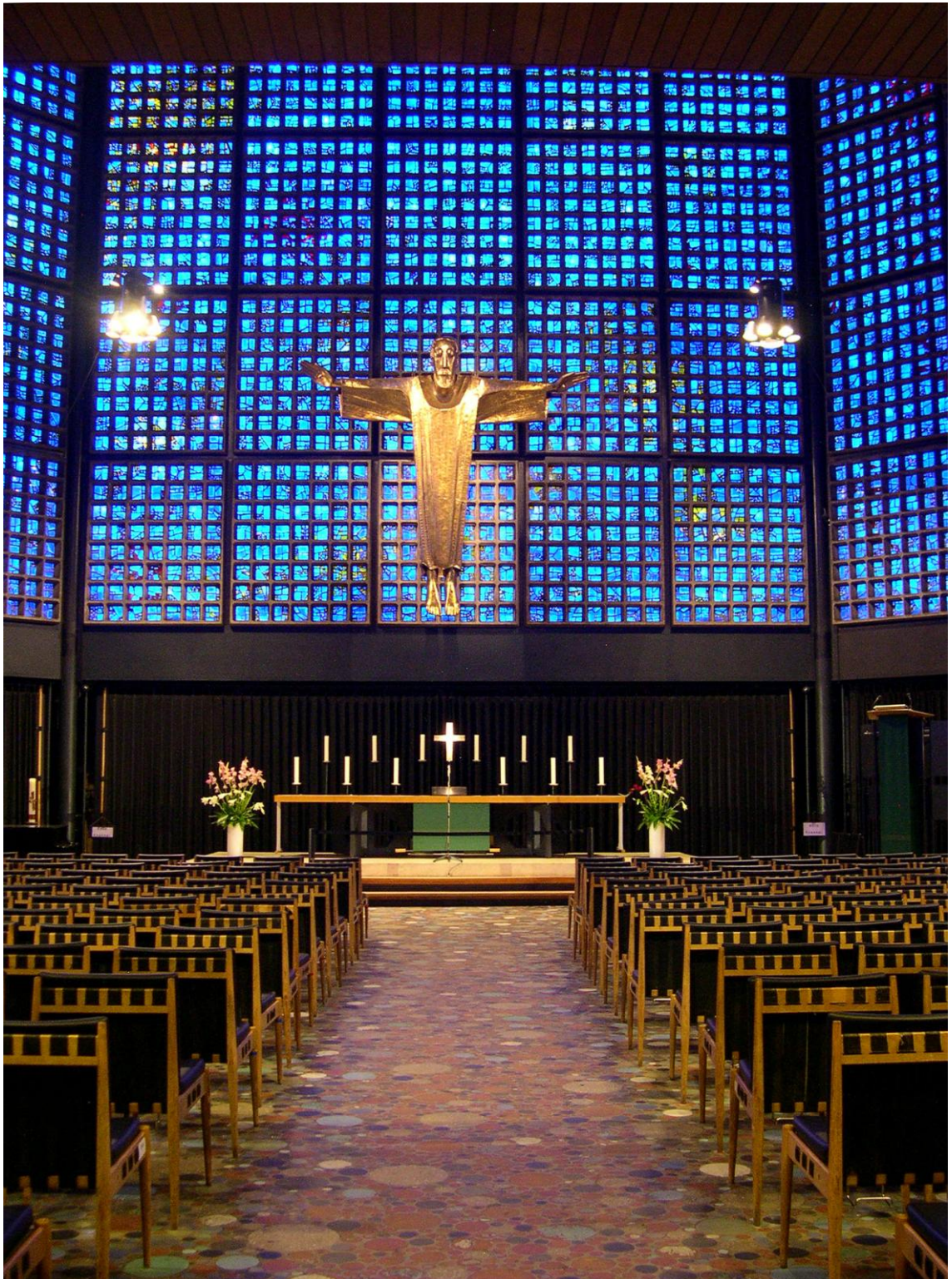


Figure 35: Interior (New Sanctuary), Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, Berlin.



## WORSHIP IN A FRACTURED SPACE

Entering into the sanctuary of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche is like entering another world. Stepping from the sunny plaza through a pair of large, bronze doors, the visitor passes through a small, dark vestibule before emerging into a chamber of light. The noise of the streets outside vanishes completely. The blue glow that characterises the exterior of the building at night pales in comparison to the submarine hue that pulses from the tall interior walls. The space is dominated by blue—and by the large, gold, risen Christ suspended over the altar, designed by Karl Hemmeter, which ‘gives the church its optical focus and at the same time expresses who should be at the centre of every service.’<sup>53</sup>

The visitor, too, is suspended, attention temporarily arrested upon entering the space; it takes a moment for the eyes to adjust to the new environment. It takes several moments of careful study to begin to discern the points of continuity between the interior and the exterior—the small, multicoloured ceramic floor tiles echoing the larger concrete circles of the plaza outside; and the joins in the stained glass echoing the cracks in the old tower.<sup>54</sup> It takes much longer to notice, if one ever does, the space’s optical illusions: the pattern of the interior glass does not match the exterior; the number of chambers in the concrete panels also differs between the outside and the inside—and the strength of the light emanating from the walls never varies, or betrays a hint of the weather outdoors. The sanctuary is actually constructed out of two sets of stained glass walls; the light pours through the glass from the space in between them (which also serves to dampen sound).<sup>55</sup>

The arrangement of furnishings within the church is absolutely typical of other Protestant churches in the area, with the altar and font at the front, directly across from the entrance, and rows of chairs facing all in the same direction.<sup>56</sup> The strongest reminder of the church’s history is a wall to the visitor’s right as they enter the space, on which is displayed a bronze plaque with the inscription ‘Den Evangelischen Martyren Der Jare 1933-1945’ (‘The Protestant Martyrs of the years 1933-1945’), alongside a crucifix and a quote from 1 John 5:4. A piece of paper clipped to the rail in front of the plaque explains to German-speaking visitors that the cross, from 13<sup>th</sup> century Spain, was a gift from Dr. Dibelius, the former Bishop of Berlin, on 20 July 1964—the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the most

<sup>53</sup> KWG (MH).

<sup>54</sup> The stained glass was designed by Gabriel Loire. See Erwin Gerlach, *Berlin: Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche*, trans. Katherine Vanovitch, Schnell Art Guide No. 2313, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Regensburg, Germany: Verlag Schnell & Steiner, 2007) 6.

<sup>55</sup> Gerlach 6.

<sup>56</sup> Mr. Wegener attested that, while the chairs are moveable, he cannot recall them having ever been shifted from the configuration in which they are set. Additionally, the font is, while not attached to the floor, so heavy as to render it practically immobile.

famous plot to assassinate Hitler. The paper further informs the visitor that this display is meant to echo similar ones at the KWG's Catholic sister-church, Maria Regina Martyrum, and at Plötzensee.<sup>57</sup> Immediately to the right of the plaque is a charcoal drawing of a mother and child: the Madonna of Stalingrad, drawn by Lieutenant Kurt Reuber, a Protestant pastor and a physician in the German army, during the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942, and presented to the KWG in 1983.<sup>58</sup> Joseph Perry has noted that this image by itself carries strong resonances with the collective memory of the victimization of ordinary Germans—and especially German Christians—at the hands of the Nazi regime, and that its placement directly beside the 'Martyr's Tablet' serves to reinforce these resonances.<sup>59</sup>

Such resonances also carry over to the copy of the image on display in the Millennium Chapel at Coventry Cathedral, described in the Cathedral's online literature as 'a special place to pray for prisoners of conscience, those who have been imprisoned because of their faith or political views.'<sup>60</sup> This is not the only point of similarity between the two churches; Coventry Cathedral was also destroyed in a bombing raid during the Second World War, on the night of 14 November, 1940.<sup>61</sup> When it was rebuilt, the ruins of the old cathedral also were incorporated into the site of the new construction, and the new construction at Coventry is also, in its own way, a showpiece of modernist architecture.<sup>62</sup>

The ruins of Coventry Cathedral are still treated as active sacred space; scattered notices posted around the old sanctuary entreat visitors to respect it as a house of prayer. This is a sharp contrast to the KWG, the ruined tower of which has been converted into something akin to a museum—although the opening of the display asks visitors 'to remember that the former vestibule of the old church is *not a museum*, but a place of remembrance, contemplation and exhortation' (emphasis added). It is difficult, however, to reconcile this request with the very museum-like display that clutters the place of contemplation—and a 'place of remembrance, contemplation and exhortation' is still rather different from a place of worship.

In spite of the differences in the way each site is presented to the public, both spaces do still host liturgy—and, in fact, they host the same liturgy. Every Friday, at noon

<sup>57</sup> For a discussion of the Plötzensee memorial, see Koshar 183-7.

<sup>58</sup> See Joseph B. Perry, 'The Madonna of Stalingrad: Mastering the (Christmas) Past and West German National Identity after World War II', *Radical History Review* 83 (2007).

<sup>59</sup> Perry 11.

<sup>60</sup> School Visits Team, Coventry Cathedral, 'Coventry Cathedral Virtual Tour: Millennium Chapel', < [http://coventrycathedraltour.org.uk/node.php?n=millennium\\_chapel#](http://coventrycathedraltour.org.uk/node.php?n=millennium_chapel#) > (accessed 29 August 2009).

<sup>61</sup> James D. Herbert, 'Bad Faith at Coventry: Spence's Cathedral and Britten's *War Requiem*', *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 3 (1999) 536.

<sup>62</sup> For details of the competition process leading to the design of the new Coventry Cathedral, and especially the impact of modernist architecture on such, see Louise Campbell, 'Towards a New Cathedral: The Competition for Coventry Cathedral 1950-51', *Architectural History* 35 (1992).

(local time), a small crowd gathers to recite the Litany of the Cross of Nails. This practice originated at Coventry Cathedral, in the aftermath of the bombing. The Provost of the Cathedral had the words ‘Father Forgive’ carved into the wall behind where the altar used to stand, and three of the nails that once held the beams of the collapsed roof were bound together to form a cross.<sup>63</sup> These two motifs became the centrepieces of the Community of the Cross of Nails. After the war, the Cathedral sent crosses as gestures of reconciliation to churches at Kiel, Dresden, and Berlin (the last of which is still on display in the ruined tower of the KWG); since then, 156 Centres have been added to the community, each ‘working for peace and reconciliation within their own communities and countries’.<sup>64</sup> Every Friday, at noon (local time), the Litany of Reconciliation is recited in the ruins<sup>65</sup> of the KWG and of Coventry Cathedral:

ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF  
GOD

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from  
class

FATHER FORGIVE

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their  
own

FATHER FORGIVE

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the  
earth

FATHER FORGIVE

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others

FATHER FORGIVE

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refuge

FATHER FORGIVE

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children

FATHER FORGIVE

The pride that leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God

FATHER FORGIVE

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING  
ONE ANOTHER, AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU.<sup>66</sup>

This litany reflects the Community of the Cross of Nails’s broad approach to reconciliation; while the impetus for the Community came from a very particular historical

<sup>63</sup> Community of the Cross of Nails, ‘An Overview’, Coventry Cathedral, <<http://www.crossofnails.org/about/>> (accessed 31 August 2009).

<sup>64</sup> Community of the Cross of Nails, ‘Overview’. Note that not all Cross of Nails Centres are churches; they may also be ‘reconciliation centres, prisons, NGOs, and schools’.

<sup>65</sup> At Coventry Cathedral, the litany is recited at noon on every weekday, but Monday to Thursday it is in the new building.

<sup>66</sup> Community of the Cross of Nails, ‘Litany of Reconciliation’, Coventry Cathedral, <<http://www.crossofnails.org/litany/>> (accessed 31 August 2009). I have preserved the capitalisation as published on the Cross of Nails website and in the orders of service distributed immediately prior to the litany; the lines in capital letters are typically recited by all present, while the others are read only by the presiding priest, minister, or layperson.

event, its focus is less on mending specific political rifts, and more on correcting systemic (or ‘original’) sin—what Judaism refers to as *tikkun olam*, the mending of a fractured world. The combination of the litany and the surrounding ruins sends a powerful message: the world, like the worship space, is not yet whole.

But if this is the message of worship in the ruins, what is one to make of the spatial logic that, at both sites, compels the visitor to turn their back on the ruins in order to enter the space of everyday worship? The new sanctuaries at both Coventry and the KWG are constructed so that the old building is difficult (in the former case) or impossible (in the latter) to see from within the new, and during worship only the minister—and the large golden Christ that hangs in the KWG—looks towards it.<sup>67</sup> Thus, during the most important moments of Christian liturgy, the only people who are fully present in the ruins, fully aware of the brokenness they signify, are those who stand outside the sanctuary.



*Figure 36: Coventry Cathedral. The ruins are to the right, the new sanctuary to the left.*

<sup>67</sup> The cross at Coventry Cathedral does not incorporate any figurative element.



Figure 37: Ruined Sanctuary, Coventry Cathedral.

## JEWISH POST-HOLOCAUST THEOLOGIES

While it is true that, as the selections in the recent anthology of Jewish Holocaust Theology, *Wrestling With God*, make clear, the most Orthodox expressions of Jewish theology remained more or less unchanged and unchallenged by the events of the Holocaust, it is also true that these are the exception rather than the rule—especially in North America and Europe. Traditional doctrines which place the responsibility for suffering upon its victims (either as punishment for corporate sin—*mi-penei hata'einu*—or as a test of faith, carrying Biblical resonances with the Book of Job, or the *Akedah*), or suggest that Jewish victimhood is cosmically necessary to correct the balance of the world (ideas of the scapegoat, or the ten righteous men) seem deeply unsatisfactory in light of the tremendous suffering visited largely upon observant, Orthodox, Eastern-European Jews.<sup>68</sup> Absent a convincing explanation for the events of the Holocaust, critical Jewish concepts such as chosenness and covenant became open to critique.

One of the earliest and sharpest of such critiques came from Richard Rubenstein, in his 1966 book, *After Auschwitz*.<sup>69</sup> Rubenstein, much like Roth (with whom he has collaborated on several volumes), is driven by his horror at the events of the Holocaust—and the degree to which he perceives traditional Jewish theology to have contributed to those events—to formulate a theological position that is difficult to recognise as a normative expression of his religion.<sup>70</sup> Rubenstein is often treated as the Jewish arm of the Christian ‘Death of God’ theological movement and, while he has acknowledged the similarities between his own work and that movement, it is perhaps more accurate to characterise his central theological concern as the *silence* of God—or, even more accurately, the non-intervention of God into history.<sup>71</sup> Rubenstein’s theological project is predicated

<sup>68</sup> This is an extremely brief gloss of material that has been covered extensively elsewhere, especially in Steven T. Katz, Shlomo Biderman, and Gershon Greenberg, eds., *Wrestling With God: Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Steven T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York University Press, 1983); the essays collected in Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Impact of the Holocaust on Jewish Theology* (New York University Press, 2005); as well as the introductions to countless other books on ‘Post-Holocaust Theology’.

The brevity with which I cover this material here is not meant as an indication of any lack of importance, but, rather, the amount of scholarship which already exists in this particular area. I have chosen to concentrate my own analysis on more recent Holocaust theologians, whose contributions have been less thoroughly digested.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

<sup>70</sup> Roth and Rubenstein have co-authored *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and its Legacy* (Westminster John Knox, 2003), as well as *The Politics of Latin American Liberation Theology: The Challenge to U.S. Public Policy* (Washington Institute Press, 1988). For a summary of criticism levelled against Rubenstein’s relationship to Judaism, see Zachary Braiterman, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton University Press, 1998) 87-9.

<sup>71</sup> Rubenstein employs the ‘Death of God’ metaphor from the first chapter of *After Auschwitz*, in which he describes it as a goal ‘at the heart of the Nazi program’ (Rubenstein 35). He discusses the connections

on a wholesale rejection of the idea of any ‘special status’—a unique covenant with God—being afforded to Jews; this stems largely from a conviction that the assumption of such a status led to, and helped to justify, the Holocaust.<sup>72</sup> In place of the God of the covenant, doubly discredited through the complicity of the covenant in promoting persecution and through the failure of God to protect the Jewish people from that persecution, Rubenstein advocates a return to the *After Auschwitz* ‘God of Nature’, a neo-paganism, although, as Zachary Braiterman has been at pains to point out, a neo-paganism tempered with a strong Jewish flavour, not least of which is its finding its centre in the modern-day land of Israel.<sup>73</sup>

Scandalous as Rubenstein’s theology was, it is easy to read later Jewish Post-Holocaust theologians as his respondents, attempting to rescue God and covenant from the void to which Rubenstein had consigned them, and surveys of post-Holocaust theology tend to support this approach, placing Rubenstein at the beginning and arranging others (always Emil Fackenheim, and some assortment of others including Eliezer Berkovits, Ignaz Maybaum, Irving Greenberg, and Arthur Cohen) afterwards.<sup>74</sup> While this is generally correct, except for the case of Maybaum, whose book *The Face of God after Auschwitz* was published the year prior to Rubenstein’s *After Auschwitz*, such a reading undermines the extent to which each thinker directly engages first and foremost with the Holocaust and Jewish tradition. Emil Fackenheim, for example, does cite Rubenstein in his 1970 work, *God’s Presence in History* (and in a number of his later works), but only as a preliminary gesture towards what Fackenheim characterises as a spurious argument, before he arrives at the real business of God-wrestling which occupies him for the duration of that work.<sup>75</sup>

Fackenheim also offers a revision of the notion of covenant, through his famous proposal of the 614<sup>th</sup> commandment:

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between his work and the Christian movement in a later chapter in that same volume, ‘Death of God Theology and Judaism’ (243-264). The major point of contrast, as Rubenstein himself points out, is that the Christian Death of God theologians take the metaphor as generally positive, while for Rubenstein it is a tragedy and a theological scandal.

<sup>72</sup> See especially ‘The Dean and the Chosen People’ in Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* 47-60.

<sup>73</sup> See especially ‘The Meaning of Torah in Contemporary Jewish Theology: An Existentialist Philosophy of Judaism’ in Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* 113-29; and Braiterman 94-100.

<sup>74</sup> See, again, Braiterman; Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues*; Michael L. Morgan, *Beyond Auschwitz: post-Holocaust Jewish thought in America* (Oxford University Press 2001); Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), *Holocaust Theology: A Reader* (University of Exeter Press, 2002). This arrangement is departed from in Katz, Biderman and Greenberg, which follows a strict chronological order, placing the more traditionally-minded Ignaz Maybaum’s ‘suffering servant’ theology prior to Rubenstein (along with contributions from Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Joseph Soloveitchik, and Zvi Koitz, all of whom are usually left out of post-Holocaust surveys, although the first three of these are included in Braiterman’s general discussion of modern Jewish theodicies).

<sup>75</sup> Emil Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York University Press, 1970) 30-31. Of course, Fackenheim’s title itself constitutes an argument against Rubenstein’s denial of God’s presence in history, though there I am aware of no direct evidence that he intended it as such.

Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man [*sic*] and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish.<sup>76</sup>

As Steven Katz has pointed out, the addition to the traditional 613 commandments contained in the revelation at Sinai constitutes a major upheaval of previous understandings of the covenant between God and Israel.<sup>77</sup> The ‘614<sup>th</sup> commandment’ was not spoken by God, was not transmitted in Torah, does not constitute revelation in the normative sense. Moreover, as Michael Wyschogrod has noted, that the source of this commandment is ‘The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz’ creates the problematic situation of divine commandment arising from and being transmitted through radical evil.<sup>78</sup> To these critiques I would add a third, related point: the covenant at Sinai was a mutual covenant, which placed obligations on both Israel and God. It was also freely entered into by the Israelites who had travelled to that place willingly. Fackenheim’s 614<sup>th</sup> commandment, by contrast, was given to a quite literally captive audience, unable to either accept or reject it (in the legalised language associated with sexual assault, ‘incapable of consent’), and thus does not, cannot, have the same weight of obligation upon the people to whom it was given. It also neatly sidesteps any issue of God’s responsibilities or obligations.

Zachary Braiterman has argued that the ‘614<sup>th</sup> commandment’ ‘was just a trope (in and of itself barely adequate) that stood for the far more critical motif of supernatural revelation’; both Braiterman and Katz conclude that, contrary to Fackenheim’s rhetoric, the ‘Commanding Voice of Auschwitz’ ‘does not constitute a divine imperative, but only a human response.’<sup>79</sup> However, even granting Braiterman’s contention that the 614<sup>th</sup> commandment is a case of overblown rhetoric attached to Fackenheim’s lifelong fascination with revelation, I still find Fackenheim’s understanding of covenant and commandment problematic, insofar as that understanding (in general) may be reflected in what he has written about this particular case. Fackenheim does not dispense with the God of the covenant, with the God of history, but at moments he does risk transforming that God into precisely the sort of arbitrary tyrant that Rubenstein protested against.

<sup>76</sup> Emil L. Fackenheim, ‘These Twenty Years: A Reappraisal’, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Greenwood Press, 1968) 20; also quoted in *God’s Presence in History* 84. Emil L. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Indiana University Press, 1994) dates the original formulation of this commandment to 1967, with no reference made to Rubenstein at all (xix).

<sup>77</sup> Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues* 218-219.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Wyschogrod, ‘Faith and the Holocaust’, *Judaism* 20, no. 3 (1971); cited in Braiterman 135.

<sup>79</sup> Braiterman 135, 149; see also Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues* 218.



This exceedingly brief overview of the earliest works of two of the earliest Jewish post-Holocaust theologians is meant to provide background and context to the discussion that follows, rather than as an exhaustive analysis of the full spectrum of Jewish responses to the Holocaust, or even of Rubenstein and Fackenheim. While both Rubenstein and Fackenheim have been quite influential, their contributions have been rather thoroughly assessed elsewhere, and recasting them under the terms of my current study is unlikely to produce any significant new insight.<sup>80</sup> Instead, I turn to two more recent contributions to the field, by David Blumenthal and Melissa Raphael, which pick up on the themes and issues brought up by earlier work and attempt, each in their own way, to recast the narrative of the Holocaust in a manner that makes it possible to rescue Jewish faith from the challenges of history.

#### *DAVID BLUMENTHAL: FACING THE ABUSING GOD*

Richard Rubenstein grounded *After Auschwitz* in psychoanalytic theory, using Freudian analysis to account for the depravities of the Nazi regime. David Blumenthal's work also borrows liberally from psychology, but rather than attempting to account for the Holocaust, his focus is on attempting to heal the trauma that it caused. Blumenthal is remarkably uninterested in defending God's actions, or lack thereof, but neither is he willing to abandon either God or the covenant. Instead, he seeks to find some way to mend the relationship between God and Israel. To this end, he turns to testimony and strategies of child abuse survivors.<sup>81</sup> In Blumenthal's theology, God is figured as a parent who has betrayed the fundamental trust of his children.<sup>82</sup> The relationship of trust and dependence between parent and child intensifies the damage done by the betrayal. His conclusion is a synthesis between classical Jewish understanding of God's attributes and contemporary abuse counselling techniques:

First, we must make it clear to ourselves [...] that we have been the victims, victims of abuse [...] that we are not guilty, that we will not accept the

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<sup>80</sup> I direct the interested reader especially to Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues*, and Braiterman, for further discussion of the work of the two earlier theologians.

<sup>81</sup> David R. Blumenthal, *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Westminster John Knox, 1993) xvii.

<sup>82</sup> Blumenthal occasionally—especially when composing prayers—departs from gender-neutral language and employs the male pronoun out of considered and deliberate deference to his own male religious imagination (Blumenthal 284); contrary to my usual practice I maintain the gendering of Blumenthal's God—and, in the next section, the opposite gendering of Melissa Raphael's God—out of deference to the particularly *human* characteristics of that God. As shall be explained shortly, the theology of image—the God/humanity mirroring relationship—is of fundamental importance to both of these theologies, and when it is God's attributes reflected in humanity which are being appealed to, a gendered imagination becomes not only reasonable (in a way that saddling the infinite with a finite characteristic usually is not) but very often necessary.

blame for what has happened [...] it is the Perpetrator Who must answer, not we [...]

Second, in our hurt and in our good common sense, we will distance ourselves from the Perpetrator [...] We will guard our distance— theologically and spiritually, in worship and in study.

Third, we will point the finger, we will identify the Abuser, we will tell this ugly truth. We will not keep silent, neither out of fear nor out of love [...] We will cling tenaciously to our rage, and we will speak [...] We will say, “The fault is not ours. You are the Abuser. The fault was yours. You repent. You return to us.”

Fourth, we will empower ourselves by acknowledging fully our survival, by building human relationships, by participating in worthy causes, and by working and accomplishing our daily and social tasks.

Fifth, we will not deny our own spirituality [...] we will affirm the reality of God’s presence, God’s power, and even God’s love [...] ours will be an acknowledgment of the Other Who is present to us in fear *and* in kinship, in terror *and* in presence.<sup>83</sup>

Structurally, the centrepiece of this scheme is the insistence on speech: that is the bridge between maintaining an appropriately cautious distance and being able to affirm the positive attributes of God along with the negative ones. The first two steps in Blumenthal’s spiritual self-help program are internal; the last three require engagement with the world, and that engagement begins with an act of speech, the vocalizing of the reality that is silently acknowledged in the first step.

Blumenthal is unwilling to abandon God, so much so that his theology of protest becomes, at its heart, a mode of liturgical expression, a means by which to address God. Blumenthal is unwilling to abandon the covenant, so much so that his protests against God’s abuse are grounded in the language of Jewish liturgy. The longest section of the book, ‘Text-ing’, consists of four Psalms (128, 44, 109, and 27) laid out with commentary surrounding their verses, in the distinctive style of Jewish textual scholarship.<sup>84</sup> The final thirty pages of the book contain psalms selected presumably for their thematic and emotional resonances, and retranslated to intensify those resonances—a protest hallel—

<sup>83</sup> Blumenthal 266-267.

<sup>84</sup> Specifically, Blumenthal offers four streams of commentary: Words, Sparks, Affections, and Con-verses. Words ‘is a philological commentary intended to justify the translation’; Sparks ‘contains brief comments on the psalms from the spiritual tradition of hasidism’; Affections ‘is an attempt to point to and interpret the sustained emotional attitudes which the psalmist-tradition wishes us to cultivate’; Con-verses brings the psalm into conversation with contemporary voices (Blumenthal 58-60). The practice of surrounding a core text with multiple commentaries seems to have its roots in the Talmud, but has evolved into a reasonably common method of textual interpretation—compare, for example, the series edited by Lawrence A. Hoffman, *My People’s Prayerbook: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, 10 vols. (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997-2007).

and prayers from the traditional liturgy, slightly rewritten to call God to account for God's abuse, while at the same time acknowledging God's sovereignty.<sup>85</sup>

Blumenthal's approach is sensitive and nuanced, but it is not beyond criticism. One reviewer has complained that his analogy between the Holocaust and child abuse is never fully unpacked, relying instead on a surface understanding of what abuse and recovery actually entails.<sup>86</sup> A perusal of Blumenthal's bibliography reveals a far wider reading in the texts of the Jewish tradition than in psychology.<sup>87</sup> Of the psychological sources he does utilize, he leans most heavily on the work of Alice Miller, the author of several popular books on child psychology, and Eliana Gil. Gil's book, *Treatment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse*, is a fairly standard clinical manual, from which Blumenthal's five-step program appears to be derived.<sup>88</sup> However, he engages with these sources primarily in 'Text-ing', placing their words alongside the Psalms under study; he does not appear to read them critically, nor does he explicitly carry forward insight from these readings into the next section, 'Re-Response', which consists of dialogues with an adult survivor of child abuse (Diane) and a systematic theologian (Wendy), as well as an essay written by a rape survivor (Beth, one of Blumenthal's students).<sup>89</sup> Indeed, he completely avoids responding to Diane's charge that he is 'far too strongly influenced by Miller', who 'does not understand the physically and sexually abused child who has grown to be an adult.'<sup>90</sup> His posture in this section is, instead, one of listening, letting the voices he invites into his world of dialogue speak for themselves.

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<sup>85</sup> This is a useful descriptor, even though technically, the psalms do not actually constitute a Hallel in the liturgical sense—Hallel refers very specifically to Psalms 113-118, a sequence of six psalms of praise recited in succession, rather than the five psalms (38, 88, 94, 121, and 124) of confusion, unrelieved depression, righteous anger, comfort, and survival offered by Blumenthal. The very name 'hallel' may be inappropriate, as it means 'praise', and the emotional content of Blumenthal's psalms is far more complex than the unambiguous celebration that characterises the liturgical Hallel. However, insofar as 'praise' can denote an act of worship and acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, this set of psalms still does constitute praise, however ambivalent that praise may be. As the psalms are presented with very little commentary (unlike the prayers, which contain detailed footnotes explaining when in the liturgy they are meant to occur, and what alterations have been made to them), it is unclear whether Blumenthal meant them to be recited individually or as a unit; however, there is a sensible progression from one to the other which would make such a recitation reasonable under certain circumstances. They reflect, in other words, the general spirit of the Hallel, even if they do not conform to the precise technical requirements.

<sup>86</sup> Jennifer L. Rike, Review of *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* by David R. Blumenthal, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65, no. 1 (1997) 206-209.

<sup>87</sup> 'Translations', 'Commentaries', and 'Classic Jewish Texts' each are given their own bibliographic heading, while psychology texts are lumped together along with contemporary critical theory, student papers, Hebrew grammar, and a significant number of Blumenthal's own works under a catch-all heading labeled 'Studies'.

<sup>88</sup> See Blumenthal 167-169, 'Con-Verses'.

<sup>89</sup> Blumenthal xx.

<sup>90</sup> Blumenthal 196. He similarly ignores another protest from Diane regarding his use of Gil; see Blumenthal 207-209.

This listening stance is both difficult to argue against and, at the same time, deeply unsatisfactory. I take it to stem from Blumenthal's conviction that speech is central to both liturgy and to the healing process, and, therefore, from a desire to guard the sanctity and autonomy of each individual's act of self-narration. In this regard, Blumenthal's refusal to interject, to impose his own academic narrative on the personal testimonies he incorporates into his scheme is admirable. However, by incorporating the personal testimonies of others with minimal comment, Blumenthal enacts a more subtle appropriation, advancing his own argument via the experience of others, letting those other voices speak for him—and, in some cases, pre-empting the reader's own response. This is most deeply problematic with regard to the essay written by Beth, which is presented with only the barest of introduction. The dialogues with Diane and Wendy do include responses from Blumenthal himself—though, as mentioned above, he avoids addressing specific criticisms, in favour of making more general statements about God and relationship.

His conversation with Wendy involves a greater degree of academic rigour than the exchange with Diane, though again, Wendy does most of the talking.<sup>91</sup> Her chapter ends with her delivering a critique similar to my own, that Blumenthal 'just lay[s] [texts] side by side', that his 'multivalency—perhaps esotericism—has become an excuse for not taking [his] work seriously.'<sup>92</sup> To this, Blumenthal responds that '[u]pon reflection, I do not think my taking this side-by-side position is lack of courage or intellect; I have proved myself in many situations in these matters.'<sup>93</sup> Exactly how, or in what situations, Blumenthal has

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<sup>91</sup> This is not to say that the exchange with Diane lacked intellectual weight or interest, but Blumenthal seems more willing to engage and respond to the specific points Wendy raises. This contributes to a disturbing pattern of power and value hierarchies in this section. While both Diane and Wendy are known in their correspondence with Blumenthal only through their first names, and the introduction to 'Response' identifies them both as professors, the acknowledgements identify Wendy Farley by her full name, bringing her professional credentials into the world of the text; the presence of her book in the bibliography does just as much to assure the reader that she is being taken seriously by Blumenthal as a conversation partner as his own response to her critique does. Diane does not have a surname; this is an understandable method of protecting her privacy, but it also removes her academic credentials and credibility from view, and Blumenthal's failure to engage with or respond to her specific criticisms about his use of texts further diminishes those credentials, so that her identity is, in the end, reduced in complexity; she is simply a survivor of child abuse (and, one senses, her function is to speak on behalf of all survivors of child abuse, rather than as a full person in her own right). Finally, Beth, the rape survivor, is not named at all in the acknowledgements, nor does Blumenthal validate her voice through any sort of introduction or response; the only context the reader is given is that she is a student, that she was raped, and that she wrote about it. This follows the structure of the first part of the book, in which Blumenthal closed every chapter with a disruption, a counter-text; but it also opens some troubling questions about power dynamics. If Beth is one of Blumenthal's students, if this reflection was produced in the context of a class, what power dynamics were involved in obtaining her consent to publish it? Where is the line between making space for other voices to be heard and appropriating those voices—and is the position of that line altered when issues of authority are introduced? Would any of these issues provoke as much discomfort without the additional problem that it is a male author who uses women's voices in this way? Blumenthal does not even begin to ask these questions in the text itself.

<sup>92</sup> Blumenthal 224.

<sup>93</sup> Blumenthal 225.

proved himself is never elaborated upon; we are privy to Wendy's reflection on what Blumenthal has said, but must take Blumenthal's word for the existence of his own reflective process—we are only permitted to know the results of that reflection, not its content. Moreover, Wendy's voicing and Blumenthal's dismissal of this critique serves also to dismiss in advance any similar objections that might be raised by the reader. By incorporating criticism of his text into the text itself, Blumenthal insulates it from outside critique; in his attempt to maintain a position of openness to other voices, Blumenthal actually risks cutting off dialogue.

While these difficulties ought not be overlooked, they negate neither the deep commitments with which Blumenthal writes, nor the contribution which Blumenthal makes to Jewish Post-Holocaust Theology. This contribution is twofold. First, he borrows from his Christian colleagues the concept of a systematic theology, which permits him to engage first with fundamental Jewish principles regarding the attributes of God.<sup>94</sup> Beginning from what my Protestant colleagues would characterise as the Doctrine of God, rather than from the reaction to historical events which served as the point of departure for previous post-Holocaust theologians, permits Blumenthal to place at the centre of his discourse the issue of relationship that has haunted the edges of much other work in this area. Discourse about God's presence in history is a thinly-masked discourse about the validity of the covenant between God and Israel: does history demonstrate that God has kept God's promises? The mutuality of the covenant, the fact that it makes demands on both Israel and God, points to the fact that what the covenant is actually doing is providing a formal structure for the dialogical relationship between God and Israel. Attempts to argue for the continued validity of the covenant, for the continued presence of God in history, over and against the apparent witness of the death camps, are attempts, however halting and abstract, to find some way to continue to remain in relationship with God.

Second, Blumenthal realises that relationship cannot be worked out in the abstract, that '[t]heology is not real unless one can pray it.'<sup>95</sup> This is an extension of the therapeutic focus of Blumenthal's project, which places speech at the centre, but it is also, again, a direct statement of a notion that has haunted previous work. Roth's critics rejected his God as one they could not worship, rather than one in whom they could not believe; Blumenthal acknowledges the correctness of this position and, at the same time, recognises that one possible key to release theology (Jewish theology in particular, although I suspect this insight applies at least to Christianity as well) from the trap of the theodical dilemma is

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<sup>94</sup> Blumenthal 5.

<sup>95</sup> Blumenthal 284.

to correct notions of what worship entails, rather than attempting to minimise the reality of suffering or God's apparent responsibility for it.

*MELISSA RAPHAEL: SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD*

Important as Blumenthal's insights are, he is by no means the last word in Jewish engagement with or response to the Holocaust. Melissa Raphael, writing some ten years later and with a vastly different set of methodological preoccupations, also has made a significant contribution to the pool of potential imaginative strategies from which Jewish theological memory can draw in its response to the Holocaust. In *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, Raphael begins from her commitment as a feminist to let the voices of women be heard at the centre of Jewish experience, rather than on its margins.<sup>96</sup> In applying this commitment to the Holocaust, she not only improves historical scholarship and extends the reach of feminist Jewish scholarship, she also offers a unique understanding of the way that the relationship between God and Israel is worked out in history.

Raphael, like Blumenthal, places the theology of Image at the centre of her investigation. This is a distinctively Jewish doctrine, originating in the text of Parshat Beresheit: *וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם* 'And God filled humankind with God's own Image; God created them male and female, filling both with the Image of God.'<sup>97</sup> The notion that humanity bears the Image of God means that

<sup>96</sup> Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust* (Routledge, 2003).

<sup>97</sup> Parsha Beresheit (Genesis 1:27). My translation here departs from the literal and grammatical Hebrew in favour of sensible and accurate expression in English, which does not have inbuilt grammatical gender as Hebrew does—*הָאָדָם* in this passage is taken to refer to humanity, both male and female, rather than to specifically to 'the man' (Rashi's rather fanciful explanation of this passage—seemingly derived from Plato's *Symposium*—aside); I avoid the use of gendered pronouns to refer to God. Avoiding pronouns necessitates some rearrangement in the order—most obviously, the second and third clauses are switched around, as the order they appear in Hebrew ('filled with the image of God, male and female, God created them') may give the erroneous impression that God is filled with God's own image (thanks to Max Goldman for pointing this out). Finally, I have rendered the first two instances of the root *בָּרָא* (as it appears in the Hebrew) as 'filled', which implies the Lurianic image of God's emanation flooding into the void at the moment of creation—an image which resonates with much of the current discussion, as Raphael's theology is also marked by Jewish mysticism (see, especially, Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish and Christian Mysticism: An Introduction* (Gracewing, 1995) 50-52). The third instance of the root *בָּרָא* is translated as the more standard 'created'; a more skilful translator would be able to carry the image of filling through the entire passage without causing confusion or disrupting the flow of the passage.

The word *זָכָר* in this passage is also worth comment, especially as this is its first reappearance in this thesis after over one hundred pages of absence; here, it functions as a pair with *נְקֵבָה*, and so the sensible translation is 'male', but its placement in the Hebrew text causes it to do double duty;

*זָכָר בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ* could also translate (loosely) with the sense of an afterimage: 'filled with the memory of God's image' (literally, 'in the image of God filled memory'—although this renders *נְקֵבָה* difficult to understand; it could, of course, be translated as orifice/opening/hole, to the effect that both

humanity becomes a source of theological understanding: the attributes of God are reflected in humanity; a statement that can be made about humanity also applies to God. Blumenthal began by dividing God's Image into the two essential attributes of 'holiness' and 'personality'; while his study focuses more on the latter, and tends to reach for an understanding of God couched in human terms, it is quite significant that he also admits that holiness is part of the theology of Image—humans partake of, and are able to understand themselves through, Godliness.<sup>98</sup> This move also has scriptural roots, of course—for example, the commandments in Leviticus that Israel is to be holy as God is holy.<sup>99</sup> But the theology of Image in Blumenthal's (and Raphael's) formulation is not simply a Jewish gloss on Platonism; humanity is not a pale copy of God. Rather, '[h]umanity, in its individual and collective existence, is created in God's image and hence struggles, together with God, to live the depth of that image.'<sup>100</sup> The theology of Image reveals God and humanity locked in mutual regard, each learning how to be themselves through encounter with the other.<sup>101</sup>

For Raphael, the theology of Image is expressed most fully in the face to face encounter between human beings—particularly Jews, and more particularly Jewish women.<sup>102</sup> The core of her study is a lengthy examination of the way that such face-to-face encounters functioned to conceal and reveal the presence of God in the concentration camps: the dehumanizing filth of the camps effecting *bester panim*, the hiding of God's face, and small acts of defiance—cleanliness, recognition of humanity—serving to reveal the face of God in the face of the camp inmates. In this way, Raphael not only suggests that God was present to victims of the Holocaust, she also suggests that God suffered with the victims, rather than being implicated as a cause of their suffering.

The problematic nature of Raphael's theology should, by this point, be clear: she neglects God's sovereignty in favour of God's immanence. Her abused, rather than abusing, God comes close to acting as an echo of Moltmann's *theologia crucis*, albeit recast in

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memory and opening (of vessels, possibly referring to the clay used for creation in Genesis 2) are filled with God's image, though that concept is exceedingly difficult to render in English).

<sup>98</sup> Blumenthal 6-8.

<sup>99</sup> E.g., Leviticus 19:2 and 11:44.

<sup>100</sup> Blumenthal 8.

<sup>101</sup> This reading of the Theology of Image owes a great deal to Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (Vintage Books, 1996).

<sup>102</sup> In her emphasis upon the face, Raphael is, of course, drawing on the thought of Martin Buber and Emanuel Levinas. She discusses these influences explicitly in pp. 100-106.

It should also be noted that Raphael differentiates between covenantal theology and theology of Image, arguing that '[c]ovenantal relationship is [...] a witness to the theology of image that posits a relation of recursive presence between God and persons' (Raphael 88). One could, then, argue that Raphael's work, in focusing on theology of Image, does little to rescue the idea of covenant. However, in her later chapters especially, Raphael invokes the figure of the Shekhinah following Israel, in particular, into exile; the particular bond implied by this image is a form of covenantal theology.

a Jewish, feminist key.<sup>103</sup> God is to be pitied, rather than brought to account; however great the sufferings of the human victims of the Holocaust, God's suffering must be infinitely greater, as God partook in the suffering of each victim. However, such a critique neglects the Kabbalistic roots of Raphael's thought, the acknowledgement of fracture at the heart of creation. The *Shekhinah* she posits is God in exile from God's own self; a fragmentary part of God, but not the entirety of Divine Being.<sup>104</sup> Thus, Raphael's work is best read as a corrective to previous post-Holocaust theologies, all of which focus on the classically omnipotent God of the covenant, rather than the weakly immanent *Shekhinah*. What Raphael says of the latter does not necessarily invalidate what other theologians have said of the former. It is possible—and, perhaps, necessary—to both acknowledge God's suffering presence within the Holocaust and to seek redress from God for permitting the Holocaust to happen.

#### *LITURGY AND THE THEOLOGY OF IMAGE: SPEAKING GOD'S FACE*

Raphael's intervention into post-Holocaust theology is essential, but incomplete. She provides a much-needed framework for understanding God's action—or part of God's action—in the Holocaust (and, in theory, all other instances of radical suffering throughout history), and therefore a foundation upon which continued relationship between God and Israel may be built; she does not provide a terribly detailed vision of how that relationship ought to be enacted, liturgically. She does not immediately appear to answer Blumenthal's dictum that '[t]heology is not real unless one can pray it'; moreover, she seems to break with the previous tradition of feminist Jewish theological intervention, which has tended to both begin from and end with practical concerns about the inclusion of women in Jewish life, Jewish law, and, especially, Jewish liturgy.<sup>105</sup>

However, a closer reading of Raphael's text reveals a strong suggestion of precisely such practical concerns, although their application to the present day is left as an exercise for the reader. The significance of Raphael's argument that, in Auschwitz, God was revealed in and through the face-to-face encounter between Jewish women, through the recognition and recovery of mutual humanity, extends far beyond Auschwitz. The process of *tikkun*, the reconciliation of 'the exiled God to God', begun in the camps must, if it is to

<sup>103</sup> See above, note 20.

<sup>104</sup> See Raphael 133.

<sup>105</sup> Blumenthal 284. For examples of earlier works of Jewish Feminist Theology, see Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics* (Beacon Press, 1998); Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*; see also the essays collected in Susannah Heschel, ed., *On Being a Jewish Feminist*, rev. ed. (Schocken Books, 1995).



be a meaningful reconciliation, continue into the present day.<sup>106</sup> Raphael's enumeration of the acts which help to accomplish that reconciliation broadens and challenges existing concepts of liturgy: needlework, washing, touch, feeding, dressing, collecting, carrying; the bending of one body towards another.<sup>107</sup> In saying that these acts did constitute *tikkun*, encounter, prayer, Raphael is also saying that they still do constitute such in the present, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future; the sacred and quotidian meet and merge, finding one another in the same sort of mutual regard that characterises the human/Divine relationship described by the theology of Image.

This is still not a fully satisfactory response; a theology drawn from the particularities of predominantly Eastern European Orthodox women is not a universal cure for Holocaust-induced religious anxiety—there is no universal cure, and attempts to invent one risk falling into the same trap as First World War memorialisation, in which individual lives are collapsed together into the collective Glorious Dead.<sup>108</sup> This collapsing is a diminishment of both humanity and God's Image in humanity. It is also inescapable; the enormity of loss in the Holocaust (or the First World War, or, for that matter, any other war, genocide, or natural disaster) is too great to approach in its entirety without losing sight of individual lives and experiences. Theology is conducted in the tense space in between individual and universal concerns, and thus is, at its best and most honest, always inadequate, never stable or complete.<sup>109</sup> This is where an element of protest or reproach, such as Roth and Blumenthal endorse, becomes a necessary corrective—not as a repudiation of God, but as an acknowledgement of incompleteness, a refusal to subscribe to a tidy—and misleading—universal narrative.

But just as Raphael's theology supplements and corrects, rather than substitutes for, the patriarchal tradition of Judaism, so do the liturgical acts she describes supplement, rather than supplant, the previous liturgical innovations carried out by other Jewish feminists. To point, as Raphael does, to the liturgical significance of the routines and rituals of a Jewish home, traditionally the domain of women, is not to suggest that a Jewish

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<sup>106</sup> Raphael 133.

<sup>107</sup> E.g., Raphael 154.

<sup>108</sup> Raphael notes this limitation in her study, but maintains that '[r]eligious feminists who wish to affirm female difference rather than erasing it in the name of equality with the male norm (the historic tendency of Reform Judaism) must take seriously the Orthodox contention that women have [...] the priestly power to mediate the presence of God' (Raphael 77). While Raphael is correct that such a contention, when it is taken seriously and not merely deployed in order to keep women in the kitchen and out of the synagogue, is an important step forward for Jewish feminism, it is at the same time deeply dependent on binary gender identification, leaving little room for intersex or transgendered spirituality to arise.

<sup>109</sup> This is well expressed in the opening meditation of Blumenthal's book, on the practice of theology, in which he declares: 'To be a theologian is to be on the boundary', mediating between tradition (and its necessary multivocality), God (and God's unknowability), and humanity (without appropriating the voice of the other) (Blumenthal 3-4).

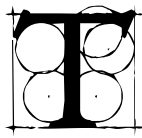
woman's space of worship should be limited to the home—or, in fact, that a man is only capable of encountering God within the walls of a synagogue. God, with and through encounter with humanity, must be praised, reproached, and helped to mend; I suspect that we will learn that the spaces and languages which permit this are far more numerous than have yet been imagined.

In my conclusion, I will return to Canadian literature as a source text for theological reflection, reading two very recent novels by Jewish authors, Anne Michaels and Edeet Ravel. These books bring issues of Holocaust memory and Canadian national identity into direct conversation with each other, and offer constructive interruptions into both discourses. Instead of the textbook Orthodox women that anchor Raphael's theology, Michaels and Ravel give us bad Jews: assimilated Jews, atheist Jews, intermarried Jews, unmarried Jews, gay Jews, Jews who don't know how to pray, Jews who know how to pray but don't, Jews who eat pepperoni pizza, Jews for whom Jewishness exists more as an interruption to their ability to be uncomplicatedly Canadian than as an identity in its own right. And instead of the entwinement of national and familial loyalties, bundled neatly together and always on a steady path towards 'happily ever after' found in Anne Shirley, Rilla Blythe, or Klara Becker, Michaels and Ravel depict isolation, dysfunction, dislocation, children whose families are dead and families whose children wish they were dead, characters who move through the world as confused about their point of origin as they are about their destination. It is these stories, and others like them, that best showcase the diversity, the complexity and the messiness of the world with which theology now contends.

## C Conclusion

I watch Michaela bake a pie. She smiles and tells me that her mother used to roll the pastry this way. Unknowingly, her hands carry my memories. I remember my mother teaching Bella in the kitchen. Michaela says: “My mother used to cut the dough this way, which she learned from her aunt, you know, the one who married the man who had a brother in New York...” On and on, casually, offhand, Michaela's mother's stories of relatives from the next town, from across the ocean, unroll like the crust. The bold dress cousin Pashka wore to her niece's wedding. The cousin who met and married a girl in America but she came from his own home town, can you believe it, he had to travel halfway around the world just to meet the neighbour's daughter... I remember my mother urging Bella not to reveal the secret ingredients of her honey cake—the envy of Mrs. Alperstein—not ever, except to her own daughter, God willing. A few tablespoons of porridge so it will be smooth and moist as cream, and honey from acacias so the cake will come out golden...

-Anne Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces* (Bloomsbury, 1998) 192-193.



he great difficulty posed by Melissa Raphael's suggestion of quotidian liturgies as a way forward for post-Holocaust theology is the lack of a distinct set of texts from which to construct an argument. If *anything* can be liturgical, then the category loses its meaning.<sup>1</sup> If all human actions (or, more properly, interactions) accomplished *tikkun*, then the world ought to have been mended long ago, and Blumenthal's demand for the inclusion of reproach in the range of potential modes of prayer would be unnecessary.

Most studies of Jewish liturgy or religious ritual rely upon textual self-identification—a text is liturgy if and because it is (or has been) labelled as such, or because it bears significant similarity to other texts which have been positively identified as liturgy.<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Hoffman has critiqued the tendency of liturgical studies to approach text and only text—to forget that liturgies exist in the context of specific, historically and socially situated communities, and are enacted, rather than simply read.<sup>3</sup> However, even in his quest for a broader study of liturgy, Hoffman relies almost exclusively on textual evidence—and not merely textual evidence, but usually textual evidence with a publication history, omitting diaries, letters, and the like. Vanessa Ochs's recent work on newly emerging Jewish ritual practices has relied on a far broader assortment of texts—e-mails, postings to internet message boards, booklets distributed at religious services to help participants follow along, conversations, and personal experiences.<sup>4</sup> However, even with the inclusion of the last two resources, Ochs still derives the vast majority of her information from text of one sort or another, and by the time the rituals she chronicles are transmitted to her readers, they have been transformed entirely into arrangements of words on a page. Liturgy may be, as Hoffman puts it, *Beyond the Text*, but it also *is* text.

I would suggest, however, that to think of liturgy as text is to mistake the evidence of a phenomenon for the phenomenon itself. Liturgy is not the text on the page so much as it is the actions described by the text; a text is categorised as liturgy because of the type of action it describes. Beginning from this understanding, it is possible to formulate a functional, descriptive definition of liturgy, which places the liturgical value on what an

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<sup>1</sup> This is the same logic which Arendt applied to guilt in post-war Germany: 'where all are guilty, none is.' Arendt, 'Personal Responsibility Under Dictatorship' 28.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Arthur Green, *These are the Words: A Vocabulary of Jewish Spiritual Life* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1999) has only two entries in the index under 'liturgy'; one points to the entry on the Amidah (75-76), and the other on Tefillah (110-111); while the latter does argue for the importance of unscripted personal prayer in Judaism, it does so by way of appeal to scriptural authority (Moses and the Psalms), suggesting that personal prayer derives its validity from its resemblance to these textual antecedents.

<sup>3</sup> See Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* esp. 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> Vanessa L. Ochs, *Inventing Jewish Ritual* (Jewish Publication Society, 2007).

action accomplishes, rather than on the textual heritage from which it draws. This is a move already implicitly made by Raphael, but it bears drawing out in greater detail. A close reading of the texts of Jewish liturgy reveals two dominant concerns:<sup>5</sup>

- 1) The transmission of the collective memory of the community, and
- 2) The creation of a space of encounter with the divine.

These concerns are interconnected; the Image of God is encountered within the community, and transmitted as part of the memory of the community. Certain liturgies very clearly consist of one more than the other—Passover, for example, tilts heavily in favour of communal memory, while the synagogue liturgies of the High Holy Days are primarily concerned with encounter—but both elements are present in each. What I characterise as ‘liturgical moments’ are not textual replacements for formal liturgy, but, rather, moments and interactions in which the functional concerns of formal liturgy are attended to.

Most of the quotidian routines which Raphael suggests might be transmuted into functionally liturgical moments exist as lived experience, rather than as text. Lived experience is difficult to translate into academic enquiry. Live-subject interviews are a viable method of uncovering the liturgical aspects of day-to-day routines—however, it is a cumbersome method, and the leap between the descriptions of quotidian liturgical experiences such a study would yield and the construction of a viable liturgical theology would open up the same ethical issues of appropriation that plagued Blumenthal's work, and which Raphael's use of memoirs sought to avoid.<sup>6</sup> One might approach such moments as Raphael does, through journals, life-writing, and other forms of intimate documentary evidence. This approach has its merits, and may even be a bit seductive: it connects the

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<sup>5</sup> This is a highly condensed gloss of an argument that could—and perhaps should—be drawn out into a book by itself. Aside from examinations of the liturgies themselves (a complete listing of which is available in my bibliography), it owes much to Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 1997), the earlier work of Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. J. W. Swain (New York: Free Press, 1965 [1915]), Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (Basic Books, 1973), and Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Cornell University Press, 1969); Hammer, *Entering the High Holy Days*; Jonathan Sacks's essay, ‘Understanding Jewish Prayer’ in *The Koren Siddur: With introduction, translation, and commentary by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks* (Koren Publishers, 2009) xvii-xlix; Anson Laytner, *Arguing With God: A Jewish Tradition* (Lanham, MI: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990); several of the essays in Louis Jacobs, *Judaism and Theology*: ‘Holy Places’ (51-65), ‘The Jewish Tradition’ (65-82), and ‘The Body in Jewish Worship: Three Rituals Examined’ (83-101); the essays collected in Michael A. Signer, ed., *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman, eds., *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); Lawrence A. Hoffman, ‘The History, Structure, and Theology of Jewish Synagogue and Home Liturgy: An Overview’ and ‘Liturgical Basis for Social Policy: A Jewish View’ in Daniel F. Polish and Eugene J. Fisher, eds., *Liturgical Foundations of Social Policy in the Catholic and Jewish Traditions* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1983); A. Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and its Development*, (Henry Holt and Company, 1932).

<sup>6</sup> This would be a very interesting comparative study nonetheless, conducted across different strands of Jewish observance, should funding and ethical approval become available.

scholar to the interior life of the author; it appears to have all the advantages of lived experience, and the stability of text. Moreover, publication places such text firmly in the public sphere, lessening concerns over appropriation of another's voice, and removing the ethical concerns connected to live subject interviews.<sup>7</sup> However, the appearance of authority and stability belies the fact that most published life-writing is at the very least edited (whether by the author herself, or posthumously) and may, like L. M. Montgomery's journals, be every bit as much a literary production as an attempt at recording lived experience.<sup>8</sup>

It is possible that some hints at quotidian liturgical routines might be uncovered in domestic manuals and cookbooks of ages past—the preparation of *challah*, for example, requires a *bracha* over the removal of a small piece of dough to be burnt, in commemoration of the dough that would have once been donated to the Temple to make up a loaf for the priests to eat. This *bracha* is written into several versions of the recipe currently in my possession; one presumes that to the person who originally copied down the recipe, the *bracha* was as necessary to the preparation of *challah* as the addition of yeast.<sup>9</sup> But the *bracha* for *hafrashas challah*, the division of the dough, is a specific *birchah hamitzvah*, a blessing recited to mark the fulfilment of a positive commandment; there are no similar *brachot* to accompany, for example, the face-to-face encounter that accompanies the handing over of *challah* from one person to another.<sup>10</sup> While a study of material of this type would almost certainly yield interesting insights into domestic ritual and the liturgical life of women from the past, it is unlikely to reveal much about the interactions between human beings which are the basis of Raphael's expansion of the liturgical.

<sup>7</sup> Raphael mentioned these particular advantages at a session of the Religions, Holocaust and Genocide panel of the American Academy of Religion, 7 November 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Also especially relevant here is the case of *The Diary of Anne Frank* and its numerous posthumous revisions—for a recounting of the issues pertaining to *The Diary* as an historical document, see Max Page, 'The Life and Death of a Document: Lessons from the Strange Career of *The Diary of Anne Frank*', *The Public Historian* 21, no. 1 (1999).

This problem also extends to live subject interviews, of course; see, for example, Paul Chodoff, 'The Holocaust and its Effects on Survivors: An Overview', *Political Psychology* 18, no. 1 (1997), in which the author claims that 'In this account [...] the reader *will experience* something of the physical and psychological stresses that confronted the inmate' (148; emphasis added). The suggestion that a reader could experience the physical stress of the camps simply by reading an oral history interview is at best trivializing the original experience—but it is also a rather naked revelation of the assumptions which I suspect underlie a great deal of work which relies upon text as a mediator of experience (including my own). Imaginative engagement in the world of a text is an experience, but one should remain mindful that it is an experience of imaginative engagement in the world of the text, not a direct experience of what the text describes. For a lengthy discussion of the interpretation of Holocaust memoir, diaries, testimony, and fiction, see Barbara Foley, 'Fact, Fiction, Fascism: Testimony and Mimesis in Holocaust Narratives', *Comparative Literature* 34, no. 4 (1982).

<sup>9</sup> These recipes have come from various sources; most have been passed on to me by friends, and very few of them contain any attribution.

<sup>10</sup> The *hamotzi*, the bread blessing, is a *bracha* that accompanies the eating of bread, and can be recited in solitude just as readily as in company.

A further potential source for a quotidian liturgical theology, the one which I believe to be most fruitful, is works of fiction: imaginative constructions of what might be. Fictive texts are stable points of reference, free from the ethical issues attached to appropriating another person's actual experience, but also less likely to be mistaken for a direct transmission of lived experience—that is to say, by the fact of their being fictive, such texts advertise the literary qualities which memoirs tend to obscure. In this conclusion, I will examine two such literary texts, Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces* and Edeet Ravel's *Your Sad Eyes and Unforgettable Mouth*.

Both of these works focus, in whole (Ravel) or in part (Michaels) on the children of holocaust survivors, who 'internalize the unresolved traumatic memories of their parents and thus suffer similar anxieties.'<sup>11</sup> Both texts, then, portray the Holocaust as already part of inherited collective memory, what Marianne Hirsch has termed 'postmemory', rather than as an immediate experience (even the Holocaust survivor featured in the first part of *Fugitive Pieces* is a child escapee; later in life he seeks to partake of cultural memory as a way of sharing in the experience the rest of his family underwent).<sup>12</sup> The Holocaust is a trace, haunting the edges of the narrators' lives, present in the *lacunae* that open up between them and their parents, their homes and other homes, their interior existence and the wider world. It is in these gaps that liturgical mending becomes possible.

Both of these works are complex literary constructions; *Fugitive Pieces* is less a novel than it is a very long prose poem, and *Your Sad Eyes* is dense with intertextual references—for example, the protagonist, Maya, is a modern, Jewish, lesbian re-visioning of Anne of Green Gables, with an 'overly long, freckled body', 'Pre-Raphaelite red hair', and grey eyes.<sup>13</sup> My reading here will be quite narrow, focusing exclusively on the instances in each book which reveal the potential for quotidian liturgical space, rather than attempting a

<sup>11</sup> Karein Goertz, 'Transgenerational Representations of the Holocaust: From Memory to "Post-Memory"', *World Literature Today* 72, no. 1 (1998) 35.

<sup>12</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Harvard University Press, 1997) 22-23; see also Hirsch, 'The Generation of Postmemory', *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008) 103-128.

<sup>13</sup> Edeet Ravel, *Your Sad Eyes and Unforgettable Mouth* (Viking, 2008) 7, 84. Maya's romance with the Diana Barry-esque Rosie ('Two black braids, large dark eyes, black eyebrows, heartbreaking mouth. Skin that glowed like the skin of red-cheeked children in coloured frontpiece illustrations'; see Ravel 54) is more overtly sexual than Anne and Diana's, and after Rosie meets her 'Fred Wright', a boy named Glenn, Maya does not enter into what Montgomery might have presented as an adult sexual relationship with a man, but becomes a fixed part of Montreal's lesbian bar scene—an option that was not available to Anne (or Montgomery)—see Ravel 2.

Less significant to the discussion at hand, Maya's constant but silent companion during her re-reading of her old journals is her dog, an aged St. Bernard named Sailor—which is also the name of the skeleton that is central to the plot of Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* (which won both the Governor General's Award and the Giller Prize)—see Ravel 28; Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost* (Picador, 2000) 64. I mention this to buttress my assertion that, in this novel, Ravel is deeply embedded in contemporary Canadian literary discourse, and it is not unreasonable to assume that she may have written her book with Michaels's award winning post-Holocaust novel also in mind—although there is less direct textual evidence of such a link.

complete unpacking of the books' literary significance, or the intertextual play between the two novels. Before that, however, a brief summary of the plot of each novel will smooth the way for the discussion to follow.<sup>14</sup>

## FUGITIVE PIECES

*Fugitive Pieces* is divided into two parts. The first takes the form of the memoirs of the fictional poet Jakob Beer, composed in the last months of his life, before he is struck by an automobile and killed at the age of sixty.<sup>15</sup> It begins with an account of his escape from the site of his parents' murder, presumably at the hands of Nazi soldiers. Jakob's recounting of this trauma is fragmentary, and scattered throughout the narrative; it rises to the surface periodically and interrupts his adult existence. The events can be reconstructed something like this: his parents had sufficient advanced warning to send him to a hiding place inside one of the walls of their house, from where he could hear, but not see, their murder; he emerged and eventually made his way to the forest near Biskupin, an iron-age settlement, where he was found by Athos, a Greek geologist working with the excavation team.<sup>16</sup> Athos smuggled Jakob out of Poland and into Greece, where he remained in hiding at Athos's family home, on the island of Zakynthos, until the end of the war.

After the war's end, Athos removed Jakob from the political instability of the Greek Civil War and moves them to Toronto, where Athos obtained a university post.<sup>17</sup> But Athos, in spite of his best efforts, could not protect Jakob from a confrontation with history. Although Jakob 'tried to bury images, to cover them over with Greek and English words, with Athos's stories, with all the geologic eras', at night, his dead family 'simply rose, shook the earth from their clothes, and waited.'<sup>18</sup> When Athos died, Jakob was left to re-assemble not only his own life, but Athos's final project, *Bearing False Witness*, a book on the SS-Ahnenerbe, the Nazi unit devoted to ancient history and archaeology. 'The night I finished the work of my koumbaros,' Jakob says, 'I wept with emptiness as I typed his dedication, for his colleagues at Biskupin: "Murder steals from a man his future. It steals

<sup>14</sup> In the interest of clarity, as both novels feature memoirs, older documents re-read during the 'present' of the novels themselves, I have departed from the customary use of the present tense when describing actions that form part of what the novel characterises as 'past'—Jakob's memoirs and Maya's journals.

<sup>15</sup> This information is conveyed in the frontpiece to the book.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Michaels 6, 9, 148-149.

<sup>17</sup> Michaels 79

<sup>18</sup> Michaels 93. Full quote: 'I tried to bury images, to cover them over with Greek and English words, with Athos's stories, with all the geologic eras. With the walks Athos and I took every Sunday into the ravines. Years later I would try a different avalanche of facts: train schedules, camp records, statistics, methods of execution. But at night, my mother, my father, Bella, Mones, simply rose, shook the earth from their clothes, and waited.'



from him his own death. But it must not steal from him his life.”<sup>19</sup> The theme of service rendered by the living to the dead runs throughout the book.

Jakob was haunted by the memory—or, more accurately, absence—of his sister, Bella. While he heard the murder of his parents and saw their bodies when he emerged from his hiding place in the wall, he did not realise until a considerable time after the event that his sister was entirely absent from the scene: ‘I couldn’t remember hearing Bella at all. Filled with her silence, I had no choice but to imagine her face.’<sup>20</sup> Besides his book, Athos left behind another unfinished task. In a drawer that otherwise contained mementos of Athos’s long-dead wife, Jakob found ‘a thick folder containing faint blue carbons and newspaper cuttings’, evidence that Athos had, up until the end of his life, continued to search for Bella.<sup>21</sup> Athos had begun this search almost immediately after the war, before he and Jakob left Greece for Canada. When Jakob first mentioned it, he presented it as a hopeless task: ‘We both understood that Athos must search so that I could give up. I found his faith unbearable.’<sup>22</sup> But from the time that Jakob and Athos moved to Toronto, Bella’s silence became an increasingly central focus of Jakob’s life.

Jakob met and married Alex, the daughter of a British doctor whose slang-filled speech and leftist politics appear as much a rebellion against her upper-class background as Jakob’s desire for her reads as an effort at escape from his own past.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the marriage, however, Jakob continued to be haunted by the uncertainty of Bella’s fate.<sup>24</sup> He became increasingly obsessed with survivor testimonies and documentation relating to the death camps, and the strain of this obsession eventually caused his marriage to fail.<sup>25</sup> Some years later, after Jakob became successful at transmuting his unresolved past into poetry, he met Michaela, a museum curator of mixed Russian and Spanish descent.<sup>26</sup> In spite of a considerable age difference between the two (Michaela is twenty-five years younger), they were capable, in a way that Jakob and Alex were not, of sharing their past with one another.<sup>27</sup> This mutual recognition led to a second marriage, and Jakob’s memoirs end with a letter to the child that he hopes to conceive with Michaela:

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<sup>19</sup> Michaels 120

<sup>20</sup> Michaels 10.

<sup>21</sup> Michaels 117.

<sup>22</sup> Michaels 59.

<sup>23</sup> See Michaels 127-136.

<sup>24</sup> Michaels 136-141.

<sup>25</sup> Jakob appears to suffer from some degree of survivor guilt; see Alfred Garwood, ‘The Holocaust and the Power of Powerlessness: Survivor Guilt in an Unhealed Wound’, *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 13, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>26</sup> Michaels 178-179.

<sup>27</sup> See especially Michaels 182, where Michaela weeps for Bella, and Jakob experiences ‘The joy of being recognized and the stabbing loss: recognized for the first time.’

Child I long for: if we conceive you, if you are born, if you reach the age I am now, sixty, I say this to you: Light the lamps but do not look for us [...] Light the lamp, cut a long wick. One day when you've almost forgotten, I pray you'll let us return. That through an open window, even in the middle of a city, the sea air of our marriage will find you. I pray that one day in a room lit only by night snow, you will suddenly know how miraculous is your parents' love for each other.

My son, my daughter: May you never be deaf to love.

Bela, Bella: Once I was lost in a forest. I was so afraid. My blood pounded in my chest and I knew my heart's strength would soon be exhausted. I saved myself without thinking. I grasped the two syllables closest to me, and replaced my heartbeat with your name.<sup>28</sup>

This is not the end of the book, however. In the second part, the narrative is picked up by Ben, a student of the man who introduced Jakob and Michaela, and an admirer of Jakob's poetry. After Jakob's death, and in the wake of his own marital discord, Ben journeys to Idhra to recover Jakob's journals (that this recovery is successful is already attested to by the presence of Jakob's memoirs in the first part of the book). Ben is the child of Holocaust survivors, and his portion of the book is primarily devoted to the excavation of his own past, with his search for (and reflection upon) Jakob's journals lending structure to his reminiscences.<sup>29</sup>

Like Jakob, Ben is accompanied by family ghosts, by his memories of his dead parents and his estranged wife, Naomi; like Jakob, he is haunted by silence. But in Ben's narrative, the silence comes from the living, not the dead. He recalls the silence that pervaded his childhood home, the things that his parents would not speak of—or that his mother spoke only in a whisper, outside his father's hearing.<sup>30</sup> He recalls the 'generous' silences of Naomi, 'who rarely clamps her jaw with frustration or anger (those usually come out in tears); her silence is usually wise.'<sup>31</sup> It is the combination of these two silences that caused the rupture in Ben's marriage to Naomi: Ben's mother confided to Naomi that she had had two children before Ben, before the war, a secret which Naomi unwittingly kept until after the deaths of Ben's parents, when Ben discovered a picture of the pre-war family.<sup>32</sup> It was Naomi who explained to Ben that his parents 'hoped that if they did not

<sup>28</sup> Michaels 194-195.

<sup>29</sup> My colleague, M. Godin, has argued in his own doctoral thesis that Ben attempts to use Jakob's life-writing as an interpretative tool for his own life, deliberately re-casting events from his own experience as echoes of Jakob's narrative—but that, in so doing, Ben frequently misreads or misunderstands Jakob's lessons. See Mark Godin, *Discerning the Body: A Sacramental Hermeneutic in Literature and Liturgy* (University of Glasgow: unpublished PhD thesis, 2009) 203-208.

<sup>30</sup> Michaels 122-123. Ben is, in many ways, an archetypal representation of the Survivor's Child—see Adrienne Kertzer, 'Fugitive Pieces: Listening as a Holocaust Survivor's Child', *English Studies in Canada* 26, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>31</sup> Michaels 208.

<sup>32</sup> Michaels 252-253.

name me, the angel of death might pass by. Ben, not from Benjamin, but merely “ben”—the Hebrew word for son.<sup>33</sup>

Unable to forgive Naomi’s complicity in the silences that damaged his childhood, Ben eagerly accepts her suggestion that he travel to Idhra, to retrieve Jakob’s notebooks.<sup>34</sup> While there, he embarks upon an affair with a younger American woman named Petra, which terminates abruptly when he wakes up to discover her ransacking the house formerly occupied by Jakob and Michaela.<sup>35</sup> While attempting to restore the house to order, Ben finally finds Jakob’s journals.<sup>36</sup> After reading them, he chooses to return home to Naomi—although whether they reconcile as husband and wife is left an open question at the book’s end.<sup>37</sup>

**‘THIS DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL NOT IN HIDING, NOT HEROIC’:<sup>38</sup>**

*YOUR SAD EYES AND UNFORGETTABLE MOUTH*

*Your Sad Eyes and Unforgettable Mouth* is a frame story, which follows Maya Levitsky, who in 2008 is an art historian at a Montréal CEGEP, as she re-reads (and re-writes) her adolescent journals, from the years 1968 to 1973.<sup>39</sup> These journals record her coming-of-age in the Montréal Jewish community, which at the time was home to the world’s third largest population of Holocaust survivors.<sup>40</sup> Most of the adults whom Maya encounters are survivors; most of her peers are, like herself, children of survivors.

At the beginning of Maya’s revisiting (and, possibly, although the text itself is unclear on this point, revisioning) of her past, in 1968, she was twelve years old and living

<sup>33</sup> Michaels 253

<sup>34</sup> Michaels 255.

<sup>35</sup> Michaels 281.

<sup>36</sup> Michaels 283-284.

<sup>37</sup> Michaels 284-294.

<sup>38</sup> Ravel 2.

<sup>39</sup> A CEGEP—*Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel*—is an educational institution unique to Québec; it is a two- to three-year postsecondary program which is mandatory for students from Québec secondary schools (which end a year earlier than schools in the rest of Canada or the United States) who wish to enter university, and also provides vocational training for students who do not wish to continue on a university track. Teachers at CEGEP are required to have a Master’s degree (in academic fields) or significant professional experience (in vocational fields).

<sup>40</sup> This is a frequently cited figure, even today—it is still, for example, featured prominently in the literature of The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (<<http://www.mhmc.ca/en>>; accessed 25 November 2009). However, a wave of emigration following the 1981 referendum has depleted the overall Jewish population of Montréal, leaving Toronto as the home of the largest survivor population in Canada (see Jim L. Torczyner and Shary L. Brotman, ‘The Jews of Canada: A Profile from the Census’, American Jewish Committee, 1995, pp. 228-229, 240 <<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/downloadPublication.cfm?PublicationID=3179>>, accessed 25 November 2009). For a general overview of Holocaust survivor populations in Canada, see Franklin Bialystok, *Delayed Impact: the Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000) 73-74.

in Côte des Neiges with her grandmother and mother: ‘Bubby Miriam, Fanya, Maya. Three mad women. Mad, mad, mad.’<sup>41</sup> She attended a state school run by the Protestant school board;<sup>42</sup> she had no friends,

Not real friends—not friends you met outside of school. Fanya would never let me visit just anyone; she’d insist on coming with me, inspecting the premises, meeting the parents. And what would they make of her garbled snippets of horror-history, her prophetic alarms?<sup>43</sup>

The distance that Fanya’s post-traumatic speech patterns and protective parenting imposed between Maya and her classmates began to dissolve when she interrupted Maya’s bath<sup>44</sup> to display an advertisement for a summer camp, copied from the message board at the local market. Eager to participate in the subculture that the advertisement hinted at (and her mother failed to recognise), Maya agreed to spend the summer at camp.<sup>45</sup> This was a portentous summer; it brought Maya her introduction to the community of Jewish youth in which she eventually made her home—and her first contact with Anthony, a charming (though slightly erratic) camp counsellor.<sup>46</sup> The following summer, however, the camp closed.

Maya was nevertheless reunited with her friends from camp after she was introduced to Rosie Michaeli. In part because Rosie’s own parents were Holocaust survivors, she accepted Maya’s home life without the embarrassment or judgement that Maya feared from her classmates. In a scene reminiscent of the first meeting between Anne Shirley and Diana Barry in L. M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables*, the two girls pledged firm friendship with one another. As a mark of her devotion to Rosie, Maya spent the rest of the summer learning Hebrew in order to pass the admission test for Eden, the Jewish school which Rosie and the rest of the children from Camp Bakunin attended.

<sup>41</sup> Ravel 9.

<sup>42</sup> One of the peculiarities of Montréal education is that there have been, since 1925, two school boards charged with operating state-run schools: the Catholic school board, which historically has operated primarily French-language schools, and the Protestant school board, which historically has operated primarily English-language schools. Since 1965, the ‘Protestant’ school board has included members of the Jewish community, and been charged with supplying education to Jewish pupils (although privately run Hebrew schools continue to exist); the real distinction between the two school boards has more to do with the language of instruction which they oversee than with religious adherence. See Andrew Sancton, *Governing the Island of Montreal: Language Differences and Metropolitan Politics* (University of California Press, 1985) 48-49. However, from Maya’s general ignorance of Judaism prior to meeting Rosie—she does not, for example, understand what the word ‘kosher’ means (see Ravel 36-37)—it seems reasonable to assume that Maya was one of only a few Jewish children at her school.

<sup>43</sup> Ravel 14-15.

<sup>44</sup> ‘The door to the bathroom was unlocked, in case my mother came home while I was still in the bath. Closed doors made her frantic’ (Ravel 9).

<sup>45</sup> Ravel 20.

<sup>46</sup> Ravel 28. Maya’s introduction to her own Jewishness is faintly reminiscent of a similar transition undergone by the protagonist of Chaim Potok’s *Davita’s Harp* (Ballantine Books, 1996).

Through Rosie's father, who taught piano, the girls met Patrick, the spoiled, moody son of Vera Moore a child psychologist who once, briefly treated Maya.<sup>47</sup> The following year (1971), Maya fell into a depression and could not be roused from her bed for quite some time. Her mother attempted to reach Dr. Moore, only to find that she was out of town; in her stead, Anthony appeared, because (as Maya deduced after the fact) he was Vera Moore's elder son, Patrick's older brother. This was confirmed by the contents of a letter that Anthony left on Maya's bureau after he departed—a letter written to Anthony by his father, Gerald, who had left the family to travel in the Far East on a 'spiritual quest'. The letter explains how Gerald and Vera met, just after the war, when Vera was passing through England on her way to Canada. With London still under reconstruction, housing was scarce, and Gerald offered Vera a place to stay; they embarked upon a brief affair, on the first night of which Vera told Gerald the story of her time in the camps. Gerald wrote that

I think it was because she thought she would never see me again and she wanted to discard as many of her experiences as she could relate in a single night, record them in another brain, my brain, and then leave them behind forever, like an exorcism. That's what I think. There may have been other reasons... some sense of duty, some historic urge. Or a deeper need—who knows?<sup>48</sup>

After Vera discovered that she was pregnant with Anthony, Gerald travelled to Canada and they married, but their life together was shadowed by her desire to forget what she had told him of her past, and his presence as a living reminder of it. Before Gerald left, the letter informed Anthony, he wrote down everything he remembered about Vera's story in a notebook and hid it so that their sons could read it and learn their mother's story, their family history.<sup>49</sup>

At this point, the workings of the story resolve into clarity: Maya, the narrator, is really a spectator, peering in from the outside on the Moore's family drama. This is confirmed in the novel's final pages, when Maya's narrative is replaced by several pages of free verse titled 'Eikah' ('Lamentations'), which read as an excerpt from the story Vera told to Gerald on their first night together. This narrative's appearance at the end of the book has the character of the curtain being drawn aside at the end of a puppet-show, finally revealing what has been in the background all along, manipulating the action on stage. But this is not quite true: Heisenberg's uncertainty principle applies to narrative as well as to

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<sup>47</sup> Vera, both in name and physical description, appears to be an echo of the self-sacrificing Leslie Moore from L. M. Montgomery's *Anne's House of Dreams* (see Ch. 5, n. 9)

<sup>48</sup> Ravel 162.

<sup>49</sup> Ravel 164.

particle physics, and so Maya observes, but also cannot avoid participating in, and therefore changing, Vera's story and the impact its echo has on her children.

All the divergent strands of narrative, the characters who drifted in and out of the story without apparent rhyme or reason, converge in the book's climax. After finishing their last exams at school, Maya and Rosie found themselves restless. They sought out Patrick, hoping that he would be bored enough to help them finance a road trip; Patrick offered his family's vacation home in the Laurentian Mountains, purchased as part of Vera and Gerald's effort to imitate a normal family life.<sup>50</sup> Two days into this retreat, Anthony appeared at the door and announced his intentions of joining the trio because his wife had left him and he needed a break; at this point, Maya-in-2008 begins to address her narrative to Anthony directly.<sup>51</sup> Anthony and Maya drifted back into the odd emotional intimacy they had shared since first meeting at Camp Bikunin, but when they retired to the same bedroom, Maya could not bring herself to tolerate Anthony's touch:

I can't change the plot. I can't change that moment. The moment that could have saved you, saved everyone—maybe. When I felt your leg against mine, I moved away involuntarily and, covering my face, I began to cry.<sup>52</sup>

The next day, the isolation of the cottage was shattered by the appearance of a group of young people from the nearest town, and their cousins from Toronto. Rosie fell instantly in love with one of the cousins, Glenn:

I'd seen her with boys hundreds of times, but not like this. Her body, its curve, the yielding trust. That's what was missing until now: the trust. Not just with the guys—also with me. She liked me, but I could see now that she held back. You may not know someone is holding back, Anthony, until you see them one day, catch them off-guard maybe, staring at a kite or a sculpture or witty graffiti under a bridge. And then you understand that you have nothing at all, that everything you thought was genuine and generous and loving was a holding back, and at that moment the real possibility emerges and it floors you.<sup>53</sup>

Anthony probably did not need to be told about that moment, either in 2008 or in 1973, as he experienced it himself, at the exact same time. Maya's attention was so caught up with Rosie and Glenn, with the loss Glen represented to her own intimate life, that she barely noticed Anthony taking his leave of her, or Patrick running off into the woods to look for

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<sup>50</sup> Ravel 188; 195-198. See especially p. 197: 'Dr. Moore's cottage was a naked manifestation of her quest for family intimacy', and 198: 'The word *dad* surprised me, and I wondered whether Patrick was being drawn against his will into the house's—or his own—shunned past.'

<sup>51</sup> Ravel 206.

<sup>52</sup> Ravel 226.

<sup>53</sup> Ravel 232-233.

him.<sup>54</sup> She forgot to even wonder where they were until the guests had departed, and then she and Rosie went to the forest and found Patrick,

sitting against a tree, blank and frozen. As frozen as a block of ice or a statue in a city square. But his eyes were red; he'd been crying, and the tears had streaked his face. A weeping statue.

Beside him we saw your feet and trousered legs. You'd removed your shoes, for some reason. Maybe you thought someone would want them, or maybe you weren't thinking, and you did what people do when they get ready for bed. Black socks tenderly covered your feet, and the bottom cuffs of your suit fell gently on your ankles. The rest of you had vanished—where?<sup>55</sup>

Maya, Rosie, and Patrick agreed to bury Anthony, to spare his mother the pain of knowing that he had shot himself. Instead, Patrick resolved to forge letters from his brother, perpetuating the illusion that he had travelled in his father's footsteps to pursue a monastic existence in India.<sup>56</sup> The three vowed never to disclose the secret, and then went their separate ways—though the 'cab money' Patrick left the girls was sufficient for Maya to move out of her mother's home and attend Cégep.<sup>57</sup> She began 'a new life', a life without Rosie, without 'the appalling muddle that intimacy turned out to be.'<sup>58</sup>

Maya's new life without intimacy is, in the end, as illusive as Ben's new life on Idhra; thirty-five years after Anthony's death, the end of her narrative finds her reflecting again on the event that prompted her trip into the past: dinner with Patrick after his mother's funeral. She sees that, over the years, his 'self-protective irony had strayed into the arena of offhand nastiness. He had become cruel'.<sup>59</sup> There is no explicit parallel drawn between Patrick and Maya's attempts at self-isolation, but immediately after recounting Patrick's unfeeling behaviour towards his wife, Maya sets about re-establishing contact with Rosie, who is now married to Glenn and living in Boston, where he is a professor of mathematics at Harvard. The final scene in Maya's narrative is of her departing, at Glenn's request, to visit Rosie who has been suffering from severe depression:

We think we aren't important; we tell ourselves that because we were helpless and ineffectual once, this is who we are, and our exits don't matter—no one will miss us. I told myself that Rosie had Glenn. My desertion was a way of mourning through imitation, a way we have of re-enacting the worst traits of whoever it is we've lost. For those tangled reasons, and others, I did to Rosie what Anthony did to me.

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<sup>54</sup> Ravel 233-234.

<sup>55</sup> Ravel 235.

<sup>56</sup> Ravel 237.

<sup>57</sup> Ravel 243-244.

<sup>58</sup> Ravel 244, 245.

<sup>59</sup> Ravel 257.

Of course, I don't know why she's in trouble. I only know I haven't been there to help out. And I also know something else that doesn't occur to us when we're young, and when what we have in common with our fellow-travellers is being young, and it seems as if it's easy to find friends. It only dawns on us later, as people drift away, that friends are in fact hard to come by, hard to replace.

I've already bought my plane ticket and arranged for a dog sitter. I leave tomorrow morning. The past is irretrievable. I will never be in Eden again, trailing after Rosie, helping her gather up her books. I'm waiting, as Anthony did not, to see what comes next.<sup>60</sup>

#### BEN AND MAYA:

*'I MUST GIVE WHAT I MOST NEED'*<sup>61</sup>

Ben and Maya's stories have a similar trajectory. Both cut off with the narrator on their way to, but not yet arrived at, a reunion—but both intended reunions follow separations caused mainly by a failure to recognise the personhood of, and, therefore, the Image of God in, others. Both, in other words, have experienced the failure or absence of quotidian liturgical moments. These failures point both towards the continued fracture in the world and towards the possibility of mending, the existence of opportunities for healing encounters (even if those opportunities are mostly missed opportunities). Focusing on failure also leaves room to acknowledge the brokenness of the world, and a movement towards confronting and correcting it, rather than wallowing in illusions of perfection and happy endings.

Both Ben and Maya's encounter with the world began with parents whose lives were marked by their experiences in the Holocaust, and both are, in turn, marked by their parents' experiences. As has already been mentioned, Maya's mother initially stood between Maya and any potential friendships she might have formed, though this was mitigated later on when Maya met other children of Holocaust survivors, who were able to understand and accept as normal the eccentricities of a parent who had spent time *'there'*.<sup>62</sup> Ben also 'learned not to bring school friends home', also found himself embarrassed to admit outside observers into his home life, but his understanding of his parents' pasts is more

<sup>60</sup> Ravel 260.

<sup>61</sup> Michaels 294.

<sup>62</sup> *'There'* is the oblique reference to the camps used by the characters in *Your Sad Eyes*; see, for example, Ravel 95, 121, 231.

For both Maya and Ben, the Holocaust takes on a distance, a tinge of unreality, like a fairy tale; cf David Brauner 'Breaking the Silences: Jewish-American Women Writing the Holocaust', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 31 (2001) 30.



painfully immediate than Maya's vague comprehension of what happened *there*.<sup>63</sup> Maya's mother is a mostly comic character, who causes Maya embarrassment, but no real harm; Ben's recollection of his father, by contrast, interweaves scenes of them listening to classical music together, '[h]is absent fingers combing through my short hair', with a painful scene involving an apple.<sup>64</sup>

My father found the apple in the garbage. It was rotten and I'd thrown it out—I was eight or nine. He fished it from the bin, sought me in my room, grabbed me tight by the shoulder, and pushed the apple to my face.

"What is this? What is it?"

"An apple—"<sup>65</sup>

"Is an apple food?"

"Yes."

"And you throw away food? You—my son—you throw away food?"

"It's rotten—"

"Eat it... Eat it!"

"Pa, it's rotten—I won't—"

He pushed it into my teeth until I opened my jaw. Struggling, sobbing, I ate. Its brown taste, oversweetness, tears.<sup>66</sup>

Food is a thematic element in both books, which reveals a great deal about relationships between characters.<sup>67</sup> Maya's mother obsessively monitored her daughter's food consumption, serving her elaborate meals while refusing any assistance in their preparation, and not partaking of them herself.<sup>68</sup> Rosie's father 'recoiled from money' and spent it 'as quickly as possible' on, among other things, large restaurant dinners for his family, during which 'he himself drank only coffee'.<sup>69</sup> Of all the adult survivors in Ravel's novel, Vera Moore is the only one who appears to take pleasure in food for its own sake, employing a personal chef.<sup>70</sup> The final section of the book portrays her on the road to Prague, in the back of a truck driven by Russian soldiers, meditating on the pleasure of fresh eggs:

*eggs were part of my future  
if I found Katya I would eat two lightly salted poached eggs on buttered toast*<sup>71</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Michaels 229.

<sup>64</sup> Michaels 217.

<sup>65</sup> Michaels 213-214.

<sup>66</sup> Michaels 218.

<sup>67</sup> This is consistent with research findings that show Holocaust survivors experience lasting psychological effects of food deprivation in the ghettos and camps. See Amy J. Sinder, Nancy S. Wellman, and Oren Baruch Stier, 'Holocaust Survivors Report Long-Term Effects on Attitudes Towards Food', *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour* 36.4 (2004). Ben's father's hoarding behaviour is far more in line with these findings than Maya's mother's compulsive feeding.

<sup>68</sup> Ravel 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ravel 110.

<sup>70</sup> Ravel 131, 174, 215-216.

<sup>71</sup> Ravel 263.

The precision with which Vera imagined her eggs—lightly salted, on buttered toast—is a sharp contrast to Ben’s father eating ‘dutifully, methodically, tears streaming down his face, animal and spirit in such raw evidence, knowing he was degrading both’.<sup>72</sup> But Vera’s eating was, like her other domestic behaviours, an attempt at substitution for, or mimicry of, a lifestyle predicated on familial relationships which she lacks. Where Maya and Rosie accepted the food that their parents pressed upon them out of affection for those parents, Patrick rejected what his mother offered for reasons that none of the characters even pretend have to do with the food itself, as evidenced by the dialogue following one such refusal:

I don’t think Rosie had ever witnessed anything quite like this, and she was on the verge of tears. I said, “That was mean.”

But now I’d gone too far. Patrick’s face darkened and he turned on me. “You don’t say,” he replied, straight out of the Ice Age, or maybe the Cold War.

“Did something happen between you?” Rosie’s voice had turned mournful. She could have been wandering through the stormy heath, she could have been asking, *Is man no more than this?*

“How do you mean?” It was Rosie’s turn to be shoved to the corner of the ring.

She nodded sadly. Even she knew that at times there was nothing to be done.<sup>73</sup>

Vera is an inversion of the other two parents in the book (and of Ben’s father), who feed their children but are themselves incapable of enjoying food; she takes great pleasure in her food, but cannot share that pleasure with her children. In none of these cases, however, is the encounter between parent and child one of mutual recognition: the parents use their children in an attempt to restore what they themselves were deprived of (and are now incapable of possessing for themselves);<sup>74</sup> the children accept or reject what is offered, either ignorant or resentful of the parental need which prompts the offering. The Image of God is visible in these scenes only as a trace, a fragment.

The apparent exception to this lack of mutuality is Ben’s early relationship with his mother, who ‘was determined to impress upon me the absolute, inviolate necessity of pleasure’, her ‘painful love for the world’.<sup>75</sup> Ben became, for a time, his mother’s confidante, the vessel into which she poured the memories that his father could no longer

<sup>72</sup> Michaels 214.

<sup>73</sup> Ravel 134.

<sup>74</sup> This is made explicit in a conversation between Maya and Sheila, one of the Camp Bakunin girls, in which Sheila points out that Maya’s mother ‘lost everything, she wants to make up for it by giving you everything’, and Maya complains that ‘It just makes me feel guilty’ (Ravel 151).

<sup>75</sup> Michaels 223.

bear to contemplate.<sup>76</sup> But Ben was an imperfect vessel: he heard his mother's stories, but did not understand the grip they held on her life; he did not, perhaps could not, cling to the world with the same mix of fear and wonder as she did. Like Maya (and Patrick and Anthony), he grew ashamed and resentful of his parents, seeking to 'free' himself from their constraints, realising only later that he 'created a deeper harm. She was afraid. I believe that for moments my mother actually distrusted me [...] This happened even more frequently once Naomi entered our lives'.<sup>77</sup> Whether Naomi's encounter with Ben's parents was more properly liturgical, a space of encounter in which the Image of God became clearly visible to all concerned, is unclear; the text is written from Ben's point of view.<sup>78</sup> What is quite clear is that the closeness between Naomi and Ben's mother led directly to the fracturing of Naomi and Ben's relationship, as discussed above.

What all these relationships have in common is a strange choreography of projection and attachment: one person reaches for the other in an attempt to hold them close and transform them into what that person most needs. Maya and Ben's mothers poured their loss into their children, seeking some sort of vicarious compensation. Rosie pours all of her energy into pleasing her parents, hoping to infuse her father with a will to live that he lacks for himself.<sup>79</sup> Ben's father attempted to mould his son in his own image, and Ben in turn transfers his resentment from his dead father to the dead poet whose life he seeks to imitate, and from his dead mother to the wife whom he sees as the final living reminder of that mother's betrayal.<sup>80</sup> Anthony desired not Maya as the reader knows her, but as the nickname/persona he gave her at camp, 'Joan of Arc', able to see past his defensive pretence and straight into his soul;<sup>81</sup> Maya desired Rosie, untroubled by the latter's casual liaisons with boys, spinning out elaborate fantasies in which Rosie featured as a passive object in need of rescue that only she could provide—and abandoned Rosie when

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<sup>76</sup> Michaels 222-229.

<sup>77</sup> Michaels 231.

<sup>78</sup> The text certainly hints at a deeper relationship between Naomi and Ben's mother, and refers, as has previously been mentioned, to Naomi's innate generosity, hinting that the recognition aspect of a liturgical encounter would come more naturally to her than to Ben. However, Ben narrates through a haze of resentment over Naomi's usurpation of his place in the family, and may be overstating—or over-imagining—the closeness of the relationship.

<sup>79</sup> Ravel 182.

<sup>80</sup> The hints that Ben views Jakob as a father substitute are subtle—Ben himself may not fully realise the parallels, but on the page after he breaks out of his reminiscence to berate the imaginary audience to whom his entire narrative is addressed, declaring that his mother was 'a sensualist of proportions you, Jakob Beer, could never even estimate [...] it was you who were embalmed!', he recalls visiting his parents to find his father 'immobile, staring at a book in his room—another survivor account, another article with photographs' (Michaels 230-231); his father's habit of retreat, and his choice of reading material, are a close echo of Jakob's own retreat from his marriage with Alex—see Michaels 136-149.

<sup>81</sup> See, especially, Ravel 38: 'Everything comes from inside you—you never do or think things just to make an impression, or so someone will think about you in a certain way. You're on a whole different plane, my love' and Ravel 221-225.

another rescuer appeared on the scene.<sup>82</sup> And Vera, whose family life was troubled from its beginning by the past that she had meant to leave behind, insulated herself behind a thin veneer of domestic comfort; her children resented and eventually fled their roles in the family charade—Anthony went so far as to shoot himself. The memory of the Holocaust, both immediate and inherited/constructed, seeps from person to person, marring their connection with others.

The failure of the relationships that drive both novels is important, but it is not the whole story, or even the most important part of the story; God's seeming abandonment of covenant, and the Christian churches' seeming complicity in the mass death of the two World Wars is not the only lesson to be read from the constructed memory of the last century, or even the most important lesson. The important gesture in all of this is not the missed connection, but the stretching of one hand towards another; not the failure of relationship, but the attempt at any relationship at all.

## CONCLUSION

After Jakob Beer's obsession with the past drove away his first wife, he returned to Greece, to his guardian Athos's old family home on the island of Idhra. There, he found his prayer shawl, 'a gift from Athos after the war, never worn, folded carefully and still stored in its cardboard box.'<sup>83</sup> He found a slim volume of Psalms that Athos once retrieved from a rubbish bin. Immersing himself in the book, he permitted himself be flooded by the voices of the past that, during his years in Canada, he had tried to keep at bay.<sup>84</sup> In the dark night, with his never-worn prayer shawl and book of Psalms fished from the trash, Jakob imagined, in painful detail, what happened to his sister, Bella:

We know they cried out. Each mouth, Bella's mouth, strained for its miracle. They were heard from the other side of the thick walls. It is impossible to imagine those sounds.

At that moment of utmost degradation, in that twisted reef, is the most obscene testament of grace. For can anyone tell with absolute certainty the difference between the sounds of those who are in despair and the sounds of those who want desperately to believe? The moment

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<sup>82</sup> Ravel 79.

<sup>83</sup> Michaels 156

<sup>84</sup> cf Michaels 139: 'When we were married I hoped that if I let Alex in, if I let in a finger of light, it would flood the clearing. And at first, this is exactly what happened. But gradually, through no fault of Alex's, the finger of light poked down, cold as bone, illuminating nothing, not even the white point of contrast that burned away the ground it touched.'

when our faith in man is forced to change, anatomically—mercilessly—into faith.<sup>85</sup>

At the end of this vigil, Jakob concluded that

*To remain with the dead is to abandon them.* All the years I felt Bella entreating me, filled with her loneliness, I was mistaken. I have misunderstood her signals. Like other ghosts, she whispers; not for me to join her, but so that, when I'm close enough, she can push me back into the world.<sup>86</sup>

Prompted, in part, by obtaining tangible relics of his past, Jakob abandoned his futile quest for communion with 'ghosts' and returned to Canada, where he met and married Michaela; they lived happily together until they were struck by a car, and died within two days of each other. This is not a happy ending, but it does have a sense of fulfilment which some critics have found problematic, on the grounds that it minimises the horrors of the Holocaust in favour of a narrative in which 'love conquers all'.<sup>87</sup> This is doubly troubling, as Jakob's story becomes the lens through which we read Ben's; it is easy to assume that Ben's own departure from Idhra heralds a return to Naomi and happily-ever-after, although the relics Ben carries are of Jakob's past, not his own, and his narrative ends still up in the air, both literally and figuratively: on a plane over the Atlantic, unresolved. And it is easy, too, to read Maya as an extension of Jakob and Ben, last seen on her way back to Rosie and the resumption of the eternal friendship pledged by Anne Shirley and Diana Barry. But these readings are mis-readings. Jakob is an inversion of Ben and Maya: he grapples with his own past, and makes a new life for himself; they grapple with the memories bequeathed to them by the previous generation, and attempt to reconstruct relationships that they had previously damaged and abandoned.

Ben sits in the air and imagines his reunion with Naomi, interweaving it with memories of his parents, newly reconsidered in light of Jakob's journals:

But now, from thousands of feet in the air, I see something else. My mother stands behind my father and his head leans against her. As he eats, she strokes his hair. Like a miraculous circuit, each draws strength from the other.

I see that I must give what I most need.<sup>88</sup>

But the reunion exists only in Ben's imagination—and so, for all we know, does the memory. As far as Ben's resolve to give what he most needs, while it is a powerful closing

<sup>85</sup> Michaels 168.

<sup>86</sup> Michaels 170.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Kertzer, 'Listening as a Holocaust Survivor's Child'; King 121-47; D. M. R. Bentley, 'Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*', *Canadian Poetry* 41 (1997); Méira Cook, 'At the Membrane of Language and Silence: Metaphor and Memory in *Fugitive Pieces*', *Canadian Literature* 164 (2000); Annick Hillger, "'Afterbirth of Earth': Messianic Materialism in Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces*', *Canadian Literature* 160 (1999).

<sup>88</sup> Michaels 294.

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sentence, Ben has not proven adept at determining his needs at any other point in his narrative—why should we assume that he has suddenly grown wise (especially as he also imagines that he ‘will stop myself from confessing I was on Idhra with a woman’—presumably honesty is not something Ben feels that he has much need of).<sup>89</sup> And Maya, in her rush to return to Rosie in her hour of need, never spares a thought for Tyen, the current (potential) lover who haunts the edges of her narrative in the present.<sup>90</sup> None of these endings is perfect, complete, or even final. What resolution may be had from them exists only in the mind of the reader. We may guess, or imagine, but never know for sure whether Ben finds himself forgiven, whether Maya’s presence proves as healing to Rosie as Glenn hopes. The only certainty we have is that both Ben and Maya have made the attempt: they stretch their hands out towards another, in the hope that this time there will be contact, encounter. They wait to see what comes next.

This is not, by itself, redemption; at most, it is a gesture in that direction:  
halting, flawed, doomed (or so it seems) to failure.  
But it is the best we have.

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<sup>89</sup> Michaels 294.

<sup>90</sup> See Ravel 40-43, 251.

## CODA

This conclusion is not simple or satisfactory. It may seem to be barely a conclusion at all; this thesis, much like the two novels discussed in this chapter, may appear to terminate abruptly, *en route* to a destination but never actually arriving. Unsatisfactory as it may be, however, I remain convinced that this suspension is the most appropriate response to the material addressed in this thesis.

The preceding pages have explored a number of strategies for reconciling the promises of theology with the messy realities of history: the encounter between Israel and Amalek passed into scripture and became a model for subsequent conflicts; the commandment to remember has resonated through the centuries. But the forms of memorialisation that were adequate prior to 1914 were destabilised by the First World War; while theological narratives dominated by a sacrificial *ethos* still provided a framework for public memorialisation, social and liturgical commemorative practice had to shift slightly to accommodate the disruptions of the war. These slight adjustments, in turn, proved completely inadequate to the task of addressing the Holocaust. In total, the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century constitute a thorough assault on traditional forms of memorialisation, the end result of which is that no more simple adjustments to existing social or theological narratives are possible. Instead, the complex phenomenon of remembrance must be addressed by an equally complex and profound cultural, aesthetic, and theological shift.

Early in my research, it became apparent that up through the First World War, memorials functioned as temporal boundary markers, attesting to the completion of a phase in history: there was a war, it ended, we built a statue to remind us what it was all about. This sense of finality is among the characteristics of memorials that have been unsettled by the Holocaust; simple statues are replaced by entire museums, and even these fail to convey a solid sense of ‘what it was all about’. I have attempted, instead, a sort of theological realism: to honour the complexity of the material in the form of this thesis, as well as to resist the urge for a conclusion that is neat, simple, easily optimistic—and ultimately dishonest.

*FIN.*

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