CLOSE ENCOUNTERS IN WAR

Close Encounters in War Journal

ISSN – 2704-8799

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Close Encounters in War and the Emotions

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Introduction: Close Encounters in War and the Emotions

By the Editors

The universe of emotions has always represented a major challenge for research in every field of knowledge, from Philosophy to Physics, from Psychology to the Arts. Although everyone knows what emotions are insofar as almost everyone can "feel", when it comes to providing a clear or systematic explanation of emotions, scholars from a range of disciplines struggle to find common ground. One breakthrough that has oriented research agendas since the 1990s consists in the claim that the human mind is – despite the rationalist tradition rooted in Descartes's philosophy and the following theories of Enlightenment and Positivism – emotional (see, for example, pivotal studies by Antonio Damasio and Joseph Ledoux in the 1990s). Interdisciplinary studies see cognitivists collaborating with psychologists (Hollitscher, *Aggressionstrieb*), anthropologists (Fried and others, *War*), sociologists (Ahäll & Gregory, *Emotions, Politics and War*), and historians (Langhamer, Noakes & Siebrecht, *Total War*) to understand the link between war and the emotions.

The so-called "emotional turn" is perhaps the most recent development in the scholarship on war. Social and cultural approaches to the study of war and conflict have allowed the expansion of this field beyond politics, military history and strategy, thus repositioning the focus of the history of war on society more broadly. Gender studies, for example, have shown the impact of cultural constructs on masculinity and femininity in wartime (Diamond, *Women and the Second World War in France*; Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*), whereas the more recent "memory boom" has established the complexity of the memories of war and the ways in which they are affected by experience, trauma and the specific contexts of remembering (Ashplant, Dawson & Roper, *Commemorating War*; Thomson, *Anzac Memories*; and Winter, *Remembering War*). Zooming in on emotions and feelings as categories for historical and interdisciplinary analysis in the field of war and conflict thus seems like a crucial step forward.

During the preparation of Issue n. 3, devoted to post-traumatic stress disorder, we grew even more aware that war and emotions are deeply entwined. We may even dare to say that if humans go to war, it is mostly due to emotions, although the rational urge to organise and explain war in terms of science is equally powerful (as historian Bernd Hüppauf and ethologist Irenäus Eibl-Eibelsfeld have demonstrated). People caught in a war are exposed to a great number of emotional stimuli that affect their reactions, decision-making,

and eventually their ability to remember their experiences. Emotions caused by propaganda, the feeling of "belonging", affective bonds, ethical inclinations, and cultural notions such as racism, nationalism, patriotism, cosmopolitanism, are only some of the numerous and varied contributing factors that may lead people to take part in a war enthusiastically or to avoid it at all costs. We believe that the "close encounter" is a fundamental emotional experience in war, as far as we can learn from the most ancient testimonies like the Epic of Gilgamesh up to science fiction, even considering its smallest sample, i.e. Fredric Brown's powerful short story *Sentry*.

War involves emotions on the broadest scale, from courage, joy, and aggression to disgust, anxiety, and fear, which Joanna Bourke claims to be the most important emotion in war (*The Emotions in War*: 315). The emotional mark of war is not limited to the time of combat, but lingers on over the decades, haunting and shaping the communities that have to deal with the emotional turmoil that affects the veterans and their families (Hutchison & Blaiker, *Grief and the Transformation of Emotions after War*), sometimes giving birth to traditions, subcultural movements, and even political currents that use the emotional legacy of war as a tool to gain power, such as Fascism in Italy in 1919. Aesthetic representations, above all in movies, but also in literary artefacts like novels and personal narratives, often suggest the misleading idea that the combatants' response to violence, killing, suffering, and dehumanisation be overwhelmingly difficult or far too easy. Conversely, all emotional reactions are context-related and escape any attempt to determine their magnitude and intensity *a priori* and schematically, without assessing the actual conditions in which such emotions were triggered, felt, and eventually elaborated consciously (Malešević, *Is It Easy to Kill in War?*: 5-6, 12-24 and 28). The elusive nature of the emotions in war has even urged mathematicians and engineers to elaborate programs for combat modelling that should provide the military with the "implementation of realistic models of combatant emotion" (Van Dyke Parunak and others, *Representing Dispositions and Emotions in Simulated Combat*). Controlling emotions in war, both on the individual and collective levels, has always been one of the fundamental aims of drill and military discipline, but recent studies show that the final goal of keeping emotions under control in the multifaceted context of war remains far from being achieved. Understanding what emotions do in war, and what war does to emotions is possible, instead, by means of observation and data collection.

The fourth issue of CEIWJ investigates the theme of close encounters in connection to emotions by exploring its facets both on a micro-scale, by studying individual testimonies and experiences, and on a theoretical and

critical basis throughout history. The articles that we propose frame the topic from the perspectives of anthropology, classical theatre, photography, personal narratives, literary representations, cultural memory, and oral history. The articles are distributed into two groups: the first section includes three articles by Maria Arpaia, Alessandra Rosati, and Lise Zurné that mainly focus on literary representation and performance; the second hosts four contributions by Dalila Colucci, Lindsey Dodd, Joana Etchart, and Mara Josi that explore the topic of emotions in war theoretically and from the perspective of witnessing through photography, personal narratives, and oral history.

The contributions

Maria Arpaia's *Fear, Self-Pity, and War in Fifth-Century Athenian Tragedy: Ethos and Education in a Warrior Society* considers the representation of war-related emotions (above all fear and self-pity) in the Greek tragedies written by Aeschylus and Euripides after the Persian War and the Peloponnesian War. By taking into account the pedagogical role of theatre in ancient Greek culture, the author claims that "the theatrical performance was an occasion to permit the citizens to experience fear, pity and compassion in a safe way to develop self-awareness" (*infra*, p. 12). to support this claim, Arpaia analyses the importance of the visual element to trigger the emotions of fear and horror (hence the feeling of pity) through the synesthetic performance of the tragedy, in which spoken word, dance, and music combine to convey a powerful emotional drive. The historical determination of the context within which this occurred is crucial to the argumentation because Aeschylus and Euripides experienced two profoundly different wars. The former looked at the ethos of warriorhood after the Persian War, by depicting in *Seven against Thebes* the fear-stricken Athenian community facing the imminent danger of invasion. The *Chorus* embodies in this tragedy the voice of the people – especially women – that would suffer the greatest suffering in the case on a military defeat. Euripides, with *Trojan Women* looks instead at the disastrous aftermath of the inter-Greek Peloponnesian war, that weakened the cities and unmasked the real imperialistic aggressiveness of Athens. By observing the effects of war from the perspective of the vanquished Trojan women that the Greek victors have deported to their land as slaves, Euripides "describes a scenario that resembles a modern humanitarian crisis and depicts the feelings and grief of displaced people, especially women, seeking refuge from war and annihilation" (*infra*, p. 21). in conclusion, Arpaia explains that the *Chorus* played a crucial role as far as it embodied non-conventional perspectives (women, slaves, outsiders, and so on) and thus

managed to influence the citizens' decision-making process to form the ethical opinion of the broader political body.

Alessandra Rosati's *Wounded Cities, Fragmented Selves: Walking, Melancholia and the Interwar Novel. Woolf's* Mrs Dalloway *and Bontempelli's* La vita operosa radically changes historical era and lands in post-war Europe of the 1920s. By sharing with Arpaia a comparative approach, Rosati brings together two different authors who look at the aftermath of the Great War from the perspective of a veteran who is apparently displaced in the big city (London and Milan), which is represented as the impersonal background where the modern human being experiences the feeling of melancholia. The two novels represent opposite trajectories of post-war demobbing: as Septimus – one of the main characters in *Mrs Dalloway* – struggles with melancholia and eventually succumbs to its gloom and commits suicide, the protagonist of Bontempelli's novel finds his way to reconcile with life and go on by ironically "counter-mourning" the bleak condition of the veteran and the death-drive triggered by the haunting memory of the war. In both cases, mourning and melancholia shape the inner landscape of the two characters, who defy their societies in which they struggle to find their place. In both cases, the war affects "the perceptions of post-war urban reality of the main characters of Bontempelli's and Woolf's novels, which share the modernist preoccupation with self-knowledge and the difficult negotiation of the social system in the face of madness, death and the irrational conditions occasioned by the war" (*infra*, p. 48).

The article *Sensing World War II: Affect, Ritual and Community in Historical Re-Enactment*, by Lise Zurné, turns to look at a different conception of performance and representation, namely the practice of re-enactment. Since historians started considering with attention this kind of direct approach to the past, re-enactment has become the object of a series of academic studies that problematize its validity while praising its effectiveness and pedagogical usefulness as a powerful means to access history. After briefly discussing the state of the art about re-enactment in connection with WWII and beyond, Zurné focuses on two groups of performers who portrayed in 2020 the 277 *Volksgrenadierdivision* of the German *Wehrmacht* and the United States Army Nurse Corps. By interviewing the re-enactors, the author aims to grasp the emotional substrate of this form of historical storytelling in which embodiment, physicality and emotions play a major role in connecting people with the past and in particular with the context of war, by means of processes of authentication. The concept of *liminoid* conditions (such as "immersion") and space (where the re-enactors place themselves in the past) is key to accessing

the practice of re-enactment, which implies the encounter between the present person and an "avatar" that has to do with a *liminoid* past. The body is the real place of this encounter, with the corollary of feelings and emotions that allow the re-enactors to look at the past differently than they would for example by reading a book. This eventually can even create social and affective bonds similar to those existing in war among comrades. In conclusion, Zurné claims that "as an embodied practice, re-enactment is particularly insightful in the study of emotions, not simply because re-enactors aim to approximate the actions, thoughts, and emotions of historical actors [...], but also because emotions are experienced, learned, and mediated through practices of the body" (*infra*, p. 71).

With *Images of Propaganda: Emotional Representations of the Italo-Turkish War*, Dalila Colucci examines how the visual imagery mediated the perception of the colonial war between Italy and Turkey for the control of Libya in 1911, in Italy and abroad, depicting the conflict as a glorious mission of civilization and easy land appropriation. The author analyses a collection of photographs taken by witnesses during the war, stored at Harvard University, and compares these photographic sources with contemporary illustrations which appeared in European magazines and newspapers between 1911 and 1912. Based on this study the author claims that "the emotional effects of the visual imagery of the Italo-Turkish War fostered a collective falsification mechanism: one that emphasized the experience of the conflict as a heroic adventure, in contrast with the reality of the combats and massacres that were taking place, all the while unconsciously denouncing the colonialist gaze" (*infra*, p. 85). The use of photographic testimonies allows Colucci to analyse the non-verbal narrative by focusing on its rhetorical and emotional strategies and distortion, because "the narrative and visual manipulation of these facts from the Italian point of view embodies the most interesting case of sentimental misrepresentation of the Italo-Turkish War" (*infra*, p. 86).

Lindsey Dodd's *Fellow-Feeling in Childhood Memories of Second World War France: Sympathy, Empathy and the Emotions of History* examines fellow feeling in a selection of French childhood oral narratives from WW2 to demonstrate that more attention should be paid to the complex ways that emotions affect the story(ing) of the past. The author frames her work within a thorough theoretical discussion of the concepts of "fellow feeling", empathy, and "composure" of the oral testimony as an intersubjective and emotion-affected source, to claim that historians should consider emotions not only as a content to interpret but rather as an actively constructing factor of the very process of interview-building: "We can therefore consider many – if not all – oral history narratives

to be structured by feeling and that feeling may be discerned by looking for affective intensities […]. Thus tracking articulated and unarticulated feelings can provide insight into past emotional states when memories were laid down, and present ones as they are told" (*infra*, p. 140). These observations draw attention on the centrality of empathy (in comparison with sympathy) in the epistemological and gnoseological processes of oral history. These concepts refer to states of mind, inclinations, or predispositions that affect profoundly the encounter between the historian and the witness, in a dialectic confrontation that requires methodological awareness, adjustment, and interpretation. The article then moves on to propose three case studies. By referring to this theoretical framework, Dodd highlights in this part of her contribution the importance of "recalibrating" fellow feeling and eventually lands on the "ethical demand" at the limits of empathy, because "fellow-feeling, whether sympathy or empathy, engenders a set of moral and ethical questions about who should or can feel what about whom, why, and with what consequences" (*infra*, p. 154).

"It's a Very Emotional Kind of Thought". An Appraisal of Five Community Workers' Accounts of their Involvement during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, by Joana Etchart, continues to explore the emotional aspects of oral history, this time by focusing on the Irish context of the so-called "Troubles". By building on state of the art about affective disorders, Etchart seeks to identify what emotional patterns may be drawn from the sample interviews that she provides as case studies, i.e. five testimonies by social workers who were involved in the Troubles. In agreement with the previous author, Dodd, Etchart, too, posits "that personal accounts may be taken into consideration in the historical analysis even when they are subjective" (*infra*, p. 162), which also means to consider feelings, emotions and affective experiences as constructive factors in oral history. The selected interviews present one further element of emotional disruption as far as the witnesses belonged to non-violent communities, which made their encounter with the conflict rather challenging and emotionally disturbing. As a consequence, fear seems to become the predominant emotion involved in the process of re-elaboration of past experiences. The author identifies signs "such as the reference to an emotional experience – fear for instance – but also less obvious signs pertaining to the oral nature of the sources – such as allusive pace and phrasing", which are "key indicators of various phenomena of infiltration and of affective disorders of historical significance" (*infra*, p. 179). Once more, oral history demands that historians approach their witnesses by carrying a complex set of methodological instruments, including psychological, anthropological, semiotic, and hermeneutic tools as well.

Mara Josi concludes the collection with her *Emotions Out of Pages:* Si può stampare *by Silvia Forti Lombroso*, which analyses the presence, meaning, and transformation of emotions and feelings in Siliva Forti Lombroso's diary, a Jewish woman (and a relative of Cesare Lombroso), who lived in Trieste when the Italian racial laws were emanated in 1938 and fled into hiding when the Germans occupied Italy after 8th September 1943. The relevance of the source consists of two main reasons: the first is that "the diary is an act of transfer which provides an inter- and trans-generational dialogue about an ordinary everyday life in the extraordinary circumstances of discrimination, persecution and the war in Italy [with] the potential to reach a wider readership and promote the understanding of historical events through sensorial and emotional descriptions" (*infra*, p. 189), and in this sense it works as a "prosthetic memory" and a "emotional bridge over time"; the second is that as a personal narrative the diary is also capable of voicing subjects that have been excluded from mainstream historical narratives such as women and the "little people", thus accounting for a multifaceted past. These points of strength combined make the diary a powerful source of information and, more than that, a material source capable of "changing readers' perceptions, adding to their knowledge, and influencing their everyday communication", as far as "emotions, sense of empathy, and identification can […] influence the perception of historical 'data' […] and engender forms of prosthetic memory" (*infra*, p. 200).

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Fear, Self-Pity, and War in Fifth-Century Athenian Tragedy: Ethos and Education in a Warrior Society

By Maria Arpaia

Abstract: In Greek culture, the natural connection between war and fear was acknowledged since Homer. However, during the Hellenic era (507-323 BC), war began to be represented on the stage in tragedies, in which the connection between war and fear included the emotion of desperation. During the Persian War, in which Athens began the symbol of Greece's freedom, the citizens experienced for the first time war-fear and the anguish over the threat of slavery. The educational task of tragedians, therefore, was twofold: on the one hand, they highlighted the heroic values in order to keep alive in the Athenians the civic duty of defending their homeland; on the other hand, they voiced the war-fear of the people, which had to endure the worst effect of the conflict. This paper will offer insight into the Greek conceptualization of war-related fear in two different historical contexts: in the aftermath of the Persian War, by analysing Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes* (467 b. C.); and during the disastrous Peloponnesian War, by analysing Euripides's *The Trojan Women* (415 b. C.).

Keywords: *Greek tragedy, emotions and theatre, Aeschylus, Euripides, educational function of theatre*

The emotions in Greek tragedy

The Greek civilization was a warrior society and military conflicts were doubtlessly a relevant aspect of its history. Warfare was such vivid a thing that almost every generation was either forged in war or witnessed it. To the Greeks, war was a periodic event, an institution of social life, and an ineluctable and almost annual necessity to keep some socio-economic balance among the interests of the local communities. War was, therefore, also one of the most popular literary topics used to educate the audience about the warrior ethos, which included heroic values and respect for defeated enemies. The *Iliad* can serve as a good example to illustrate the ethical conception of war among the Greeks.[1] Achilles and his superhuman warrior virtues hold a prominent place in epic storytelling as much as the sacrifice that Hector, the last champion of the enemy, performs for his homeland. Even if the killing of Hector brings a great victory to the Greeks, the focus of the *Iliad* eventually shifts on the desperate reactions of Hector's mother, father, and wife, who cry over his death (Homer, *Iliad*: XXIV, ll. 708-775). Similarly, the funeral of Hector announces the conquest and destruction of Troy but is not described in a triumphalist and celebratory tone: rather, the Trojan women voice the despair and fear for the future of their people through their lamentations.

The Athenians showed particular appreciation, inherited from the epic poem, for the universality of wartime suffering. Also by experiencing the grief and fear of their foes, they could explore their own emotions in wartime, which they mostly did through tragedy staged at Dionysus's theatre.[2] Beyond any doubt, theatrical performance intensified the empathic reaction of the audience towards the defeated enemy more than listening to the storyteller, also because the visual component of the tragic performance involved the spectators in a synesthetic experience. Greek tragedies often represented the emotive consequences of warfare, including the suffering of the characters and the fear of an uncertain future that the vanquished felt as they were confronted with the perspective of being deported from their homeland, either as slaves or as exiled.

To catch the educative scope of the above-mentioned tragic themes, it is necessary to take into account the pedagogic role of theatre in ancient Greek culture. The *mise-en-scène* of tragedies as a social event represented a way of bringing the community together and investigating topical and controversial matters that concerned society as a whole.

The theatrical performance was an occasion to permit the citizens to experience fear, pity and compassion in a safe way to develop self-awareness. These feelings were stimulated in the spectators by means of a sophisticated mechanism of identification based on displaying emotions on stage. In a crucial passage of the *Poetics* XIV, Aristotle reflects on the importance of involving the audience emotionally:

> Pity and fear can derive from the visual (*opsis*), but also from the arrangement of the incidents itself, which is preferable and the mark of a better poet. For the plot ought to be so composed that, even without seeing a performance, one who merely hears what happens will shudder and feel pity as a result of the events – as indeed one would on hearing the plot of the *Oedipus* (14, 1453b 1-7).

Both seeing and hearing involve the formation of mental images and thus poetic speech alone without *opsis* – as Aristotle argues – is capable of arousing in the hearers the kind of emotion that will permit them to identify with the events on stage (Munteanu, *Grief*: 47 and 95-100). Aristotle's approach to emotion in drama and poetry focuses on the importance of *phantasia*, which means imagination, that the philosopher calls "enargheia" or "vividness" (*Poetics*: 1462a, 14-18). The quasi-pictorial representation of a stage, person, or event permits the hearer to form mental images out of a verbal narrative. In Greek narrative, there is no effective distinction between the effects of visual and verbal representation: both aspects possess great power of persuasiveness,

engage *phantasia*, and emotional response.[3] Longinus, the author of *On the Sublime* (15, 1) underlines that *phantasia* is typically emotional: one feels something that a participant or an eyewitness would feel. The audience feel as though they were seeing the events through the eyes of the characters, but the characters' experience itself comes from the dramatist's imagination. We are in presence of a three-level identification with a very sophisticated process of "emotive reflection". By watching the drama, the audience identify themselves emotionally with the characters and, in turn, recreate sympathetically their first-person perspective in their mind. The elicited audience's experience is not the same as the emotions of the characters imagined by the dramatist, though, because the spectators feel a derivative emotion, some sort of second-degree emotion. The audience's reaction mirrors the emotions embodied by the actors on stage but such perception must necessarily be different in nature because it is filtered through the audience's subjective emotional system. The audience are aware of being safe as to the events performed on stage and empathize with the suffering of the tragic characters. Thus, the spectators feel pity for the disaster that overwhelms the protagonist, and feel terrified before the heinous killings *as if* they were involved in the narrative contest, although they are not. This inevitable cognitive distance from the emotional context on stage marks an important effect on the educative aim of ancient drama. The tragic performance would solicit both the emotional and cognitive spheres. The emotional play of Greek tragedy focused on the audience's two-level reaction to the emotions performed on stage.[4] Only this kind of "reflective feeling" could catch the similarities and the differences between self-perception and the other-perception and broaden the spectators' standpoint.

In the light of these considerations, one could therefore claim that the external audience of the ancient Greek dramas did not directly empathize with the first-person perspective of the characters: they are suffering on stage, while the spectator does not feel what they are feeling, but rather, as Gorgias states, "a certain experience of their own" (*Encomium of Helen*, 9).[5] The characters may feel anguish or grief, but the audience would only feel fear and pity.[6] The tragic emotions of fear and pity are characteristic of a third-person point of view and typical of the bystander's response to suffering. Thus, empathy in ancient Greek drama rooted into an "aesthetic emotion" provoked by the fictional representation on stage and filtered through the spectator's subjective emotions.

A guide to this complex and dynamic system of identification on stage was the Chorus, which not only participated and acted in the drama but also, intentionally or unintentionally, triggered fear and pity in the audience by showing the *choreutēs*' reactions to the events because they acted as internal

spectators of the drama. The *choreutēs* usually embody marginal social groups (women, old men, or slaves) who are excluded from the political life of the community but are nonetheless emotionally involved in the storytelling, so their destiny is strictly connected with the lot of the main characters. In this way, therefore, the Chorus enjoys an apparently contradictory position: external to politics but internal to the plot. The socially marginal position allows it to have a bottom-up point of view on the actions onstage, as far as the Chorus voices the usually unheard social groups and their maxims of popular wisdom (*gnomai*). On the other hand, the emotional bond that the Chorus establishes with the characters encourages the empathic response of the audience.

The Chorus involves the audience in a synesthetic way by means of music, dance, and singing, and their performance is aimed at triggering a collective emotional response: so that the Athenian citizens may empathize with them as a community. The *choreutēs* become the physical, cognitive, and emotional link between the heroes in the drama and the fifth-century Athenian audience. The Chorus, therefore, guides the spectator through the tangle of tragical emotions by filtering, displaying, and expressing feelings as a bystander.

This participative feeling played a social and political function as far as it could foster a sense of attachment and connection both among the citizens and between these and the *polis* and could habituate them to thinking and feeling responsibly together. This also explains why the *choreutēs* constantly switch from the first person singular to the first person plural and backwards (from "I" to "we" and vice versa). Their perspective takes on the challenge of expanding the individual and collective standpoints and aims to cultivate individual and collective emotions as a whole.[7]

Moreover, such a civilisation as classical Greece makes the audience particularly receptive and open to common emotions experienced in a collective context, in which the citizens meet as members of a social group. It becomes clear that a collectively experienced emotion carries motivational and normative power. Thus, the Chorus becomes a paradigmatic institution that leads the audience to "institutionalize" those emotions that are considered virtuous for a prosperous development of the city (such as religious respect for the deities and their inscrutable divine willpower, or the awareness of human limits) and to free themselves from those that are reputed prejudicial for the entire social body (such as uncontrolled emotions of fear or rage; arrogance and *hybris* against the deities, or flagrant breach of social and religious laws). By commenting on the events of the plot, the *choreutēs* address and shape the moral development of the citizens because they embody the voice of the community that educates its citizens to balanced emotional self-control.

To elicit this kind of "spectatorial aesthetic", ancient drama requires narrative structures paradigmatically built to convey emotions,[8] a metaphorical vocabulary, and an emotional language, as well as a particular acting rhythm, which – in the case of the Chorus – becomes musical rhythm.

It is possible to recognise in Greek dramatic narration some linguistic and cultural patterns containing paradigmatic scenarios that elicit emotions accordingly. War stories represent a narrative pattern *par excellence* that should trigger pity and fear in a society so deeply rooted in warriorhood. I will now consider the "emotion-triggering" paradigmatic structures of the Athenian tragedy by focusing on two pieces of work, namely *Seven against Thebes* by Aeschylus and *Trojan Women* by Euripides.

Seven against Thebes: the ethos of warriorhood

During the Persian war, Athens became the symbol of Greek freedom and the Athenian citizens experienced for the first time fear of being vanquished and the anguish over the threat of slavery. The educational task of tragedians, therefore, was twofold: on the one hand, they gave paramount prominence to the heroic values to enhance the people's civic and patriotic will to protecting their homeland; and on the other hand, they voiced the anguish and dread of the citizens who had to endure the direst effects of the conflict.

In Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes* (467 BC), Polynices, Oedipus's son, invades his own homeland to remove his brother Eteocles from the throne. The two brothers have agreed to rule over the city in turn, but when Eteocles refuses to yield the throne and breaches the agreement Polynices allies with the lords of Argos and moves to war. Eteocles embodies the perfect ruler, and as he gathers all the best of his army, he plans the deployment of his troops with coolness, yet being aware that he will eventually fall in battle. On the contrary, the Theban maidens, who constitute the Chorus, are lost in despair as they barricade themselves in the city. The king rebukes them harshly and repeatedly for their words of fear and self-pity, accusing them of crushing the morale of the besieged. As Michael Gagarin has observed, the play "does not present a conflict within Eteocles himself", as usually occurs in Greek dramas, in which the characters come to grips with their own inner demons, but "between him and the Chorus" (*Aeschylean Drama*: 125).

The entire tragedy focuses on the problem of knowing what one should really fear: after Eteocles decides to meet his brother in battle, the Chorus weighs different fearful scenarios: the pollution stemming from fratricide; the consequences for the city if the enemies breach the gates; and the risk of being

abducted as slaves in case of defeat. Eteocles explicitly invites the women to repress any expression of fear, to trust in the citizens' deities (Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*: ll. 34-35), and to inspire courage in the soldiers, instead of frightening them with their lamentations (l. 270). The choice of the dramatist to set the play just before the beginning of the battle is strictly aimed at enhancing the role of fear in the entire drama. The imminent conflict is announced by the Scout, who has just described to king Eteocles what he saw "with his own eyes" (l. 41): seven heroes swearing the oath to destroy the city to the ground or die on the battlefield. The Scout emphasizes the urgency of the moment in an alarmed tone: soon the enemies will be at the city gates and their courage is compared to that of "a lion with the war in his eyes" (l. 53). The Scout, therefore, incites the king to prepare for immediate reaction, using the nautical metaphor of a careful helmsman who should "secure the city before Ares's blasts storm down upon it" (l. 63), before "the wave of their army now crashes over the dry land" (l. 64). The metaphors of the city as a ship and the king as a good (or bad) helmsman are *topoi* of the Athenian theatrical language. However, what attracts my attention the most is the extension of this semantic field to the war theme. The war is represented as a storm sent by Ares and the army as "a terrestrial wave" (l. 64) ready to rush down against the city with its squalls of war. The link between the war-related concept and the semantic of the water is here announced and will characterise the entire drama.

While the first reaction of the king is praying to the deities in a faithful attitude of submission, the Chorus' perspective sharply contrasts with the apparent calm and clarity of mind of Eteocles: as soon as the women appeared on stage, they cry in utter agitation. The rhythmic music of their entrance, played in a dochmiac metre and consisting of an increasing succession of short and long vowels, emphasises their aggravation (Visvardi, *Emotion in Action*: 149).[9] They "cry for great sufferings" (l. 78) as the army has begun to approach. Nevertheless, although they cannot be eyewitnesses of the events like the Scout, their anguish builds as they hear the sounds of the enemy forces preparing for the assault:

> In terror I wail loud cries of sorrow.
> Their army is let loose! Leaving camp, –   80
> look! – the mounted throng floods swiftly ahead.
> The dust whirling in the air tells me this is so –
> its message is speechless, yet clear and true.
> And now the plains of my native land under
> the blows of hooves send a roar to my ears; the sound flies   85
> and rumbles like a resistless torrent
> crashing down a mountainside. (ll. 79-86)

The sounds and noises of war mostly suggest a vivid perception of the approaching enemy. The stomping of hooves seems a roar to the ears of the women (ll. 83-84); spears clatter (l. 100); and the bridles in the mouths of the horses rattle with a deadly sound (ll. 121-122): the hearing perception contributes to reproducing the well-known noises of battle that come to life on stage through the words of the Theban women.

They clearly envision and voice what they hear and see in their minds. Synesthetic expressions (e.g. "I see the clash", l. 104) and the detailed description of several battle aspects also enhance the overlapping of sight and hearing: the hubs of the chariots creaking beneath the axles load (ll. 151-153), a hail of stones striking the battlements from afar (ll. 158-159), the shaking of spears (l. 155), and the bronze-bound shields (ll. 160).[10] These aural and synesthetic images permit the audience to experience the terrifying atmosphere of the siege. This kind of "enargeia" intensively involves the emotional sphere of the spectator, making them believe they can really see the enemy army approaching and thus re-experience the same fear that they probably felt during the Persian assault on Athens, when the Persian king Xerxes took over the Acropolis and burned it, destroying all its sanctuaries and temples. In ancient drama, the plot is often set in a city different from Athens: this theatrical expedient was necessary to create some distance from the themes of the tragic performance. Such a spatial distance provoked cognitive and emotive distancing, thus permitting the audience to face important and painful local issues but by seeing them unfold in another city, that is, in another community. Thebes, in particular, was a sort of "body double" of Athens, something like a mirror in which the Athenians could observe the dynamics of their own political and social life (Zeitlin, *Thebes:* 144-145). Thus, in Aeschylus's tragedy, Thebes becomes an image of Athens besieged by the Persians just thirteen years before (Ieranò, *Introduzione*: xii).

Among the auditory effects, the "barbaric" racket of the Argive army stands out (Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*: l. 463) as typical of foreign people who speak incomprehensible idioms, an uncanny contributing factor to the spread of terror. This reference to a non-Greek speaking invader eventually makes the emotive role of the Chorus' laments manifest, i.e. re-enacting the memory of anguish and fear experienced during the Persian assault. The maiden's cries of fear, mixed with the clash of distant weapons, accompany the description of the battle: the sounds of war from the outside combine with the fearful weeping within the city to convey a feeling of total confusion. To intensify the emotive mood of the performance, the metaphors of water – already used by the Scout –

resound to express the devastating force of the war. As the Chorus perceives it, the noise of the horses' hooves recalls the roaring sound of an irresistible mountain torrent (l. 84), and the lined-up army ready for the battle resembles a "wave of men that breaks loudly over the city, raised up by the blasts of war" (ll. 114-115). Again, in the crucial moment of the choral lament, when it becomes clear that Eteocles has to fight against his brother, the Theban maidens comment: "Now it is as if a sea of evils pushes its swell onward. As one wave sinks, the sea raises up another, triple-crested, which crashes around the city's stern" (ll. 758-760). Finally, when the city is safe, the Scout declares: "The city enjoys fair weather and has taken on no water even though it has been buffeted by many waves" (ll. 795-796). All these maritime images contribute to de-anthropomorphise warfare, reducing it to a natural phenomenon, which means something that is basically out of human hands. The war strikes like a storm sent by Ares and the king, in whose hands rest all hopes, cannot do anything without praying to the deities for their favour, to which both Eteocles and the Chorus commit themselves (ll. 69-77; and 265-270). Although Eteocles shares with the Chorus the awareness of the unpredictability of war, which strikes on humanity just like a storm, his reaction to the maidens' cries is violent. By calling them "insufferable creatures" (l. 182), the king reacts vehemently against them and the entire female gender. According to him, their lamentation endangers the *polis* (l. 190) because by clamouring and running through the city, these cowardly women let "the wave of war" rush inside the walls, thus inevitably transmitting their terror to the citizens.

Eteocles, who wants to represent himself as a "good city's chief", encouraging and supporting the citizens during difficult moments, strives to control the circulation of fear in Thebes. In Thucydides's *The Peloponnesian War* (2, 60, and 4), also Pericles is depicted as particularly concerned with the fear of his fellow citizens during the Peloponnesian War, and in his discourse he points to the fact that excessive focus on private fear and anger deprives the Athenians of the ability to consider communal safety. Because uncontrolled fear robs people of their capacity to think clearly and make plans and decisions, it is needed to keep fear below uncritical levels. Eteocles's reaction to the wailing maidens reveals the crucial role of the Chorus in influencing emotionally the social community, both the Theban citizens within the drama and the Athenian audience sitting in the theatre. By voicing and enacting fear, they also generate a similar reaction that spreads among the citizens: the king, therefore, asks the Theban women to keep quiet (Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*: l. 250) because they are anticipating a disaster that will not eventually occur. However, despite his request, the women keep on crying as they fear slavery once their city has been destroyed.[11] Rape and slavery were fearful plagues for any woman after

an invasion: to be carried away from their homeland and enslaved to another city, submitted to a savage master, was the most painful lot for women. In the first stasimon, thus, the Chorus enact the most-feared destruction of the city, dramatizing the enslavement of the women, who are taken away, dragged by their hair, their clothes being torn after their men have been slaughtered and the crops destroyed and devastated (ll. 321-333):

> It is a great cause for grief to hurl a primeval city
> to Hades in this way, quarry and slave of the spear,
> ravaged shamefully in the dusty ashes
> by an Argive man through divine will.   325
> And grief, too, to let the women be led away captive –
> ah ah! – young and old,
> dragged by the hair, like horses,
> with their cloaks torn off them.   330
> A city, emptied, shouts out
> as the human booty perishes with mingled cries.

The maidens have not yet been taken captives and yet their lament features the same themes of traditional songs of captive women, including codified metaphors, pathetic expressions, and the image of the enslaved girls degraded to beasts and roughly dragged away like horses (l. 328) by their new masters.[12] The very *polis* is identified with its women and depicted as a young maiden enslaved by the conquerors (ll. 321-322): as the women go away into captivity, the entire city cries out in despair (l. 331). Explicit terms referring to fear – the anaphor of the substantive "grief" (ll. 321 and 326) and their exclamation of anguish ("ah! ah!", l. 328) – constitute the basis of self-pity. Their premature lament intensifies the fearful atmosphere of the tragedy and consequently triggers the empathetic response in the spectators, who feel horror and pity for the doom of the vanquished women.

Trojan Women: the desperation of the vanquished

Choruses of captive women are relatively common in Greek tragedy.[13] One of the most emotionally intense cases is doubtless Euripides's *Trojan Women*, performed in 415 BC during the historical conflict between Athens and Sparta. This drama forces the audience to ponder the repercussions of war through the lament of the Trojan women captured by the Greeks. In contrast to the traditional structure of tragedy, all kinds of conflict among the characters here disappear. Onstage, moreover, no significant contemporary action unfolds, for

all that matters as to the plot has already happened. Troy has fallen, the Greeks have devastated and burned the city, and slaughtered all the Trojan heroes on the battlefield. Only the women still live among the smouldering ruins of the city and wait for their bitter destiny to unfold. The narrative structure is composed by the juxtaposition of single pictures of desperation. Each woman takes part in the lamentation, expressing her grief and fear of the future: Cassandra, possessed by Apollo, dances her foolish dance short before being deported as a slave by Agamemnon, chief of the Greek army. Andromache, Hector's widow, laments the forthcoming slavery that she will have to endure under the rule of Neoptolemus, son of the much-hated Achilles, who slain her husband. Among them, Hecuba stands out, the ancient queen of Troy, who could not help but witness the destruction of her homeland and the death of her young sons and husband. The Chorus consists of other Trojan women who share the same destiny of slavery and are still waiting to know their future destination.

In the *parodos*, the initial song of the drama, the Trojan women emerge from the tents in the enemy camp, summoned to be informed about which Greek heroes will soon become their masters:

[Antistrophe 1.
Half-chorus B
Oimoi!
Terrified I left the tents
of Agamemnon when I heard you, Queen.
Have the Greeks decided to kill us?
Or are the sailors about to set sail,   180
Manning their oars on the sterns of the ships?

Hecuba
O daughters, my sleepless soul
Is filled with terror.

Half-chorus B
Has some Greek messenger come?
To whom am I assigned
To serve as a miserable slave?   185

Hecuba
You won't have long to wait for decisions.

Half-chorus B
Io! Io!
What Argive, or man from Phthia,
Or islander, will take me far from Troy   190
To a life of misery?

Hecuba
Pheu! Pheu!
Where will I, an old grey woman,
Go to be a slave?
A useless old drone,
Stand-in for a corpse
Pale ghost of the dead?
Aiai! Aiai!
Will I be a doorkeeper,
Or nurse to some child,   195
I, who has honoured as Queen of Troy?

(Euripides, *Trojan Women*: ll. 176-196)

The Chorus is divided into two half-Choruses that dialogue with Hecuba, condoling and amplifying her grief through their own. No harmonic discourse, no gnomic utterance, or moral teaching come from the Chorus: their voice is interrupted and fragmented by sorrow and fear that permeate the entire drama. The Chorus' function onstage consists in highlighting the despair and anguish of the characters, using an interactive form of lamentation (such as the painful alternation of short questions and answers between Hecuba and the Semi-Chorus B, that increases the *pathos* of the dialogue) and accompanying their suffering with exclamations of grief or unarticulated interjections (ll. 176; 186; 190; and 193), and with words of commiseration for their communal lot.

The *Trojan Women* describes a scenario that resembles a modern humanitarian crisis and depicts the feelings and grief of displaced people, especially women, seeking refuge from war and annihilation. Through an in-depth analysis of the lexicon of the play, one sees that the prominent pattern is a "us vs. them" dynamic. The master-slave scenario is evoked by the repetition of the root δουλ* ("slave") when referred to women, and δεσπότ* ("master") when referred to men. Most of the verbs referring to the male characters are expressed in the active voice, while the women are frequently the passive recipients of the victors' actions (e.g. "to be allocated", l. 29; "dealt to", l. 32; "reserved", l. 33; "classified", l. 35; "was slaughtered", l. 40; "will be forced", l. 43; and "we are taken", l. 1310).

The Trojan women are dehumanised and deprived of their free agency. Such a process, perpetrated at the hand of the Greeks, who can decide what treatment the vanquished should receive, consists in objectifying human beings. As Finley states, indeed, we can define slavery as "the status in which a man is, in the eyes of the law and public opinion and with respect to all parties, a possession, a chattel, of another man" (Finley, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*: 97).

The slavery pattern is a coral-theme in this drama, and the Chorus plays an extra-ordinary role because the *choreutēs* lose the organic expression of their thoughts and, as a consequence, their educative function, becoming just a dialogical counterpart of the protagonists' sorrow (De Benedetto, *Euripide*: 223-238). To well comprehend this new choral narrative, it is necessary to view the composition of the *Trojan Women* in light of its contemporary historical events. From 431 until 404 BC, Athens waged the Peloponnesian War. In 416, Athens and Sparta engaged in different efforts to secure an alliance with the island of Melos, but when the Melians refused to become a tributary state under the rule of Athens and opted for remaining neutral, the Athenians responded violently. Thucydides portrays the brutality of Athenian troops in exerting their supremacy over the Melians: "They killed as many of the Melian men as they were able to capture, whereas they enslaved children and women" (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*: 5.116.4). Whether the Melian episode prompted the *Trojan Women* is an object of debate,[14] but the issue might be superseded by considering that Athens was indeed at war and that episodes of such kind were the normality, for the time being.[15]

After transforming the Delian League into the Athenian Empire, the Athenians became sackers of cities and captors of women and children. They systematically subjugated those cities that revolted, rejected forceful alliances, or refused to provide troops for the Athenian armies in the Peloponnesian War. Modern critics have often interpreted Euripides's dramas about the Trojan war (such as *Andromache* or *Hecuba*) –the *Trojan Women* in particular – as a protest against the Peloponnesian War (Duè, *The Captive Women's Lament*: 107).[16] This play, after all, was produced in 416, in concomitance with the destruction of Melos and the disastrous Sicilian expedition.[17] While such a reading may be far too simplistic, it is unquestionable that after the end of the Periclean regime Euripides's dramatic production lost progressively contact with contemporary politics (Di Benedetto, *Euripide*: 190-192). The dramatist mostly disapproved of the demagogues, who were inapt to guide the citizens through mindful and moderate political choices. Euripides had always defended the democratic principles and supported the Periclean program, which aimed to make Athens

and its empire powerful. But when democratic life ceased to be guaranteed because of demagogical abuse of power, he decided to exclude the political themes from his plays. His works, dating to the later part of the Peloponnesian War, focused on a nostalgic desire for peace, repeated requests for an armistice with Sparta, and a sincere rejection of all kinds of violence. His aim became to show on stage the cruel consequences of war: the desolate ruins that remain on the battlefield, the mourning of the fallen warriors, and in particular the desperate condition of women, who were exposed to rape and slavery. The Trojan past became a sort of mirror of the contemporary military events and the emotional force of the laments of the Trojan women played a paramount role on stage.

It is now important to establish on what level the Athenians were supposed to relate to them. Edith Hall has observed that Troy, exactly like Thebes, "functioned as a mythical prism through which the fifth century refracted its own preoccupation with military conflict" (Hall, *Introduction*: ix). Over the course of its history, Athens seems to have maintained a complicated relationship with the Trojan war. In sixth-century Athenian literature and art, the fall of Troy was depicted as a great sacrilege at the hands of the Achaeans, who perpetrated many atrocities.[18] The sack of Troy was even represented on the Parthenon metopes. According to Ferrari, the Athenians would identify themselves more with the conquered Trojans than with the victorious Achaeans, as a reminder of the sacrilege committed by the Persians in Athens in 480 BC (Ferrari, *The Ilioupersis in Athens*: 126). The ruins of Athena's temples that had been burned down were incorporated into the new program for the building of a new temple of Athena, the Parthenon, in imperishable memory of the Persian sack, which is the reason why the plundering of Troy was illustrated on the Parthenon itself. The Parthenon's sculptures could be interpreted not only as an emblem of victory over the Persians, as most scholars retain, but they could also invite to compare the Persian invasion and devastation of Greece to the Greek invasion and destruction of Troy. In the fifth century BC, on the contrary, Euripides identifies in his tragedies the Athenians with the Achaeans – who pillaged and destroyed Troy – and forces his audience to reflect on the dramatic consequences of the Athenian's aggressive politics in the contemporary Peloponnesian War.

In this drama, not only the Trojans and other captives are presented sympathetically, but the Trojan women are even depicted as morally superior to the Greeks who enslave them.[19] An emblem of that is the cruel behaviour towards Astyanax, the only child of Hector and Andromache and last heir to

the throne of Troy, who, although still an infant, is taken away from his mother's arms and cast from the city walls into his death:

> Talthybius
> He must be thrown from the towers of Troy. Accept it.
> You'll be wiser for that; don't stand in the way.
> But bear your pain like the great lady you are
> And don't imagine that you have any power
> To change this: you don't. You are powerless; just look around!
> Your city is destroyed and your husband is dead; you are a slave;
> We can easily deal with a single woman. So I do not want you to fight.
> Nor do anything to incur anger, nor call down any curses on the Greeks. […]
>
>
> Andromache
> […] Oh you Greeks you have found torture worse than any barbarian's!
> Why do you kill this child who has never done you any wrong?
>
> (Euripides, *Trojan Women*: ll. 725-734; and 764-765)

The messenger's pragmatic piece of advice about the adequate behaviour that Andromache should keep after hearing the terrible destiny of her child is an echo of the well-known Melian dialogue reported by Thucydides:

> Melians: And how could it be just as good for us to be the slaves as for you to be the masters?
>
> Athenians: You, by giving in, would save yourselves from disaster; we, by not destroying you, would be able to profit from you. […]
>
> Melians: Then surely, if such hazards are taken by you to keep your empire and by your subjects to escape from it, we who are still free would show ourselves great cowards and weaklings if we failed to face everything that comes rather than submit to slavery.
>
> Athenians: No, not if you are sensible. This is no fair fight, with honour on one side and shame on the other. It is rather a question of saving your lives and not resisting those who are far too strong for you.
>
> (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*: 5.92-93; and 100-101)

In the words of the Athenian messenger "the law of the strongest power" rules, just like in Thaltybius's advice to Andromache. "The strongers do what they have the power to do and the weakers accept what they have to accept" (5.89), the ambassador says to the Melians, summarising the ideas of supremacy on which the Athenian empire rested.

The disapproval of this kind of demagogic politics also becomes clear as Andromache capsizes the epithet "barbarian", explicitly accusing the Greeks of being "barbarians" (Euripides, *Trojan Women*: ll. 764-765), for they murdered an innocent. The lack of mercy towards women and babies was a usual practice in ancient wartime, and for this reason, the insistence on the feelings of the vanquished produces a profound emotional effect on the audience.

In the *Trojan Women*, the spectator is confronted with the suffering of the Trojans, both protagonists and the Chorus. Their laments trigger pity in the Greek audience and, employing this quintessential emotion of tragedy, move the spectators to empathise with the experience of the Trojan women (Duè, *The Captive Women's Lament*: 111). As the tragedy erases the boundaries between the vanquished slaves and the victors, so the distinction between the Greeks and the foreigners is blurred and even subverted. The contrast between the Greeks and the Trojans often serves only to highlight the sameness of their suffering, for the laments of the Trojan women are fundamentally Greek in form and theme, and their very "Greekness" overrides the otherness of ethnicity and social status. The effect aimed to wholly erase all distinctions between the Greeks and foreigners, male and female, slaves and free individuals. Within the strict boundaries of the tragic performance, these distinctions could be questioned, explored, and experienced by an audience of Greek citizens (112). Disillusioned by politics, Euripides aimed to upset the Athenians by challenging their self-awareness, by modifying the traditional narrative structure of the play,[20] constructing this piece of work not as a unitary story but by stitching together single pieces of lamentations, and by overturning the roles of victims and oppressors.

Conclusions

Choral performances in both plays are focused on the female perspective. While male heroes could usually kill their warrior opponents or be killed with honour defending their homeland, women were left with the only chance to cry their fallen husbands, sons and brothers and to endure a destiny of rape and slavery. What is foretold by the Theban maidens waiting for the enemy assault is actually enacted in the words of the Trojan women: the grave – albeit premature – fear of the maidens becomes the pitiful condition of the defeated Trojan women. Both agree in claiming that it would be far better to die than suffer this kind of abuse: "I declare that the dead will do better than the captives" (Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*: ll. 336-337), the Theban maidens say, and similarly states Andromache: "I think not to be born is the same as death, and to live with suffering is worse than dying" (Euripides, *Trojan Women*: ll.

636-637). This is the female common opinion about the war in ancient times as well as today when rape – although no longer slavery – continues to be one major fear for women exposed to war.

Both the tragedians use the feminine perspective to problematize the ideological conception of the fear of war. In Aeschylus's play, the Athenian audience are asked to remember proudly how they bravely repelled the barbarian invasion and, on the other hand, to feel more comfortable with the fear, which is presented as an inevitable aspect of war that should however be put under the control of reason. Aeschylus's teaching consists in not ignoring the emotional aspects of war but in heroically overcoming the backdrops of any emotive reaction to war and its effects. During the Peloponnesian War, instead, the Athenian audience was asked to confront some recent political and military decisions of their government by witnessing the suffering of the Trojan women. Euripides dramatizes the effects of war on women to challenge the bellicose ideology of Athenian imperialism. It is worth remembering that in both the plays, the connection of war and fear includes such emotions as desperation and self-pity and that these emotions, in turn, imply some direct experience of war and combat. By experiencing and collectively displaying emotions, the Chorus influences the citizens' decision-making process and contributes to form the common opinion of the community. The Chorus consistently influences the characters' and the audience's perception of dramatic events and their ethical consequences. The pleasure that the spectators derive from identifying themselves with a collective body – and the "emotive distance" that characterises the empathic communication of these dramas – makes it easy to assess the emotional component of judgment for both the individual and the community within and, potentially, without the plays.

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[1] The *Iliad* represented the cultural expression of early Greek society. The historical background of the Homeric poem is the late Bronze Age, in the early twelfth century BC, but its composition probably dates to the eighth century BC in a context of aristocratic rule. Oral literature was central to the educational-cultural function of the itinerant rhapsode, who composed epic poems out of memory and improvisation and disseminated the aristocratic values about warfare, via song and chant, during his travels and at the Panathenaic Festival. About the educational and cultural function of the oral Greek epic, see in particular Havelock (*Preface to Plato*). On the methods of oral composition and his psychodynamics effects on the audience, see Lord (*A Singer of Tales*); Parry (*The making of Homeric Verse*); and Ong (*Orality and Literacy*). Such virtues as honour and responsibility were central to the aristocratic ethic of warfare. Single combat or duel was the apical moment of the battle, during which also excesses of pride, vengeance and cruelty were displayed. These kinds of values dwelled on in the literary tradition and the cultural imagery also after the socio-political conditions changed and Athens became a democratic city that based its military power on the hoplitic phalanx. This was a collective combat unit made of heavily armed citizens whose prevalent values were loyalty, discipline, and camaraderie. For an overview of this issue see Dawson (*The Origins of Western Warfare*).

[2] Tragedies and comedies were performed in dramatic festivals of Athens, called *Dionysia*, which also constituted an essential part of the cult of Dionysus. This was the god of theatre and in general governed all those activities through which the worshippers could experience the ecstatic overcoming of the human condition (e.g. through alcoholic intoxication or by being possessed by mania, the divine force of the god, during the mystical liturgies. On this issue see Pickard-Cambridge (*The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*). All citizens were encouraged to attend the Dionysus' theatre and to watch the dramas, in which the spectators were emotionally involved in the events performed. In a certain sense, the spectators were possessed by the Dionysian force of *empátheia* and identified themselves with the characters' reactions to the events. For more details on this specific issue, see Bierl (*Dionysos*); and Friedrich (*Everything to Do with Dionysos?*). The power of such emotional communication

between the actors and the spectators was also employed by the democratic government to spread the main values of the city, which usefully influenced public opinion about the most relevant public events. The focus of the performance, moreover, did not limit to the tragedy's plot: the contents of the tragedies were very traditional. The dramatists represented well-known stories borrowed from traditional and local myths. They did not aim to surprise the audience with some unexpected conclusions of those stories but to focus their attention on one specific theme. The characters embodied different points of view about moral, political, and religious issues and the audience was guided to reflect on them and to build up their own opinion. This new way of telling mythical stories was functional to make the audience aware of the democratic management of public life founded on the exchange of points of view and rhetoric. See Arnott (*Public and Performance*); and Griffin (*The Social Function of Greek Tragedy*).

3   On this issue, see in particular Zanker (*Enargeia*); and Sheppard (*The Poetics of Phantasia*).

4   Konstan, in *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks*, mainly examines the relationship between emotion, feeling, and cognitive components on stage.

5   The same concept is illustrated in Plato's *Republic* (606b). See Halliwell (*The Aesthetics of Mimesis*: 77).

6   See Cairns (*Horror*: 71-72). Halliwell affirms: "When we feel pity, we do not share the sufferer's subjectivity: however much we may draw emotionally near to it, or move vicariously with its psychological expression, we remain, qua feelers of pity, outside the immediate, 'first- person' reality of the pain, whether physical or mental" (*The Aesthetics of Mimesis*: 216).

7   About the role of the chorus in the Greek tragedy, see Calame (*Performance Aspects*); Goldhill (*Collectivity and Otherness*); Gould (*Tragedy and Collective Experience*); Kaimio (*The Chorus of Greek Drama*); and Foley (*Choral Identity in Greek Tragedy*). On the choral emotivity in tragedy and its relationship with collective emotions, see Visvardi (*Emotion in Action*); and Lada-Richards (*Empathic Understanding*).

8   The idea that emotions are linked to narrative structures was initially proposed by Goldie (*The Emotions*) and later developed by Snaevarr (*Metaphors, Narratives, Emotions*).

9   About the pathetic function of the dochmiac metres in *Seven against Thebes*, see Gentili & Lomiento (*Metrica e ritmica*: 241-242). The scholars underline that in the first parodos the long succession of astrophic dochmiac verses is functional to convey the description of the fear of war and the dangers of an enemy invasion. Taplin (*The Stagecfraft of Aeschylus*: 141-142) suggests a scattered entry of the Chorus on stage basing his suggestion on the internal evidence of the dochmiac astrophic lyrics.

10 For a more detailed overview of the rhetorical and cognitive rule of the synaesthesia in *Seven against Thebes*, see Marinis (*Seeing Sounds*). On this topic in ancient Greek literature, see Stanford (*Greek Metaphor*); Waern (*Zur Synaesthesie*); and Zancher (*Enargeia*).

11 Eteocles: "Damn you! Will you not endure these events in silence?" / Chorus: "Gods of our city! Do not let my fate be slavery!" (ll. 252-253).

12 For a comparison between the formal structure and the lexicon of ritual lamentation and the choral performance of slave women, see Alexiou (*The Ritual Lament*).

13 On the issue, see Duè (*The Captive Women's Lament*).

14 According to Bowra (*Euripides' Epinician for Alcibiades*), *Trojan Women* could be written only after the Melian slaughter (winter 416), considering that Euripides composed the Epinician for Alcibiades in the summer of 416 BC. But Di Benedetto (*Euripide*: 185) argues that this

dating, established in Euripides's favour for Alcibiades, cannot be proved, as well as direct involvement of Alcibiades in the expedition against Melo cannot be proved.

[15] When Mytilene revolted too against Athens, some years later, the Athenians made a very similar decision: "And out of anger, it seemed good to the Athenians to not only kill the Mytilineans who were there, but to kill all of the Mytilinean men, and to enslave their children and women" (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*: 3.36.2).

[16] Croally (*Euripidean Polemic*: 254) sees the function of tragedy as didactic, its purpose consisting of questioning ideology. Thus, for him, *Trojan Women* represents "the consequences of war for the structures of thought, the beliefs, values – the ideology – in which Athenians lived, and in which tragedy and its functions were conceived (and challenged)."

[17] Edith Hamilton called Euripides "a pacifist in Periclean Athens" and *Trojan Women* "the greatest piece of anti-war literature there is in the world" (*A Pacifist*: 243). About the same theme see also Delebecque (*Euripide et la guerre du Péloponnèse*: 245-262). On the play's relationship to contemporary historical events see also Westlake (*Euripides' Troades*); Goossens (*Euripide et Athènes*: 520-534); and Maxwell-Stuart (*The Dramatic Poets*).

[18] Many tragedies dealing with the Trojan war themes were produced in the second half of the fifth century BC., but curiously the sack of Troy as a subject of vase painting became less and less common. After 420 it nearly ceased to be represented. See Boardman (*Athenian Red Figure Vase*: 229).

[19] Segal (*Euripides*: 171). About the same issue see also Aélion (*Euripide*); (Croally, *Euripidean Polemic*: 103-115); Anderson (*The Fall of Troy*: 106); Vidal-Naquet (*The Place and Status of Foreigners*: 114); Ferrari (*The Ilioupersis in Athens*: 127-128); and Saïd (*Greeks and Barbarians*).

[20] According to Aristotle's analysis of the dramatic structure (*Poetics*: 1450 b27), a drama should imitate a single whole action, that "has a beginning and middle and end". He, therefore, splits the play into two parts (complication and unravelling) and establishes that five major narrative acts should contain the entire dramatic arc (exposition; rising action; climax; falling action; and denouement). It is important to bear in mind that Aristotle's work was not normative as to dramatic composition but rather aimed at describing the dramas that were most commonly represented in Athens since the fifth century BC.

Wounded Cities, Fragmented Selves: Walking, Melancholia and the Interwar Novel. Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Bontempelli's *La vita operosa*

By Alessandra Rosati

Abstract: This article looks at the connection between walking, trauma and self-development in two novels of the interwar years from Italian and English literature, namely Massimo Bontempelli's *La vita operosa* (*Productive Life*, 1921) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). Identity processes and urban space have long been recognised as central to these novels, yet the effects of the war on the characters' consciousness have received far less critical attention. While *Mrs Dalloway* is a highly experimental work set in London on a single day of June 1923 and centred on the actions and thoughts of the eponymous character, the bourgeois middle-aged Clarissa, Bontempelli's (micro) novel is an autobiography recounting the adventures of a young idler in Milan in 1919. However, these novels share similarities in the depiction of two ex-soldiers – the narrator and protagonist of *La vita operosa* and the shell-shocked Septimus Warren-Smith, Clarissa's double – wandering through the city. Placing particular emphasis on the modernist chronotope, i.e. the intersection of inner and outer time-space in modernist fiction, I will examine how memories of the war, as well as (day)dreams, interweave with the characters' perception, affecting their city experience. Drawing on the conceptual framework of melancholia, I will link this specifically modern condition to the experience of the fragmented self in the metropolis. I will thus show that, in these novels, walking in the city represents a way of coming to terms with the trauma of the war, and overcoming the state of shock and paralysis resulting from it.

Keywords: *modernism, melancholia, war, city, subjectivity*

Introduction

Melancholia has a history that spans centuries: from the humoral theories of ancient Greece through the Christian concept of a sinful state of "acedia" to its revival in the Renaissance by the hands of Marsilio Ficino, and then in the Romanticism, when melancholia was exalted as a mode of intensified reflection – the temperament proper to thinkers and philosophers. While, at any given time, different, contradictory theories of melancholia co-existed, most descriptions oscillate between two poles: either melancholia is regarded as an illness, an affective experience which entails fear or despondency, or as a "normal abnormality," a depressive mood proper to the person "born under Saturn," which also resulted in a particular temperament. The latter, "temperamental melancholia," which Aristotle linked in his *Problems* to men of

extraordinary ability, was thought to prompt capacities for creation and great achievement, and thus, connected to "the man of genius".[1]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there was a paradigm shift in the conception of melancholia, with the emergence of psychoanalysis and the parallel development of the modern city. Differently than in the past, melancholia came to be seen as inextricably related to the experience of loss, namely in the way of an emotional attachment to something or someone lost, as formulated in Freud's 1917 essay *Mourning and Melancholia*. It was, however, Walter Benjamin who mostly saw melancholia as a historically contingent condition, specifically related to the experience of modernity, a psychic consequence occasioned by the emergence of high capitalist society. Notably, Benjamin singled out Baudelaire as the first modernist "urban melancholic," recognising that, mostly in his splenetic poetry/spleen poems, melancholia asserts its value in that it grants access to the historical origins of subjective suffering and thus, to the logic of historicity itself. In order to defend himself from the shock of modern city life, Baudelaire resorts to the realm of personal memory, which, filtered through his isolating urban experience, results in "a split structure of experience." However, this fractured mode of experience, Benjamin argues, is far from personal, but rather, it is the "melancholic scar" left on the individual by high capitalist modernity (Benjamin, *The Paris of the Second Empire*: 4, 3-92 and 95-98. Cited in Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia*: 34).

If, as Julia Kristeva would have it, melancholia asserts itself in times of crisis (see Kristeva, *Black Sun*: 8), the examination of this condition and its unfolding in the urban environment of the post-war years – a period of deep crisis and social upheaval – provides a fruitful contribution to this field of study.

This essay investigates the connection between the experience of war and identity formation in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Massimo Bontempelli's *La vita operosa* (*Productive Life*, 1920), two novels whose similarities have been largely overlooked. While identity processes and urban space have been identified as key elements to both narratives, the effects of the war on the subject's consciousness have received far less critical attention. My analysis highlights how the experience of war shapes the perceptions of the two main characters, affecting their path in the post-war urban reality. Drawing on the conceptual framework of melancholia, I will then try to demonstrate that walking through the city is a way of coming to terms with the experience of the war, thus developing a freer, fuller self.

Mrs Dalloway

Mrs Dalloway has long entered the canon of high-modernist fiction, yet only a few studies have recognised it as a war novel.[2] Indeed, the war enters the narration on many levels, most evidently in the characterisation of Septimus Warren Smith, the shell-shocked veteran whose trauma is widely depicted in a climatic trajectory which leads to his suicide.

While the thematisation of the double in the novel has been widely acknowledged, critics tend to read the couple Clarissa/Septimus mainly under the dichotomy of sanity/insanity, seeing in the former soldier's final act a surrender to depression and inability to (re)act, as opposed to Clarissa's choice of living.[3] In her enlightening study, Christine Froula describes *Mrs Dalloway* as a war elegy, yet she mainly focuses on Clarissa as the central elegiac consciousness and on the transposition of certain generic conventions to feminine registers (*Mrs Dalloway's Postwar Elegy*: 87-126). Although she considers Septimus as an elegiac consciousness too, she interprets his ultimate suicide only in negative terms, as the interruption of "the elegiac progress toward life and the future" (113). Focusing on Septimus' states of mind and perceptions I will argue, instead, that his path is an attempt to make sense of the war and his own existence, thus offering a new, more positive interpretation of the novel's ending. In the same vein, I highlight Bontempelli's irony as the marker of the melancholic experience of the modernist fragmented self,[4] showing its critical function in an aim to challenge the view of *La vita operosa* as a "miserably failed attempt of an integration [into society]" (Bontempelli, *Opere scelte*: xxii).

My reading of these two novels is informed by Sanja Bahun's understanding of melancholia as a socio-symbolic emblem of modern times, namely "both a reaction to and the very form of modernists' interaction with the maelstrom of modern life" (Bahun, *Modernism and Melancholia*: 3). Bahun maintains that, like modernism, melancholia is a rather ambiguous phenomenon that can be understood as an affect and an affective disorder, a type of behaviour (a mood comparable to Baudelaire's *spleen*), or, as philosophers have described it, a mysterious condition that "triggers the power of imagination and cognition" (3). Similarly, in psychiatric literature, melancholia appears as a variegated and vague cluster of illnesses, ranging from "bipolar depression" to "complicated grief" (4). Contending with the tendency in literary scholarship to consider modernism as an "elusive melancholic Weltanschauung" whose only clear feature is the rejection of social engagement, Bahun proposes a view of melancholia as not simply "an escapist frame of mind", but as "dual phenomenon", a discourse that interprets and produces experiential reality as well as a distinct symptom determined by its historical moment – hence her

speaking of "historical melancholia" (4). Significantly, Bahun draws a crucial parallel between modernism and melancholia: she sees the psychic features that dominate the clinical picture of melancholia – namely, the struggle of ambivalence, experience of dislocation and feelings of fragmentation in the face of cognitively inaccessible loss – as marker-sentiments which find expression in modernist texts (5). Moreover, she also highlights as melancholic symptoms self-reflexivity, epistemological and affective insecurity, and the problematic relation to the logocentric process – features which are intrinsic to modernism and to which I will devote particular attention.

Bahun's interpretation of melancholia as a historically contingent mood-bending is significant as it allows me to illuminate the experience of the two ex-soldiers protagonists of Woolf's and Bontempelli's novels in the post-war reality of London and Milan respectively. It is likewise significant that Bahun points to a fundamental shift in the perception of melancholia in a specific moment in time, namely the emergence of psychoanalysis, considered as a science discourse "that is at the same time a product and a symptom of cultural modernism" (4). Her psychological account is thus grounded on Freud's reconceptualisation of melancholia, a subject he addressed for the first time during the First World War, notably in his seminal paper, *Mourning and Melancholia* (1915-17). Rather than following suit of the Freudian and common understanding of melancholia as opposite to mourning, Bahun identifies a modern inability to mourn, labelled "countermourning," which she connects to the social and political context since the second half of the nineteenth century, and in particular to the devastating psychological impact of the two world wars. This countermourning, which belongs to the framework of melancholia, is not simply anti-mourning, but a mourning that refuses to mourn, thus questioning the "healing" aspects of mourning as a specific, culturally constructed type of behaviour, thereby working against those attitudes proper to it, such as "acceptance" and "resignation" (19). In what follows, I examine the melancholic condition and its role in the developmental trajectory of Septimus Warren Smith, who, showing the symptoms common to war neurosis,[5] struggles to preserve himself in the harsh reality of post-war London.

As Bahun points out, the condition of melancholia is premised on the absence of an object that is symptomatically felt as present (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 55). On his first appearance in the novel, it is evident that Septimus' war experience shapes his sense of reality, as he refuses to detach himself from the lost object: in this case, his friend, Evans, whose death he witnessed in the trenches. When a mysterious motor car passes through Bond Street, arousing everyone's curiosity, Septimus senses "some horror", feeling the earth

quivering and questioning the purpose of his being "rooted to the pavement" while he witnesses the world bursting into flames (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*: 16).[6]

Freud hypothesised that melancholic symptoms were caused by the ambivalence of feelings and repression in the wake of loss (*Freud to Fliess*: 250), and entailed the simultaneous exaltation and mistrust of language. This is expressed in the novel by Septimus' contrasting feelings and altered perception of the reality around him, with an emphasis on the creative expressiveness of language. At particular turning points in the narration, when the other characters' attention converges on a specific event, like the aforementioned motor car or the aeroplane soaring above Regent's Park, Septimus' extraordinary sense of perception really comes to the fore. While everyone tries to read the white smoked letters left hanging in the sky by the plane, Septimus interprets them as signs sent to him in a language he is not "yet" able to understand, and feels bestowed with "unimaginable beauty" (*MD*: 23). However, this moment of exaltation leaves space immediately afterwards, to a deadly scenery which causes his desire to close his eyes and "see no more" (24). Believing the trees to be alive, he feels their leaves connected to his own body and waves up and down like the elms – notably resonant with helmets – while sparrows draw jagged fountains and the cry of a child makes him foresee "the birth of a new religion" (24).

Septimus finds himself living in a sort of limbo, convinced to be the Lord "taken from life to death" (27), that of his soul brought about by the war, and initially refuses to accomplish his mission and die once and forever for his sins and those of humanity. Hence, while hearing the sparrow singing a Greek elegy assuring that "there is no death", he sees Evans again beyond the river where the dead walk, and can even touch him if he stretches his hand (26). Septimus' struggles of ambivalence towards reality and his destiny are reflected in his oscillation between nihilistic despair – the intention of killing himself out of human cruelty – and the inability to let life go with all its "exquisite beauty" (23). However, his initial reluctance leaves gradually space to the acceptance of his destiny, foreseen in the vision of his afterlife, when he is finally drawn to the "shores of life," in what seems like an ascent to heaven with the sun growing hotter and the cries getting louder, signalling something "tremendous" is about to happen (75).

Freud highlights that, although it entails inhibition of the ability to verbalise, melancholia is characterised by "insistent communicativeness", that is the melancholic's unrelenting attempt to exteriorise the affect in language (*Mourning and Melancholia*: 247). Septimus, who believes to "carr[y] in him the greatest message in the word" (*MD*: 91) tries to speak it out, as when he stares

at the sky muttering and clasping his hands, painfully striving to disclose to the world his "profound truths" (74).

Initially, Septimus seems unable to depart from Evans, but, with the proceeding narration, his melancholia develops into countermourning as his pre-war, freer ego becomes the lost object so that subject and object are no longer psychologically divided. The role of language and communication is paramount in the characters' emotional development. Significantly, Bahun recognises a continuity between melancholia and sublimatory mourning rites such as writing (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 6). As Septimus writes his revelations on the back of envelopes, so he tries to communicate his message via flaming poems and drawings about war and Shakespeare where he outpours his excitement only to encounter his wife's lack of understanding and their maid's scorn (*MD*: 154).

While Septimus hallucinates Evans and sees "all the other crimes" raising their heads and sneering over the rail of his bed (99), the narration makes it clear that the war, where he distinguished himself, has taught him to repress his emotions, so that when his friend died, "he could not feel" anything (95). In the war he had thus learned to stiffen life's "irreticencies" into a corpse of discipline, like that of the weedy boys marching with a thudding sound up Whitehall with stiff arms and a marble stare (56). It is in the trenches that Septimus developed "manliness" (94),[7] with the war representing a breaking point between his life of the self-educated boy who came to London from a small town in Gloucestershire with some literary ambitions, and his adult life of a man who "had gone through the whole show: friendship, European War, death…" (95). Significantly, it is in Milan, soon after Evans' death, that Septimus decides to marry a young woman, Lucrezia, although he knows he does not love her, thus fully accomplishing his manly duties.

Bahun traces Freud's redefinition of melancholia back to the religious psychology of Søren Kierkegaard, whereby, for both thinkers, melancholia is at once a paradigmatic condition and the performance of a new subjecthood. What is relevant here is that Kierkegaard considers melancholia as a progressive move, un "upbuilding stage" leading to "emotional, intellectual and spiritual maturity" (*The Sickness unto Death*: 78 and 110). This maturity, he continues, manifests itself as an individual ability to make a responsible existential choice at the decisive moment in which personal history and eternity intersect. Septimus' existential trajectory is exemplary of this as, by killing himself, he does not only assert his freedom from society's norms, but he also accepts that he must take charge of his destiny for the sake of humankind. Indeed, the insistence on communication is paralleled in the novel with the revelation of

Septimus' messianic mission of renewing society, already hinted in his "fantastic Christian name" (*MD*: 92). Hence, Septimus' exalted conception of himself and his exceptional perception of reality does not only reflect the compulsive self-reflexivity proper to melancholic ailment, but also reveals the critical social function identified by Bahun as inherent to this condition (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 32).

It is worth noticing that Christian and war imagery also merge in the dream of Peter Walsh,[8] Clarissa's ex-lover just returned from India, that of the solitary traveller, "the disturber of ferns" who seeks solace and relief in a womanised natural landscape (*MD*: 62). His vision of the woman "made of sky and branches," (62) risen from the "troubled sea" to shower down compassion and absolution is soon replaced by the old lady who waits in the village with her shaded eyes for the return of her "lost son" (63) – a scene which clearly recalls the famous parable of the Prodigal Son. The "giant figure" the traveller sees at the end of his ride evokes God; the elderly woman who comes to the door with her white apron and hands raised seems to embody the forgiving parent of the biblical story. The conflation of traveller and lost son is significantly interspersed with war imagery as the old woman who looks at "a rider destroyed" is revealed to be "the mother whose sons have been killed in the battles of the world" (63). Peter's commentary on his dream is also (fore)telling: "the death of the soul" (64). Not only is Septimus one of the souls lost to the war, but he also fears his "eternal loneliness" (27) and, significantly, in his violent visions of melted flesh, he conceives of an old woman's head in the middle of a fern (72).

It becomes clear then that Septimus is less able to let go of Evans than his true, freer self. That is why his final suicide can be interpreted, in the words of Clarissa, as an act of defiance, the preservation of beauty and one's truth, which she has sacrificed in the face of societal conventions.[9] While it is unsure whether Septimus' act of communication is fruitful, his message has definitely reached her: "a thing there was that mattered" – she muses after hearing that he has killed himself – "this he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate" (202). Feeling her body in flames, Clarissa can see Septimus jumping out of the window and admires him for the fact that "he had flunged it away" (202), whereas the only thing she has been able to throw is a shilling in the Serpentine. Remembering the day when, coming down in a white dress she thought of taking her life, aware that dying would mean "to be most happy," she makes sense of Septimus' act. It is indeed the awareness that he had plunged "holding his treasure", the precious thing "let drop every day in chatter, lies and corruption," which Clarissa ends up losing due to her

ambitions and trifles, that allows her to keep on with the party and her life more serenely (202).

Hence, the role played by society and its conventions is paramount not only for Septimus, but also for Clarissa's melancholic sense of self. The problem of self-development (and its limits) in the face of an irrational, post-war world, appears as strictly connected to the use of irony in both Woolf's and Bontempelli's narrative technique, as I will show in the following part.

La vita operosa

La vita operosa is quite different in form and style from Woolf's lyrical work, as it is written in the first person and deal more openly with the flaws of post-war reconstruction, yet both texts share the ironical attitude towards society's values and mores. The sections which form the "adventures" of *La vita operosa* depict the various attempts of a veteran just returned in Milan to find his place in post-war Italian society, ruthlessly detected in its trivial and irrational aspects.

While the importance of the city for the character's developmental path has been recognised, the effects of the war on his perceptions of the urban reality have attracted less critical reflection.[10] This is even more surprising considering that, from the onset, the character's condition of "spaesamento" (disorientation) is connected to his experience as a soldier, as he laments that the Officer Training School he attended has not taught him to orientate in the "aperta campagna", the open field of Milan, when you have neither a compass nor a watch or stars and sun to help you (Bontempelli, *La vita operosa*: 151).[11] The adventures of the "I"– called Massimo like the author – thus unfold in a city where, in the first instance, he needs to find his way ("bisogna prima orientarsi", 153) – not an easy task as Milan is presented as the field of "the harshest battles in life" (151). Significantly, while the ex-soldier is pervaded by "estasi" (ecstasy, which happens to be the title of the second section: 151), this exalted condition is premised on the rediscovery of the beauty and the everyday after the experience of war, which however does not hinder a sensation of void deriving from la "malsana tendenza verso l'infinità", (the unhealthy tendency towards infinity, 150) which affects humankind. While he labels "nostalgia" the feeling the soldier had for the earthly goods he sees everywhere around him in the city, like the bar with the colourful bottles of liquors, the crystal of the showcases and charming women getting on buses and trams, his present condition can actually be subsumed to melancholia. Not incidentally, following Benjamin, Bahun identifies as the first urban melancholics Charles Baudelaire, whose *spleen* – an ambivalent psychological

condition oscillating between anguish and ecstasy – has been associated with Bontempelli's "passeggiate urbane" (city walks, see De Villi, *Allegorie del moderno*). This aspect is also present in Woolf's novel: Clarissa enjoys walking in London and loves what she sees around her "in this moment of June," yet, at the same time, she feels that "in people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge" death lurks (*MD*: 4). Although "the war was over," it has left an indelible mark on people's lives, so that amidst the triumphs of British civilisation, Clarissa cannot whisk away the thought that it is "very, very dangerous to live even one day" (9). In this sense, the recourse to literature, here to Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, seems to have a sublimatory mourning function as Clarissa repeats more times to herself throughout the narration the first two lines from a funeral dirge *Fear no more (the heat o' the sun)*, the same words uttered by Septimus before his final act (153).

Although Bontempelli's text engages with more trivial aspects of reality, and the hero's path is not charged with the Christian symbology present in Woolf, military and religious imagery merge with the usual irony in that the treatise of topography studied at military school, with its dialogic structures, is compared to the "catechismo", the holy text of Christian doctrine. Moreover, the character's difficulty in gaining a sense of orientation is made more explicit as the city reveals its nature of "battlefield of life" when the sky is covered, and the air envelops everything with its grey veil (*VO*: 152). Also here, although less overtly than in Woolf, the experience of the trenches lurks in the protagonist's perception of the urban landscape. Women attract him with their eyes "di carbone e luce" ("made of coal and light", 151), and from time to time the streets are lit by "lunghi bagliori folgoranti" ("prolonged dazzling glows") as aeroplanes fly above the city (152).

While Woolf's narration is often dreamlike in its famously fragmented yet flowing style, reflecting the characters' thoughts in a stream of consciousness, Bontempelli's novel *performs* melancholia: first, through the psychic tripartition of the self into the author, narrator and protagonist; then, in the division of the chapters into smaller units, which articulates the modern subject's uprootedness in the urban context and the sensation of void derived from the war. Esther Sánchez-Pardo has made the significant case that melancholia influenced the modernist heterogenisation of forms such as the novel, biography and autobiography (*Cultures of the Death Drive*: 213-214), which – in the case of Bontempelli's text – borders on autofiction.[12]

Yet the strategies of split embodiment employed in the micronovels which compose *La vita operosa* are not only evident on the level of textual performance, but also in the protagonist's tragicomic duplication and constant dialogue, or

better an affect-ridden interior monologue, with his "Dàimone" (daimon). The latter is indeed the most evident sign of the protagonist's melancholic psyche, given that, as Bahun notes, fragmentation and the problematic relationship to the logocentric processes, embodied here by his "loico" (logic) double, are among the key features of the melancholic condition.

However, it must not be overlooked that the elusive and intangible nature of identity preoccupies Woolf's novel as well, finding expression not only in Septimus' compulsive/pathological self-reflexivity, but also in Clarissa's musings and struggles on self-definition. Walking in the crowded streets of London on an ordinary day of June, she reflects on the impossibility to capture true identity – she would not say of anyone in the world, including the people she knows best, and even herself that "I am this, I am that" (*MD*: 8-9). Later at home, looking at her face in the mirror she confesses that her stable self – "pointed, dartlike, definite" – is but only the result of a strong effort to put all her diverse, incompatible selves together to be always only and the same Mrs Clarissa Dalloway who is hosting a party that very night (40).

Another aspect of both novels deserving attention here is irony, which I consider not only as an expression of the melancholic experience of the fragmented self, as Bahun would have it (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 33), but, as an attempt to give order and meaning, and to create a space for oneself, in the chaos and irrational social conditions of post-war society. It is undeniable that each of Bontempelli's ludic embodiments, reinforced by ironic distancing, contributes to giving a melancholic testimony of his time. One episode which is exemplary of this is the chapter concerned with the gambling game, "la morra": entering a café he used to haunt before the war, the protagonist immediately notices a different atmosphere and, strange as it may seem, is caught by a memory of the front, that of a valley, Valdirose, in between Tarnova and San Marco, crossed by a grid that reaches up to a steep slope (*VO*: 154). The apparent reason for this random correlative is made clear immediately after: in the café, which used to be known as an elegant venue, wreathed by clouds of smoke and the sound of violins, a group of ladies and gentlemen play the game of "morra," which a sergeant taught him in the trenches. Subsequently, the tricks of the game are explained via military jargon, with the player progressing of a "grado," (degree), as he gains more skills up until the third, when he will be able to guess the adversary's move and beat him (155). This analogy between war and game is a way to reflect on the lack of purpose of the war, which has only taught those who took part in it how to play and cheat. Moreover, the law of chance dominates both fields, reinforcing the sense of "smarrimento" (loss, confusion) felt by the protagonist. Feeling "più che mai senza bussola" ("totally

bewildered", 155), after having contemplated for a while the new society "nata dal lavoro moderno e dalla vittoria" ("born from modern work and victory", 156), he then resolves to try and make money, as befits a productive city like Milan.

While Woolf's humorous sensibilities – as well as her intention to "criticize the social system, and to show it at work, at its most intense"[13] in the novel – are well-known, the role of irony and humour as a coping device for a negotiation of the social system in the cruel post-war world has received little critical attention. As Lisa Colletta has aptly pointed out, what links Clarissa and Septimus is the opposite reaction to the constraints placed on them by an imperial, patriarchal society that does not allow any deviation from the imposed pattern of class and gender conformity (*Criticizing the Social System*: 39). However, while Septimus reacts to society's limits "insanely" due to his direct experience of war, Clarissa's response is "sane" in that she partakes in societal customs, as her hosting the party shows, yet remains ironically distanced from them (40). In Woolf, there is also the narrator's ironic gaze, which is directed at society's pretensions and hypocrisy, personified by the party guests such as lady Bruton and mostly by the doctor Sir William Bradshaw and his wife, whom Clarissa openly dislikes. The novel thus seems to hint at one possible way of negotiating the social world without being submitted to it, and irony is presented as the coping mechanism which allows this negotiation. If Woolf's satire, however, tends to dark comedy as much as twentieth-century social satire, as Lisa Colletta notices, this is not only because humour is set against the backdrop of madness, death and the effects of war, but also because – unlike comedy – it works against the reconciliation between individual and society, as testified by Septimus' suicide and Clarissa's isolation from her social world (48). Significantly, the final image of Clarissa that the reader is left with is that of her standing alone at the window, reflecting on Septimus' death while staring at the simple old lady going to bed in the house opposite; she eventually must call on herself once again to "assemble" and get back to the party (*MD*: 204).

This dark brand of humour and the unsettling lack of belief in the rational progress of history is all the more apparent in Bontempelli's text, particularly in the narrator's ironic stance/attitude towards the customs and values of post-war society as well as in the narrative's refusal of any final reconciliation between self and society.

As Bahun notes, melancholia may develop not only around the loss of an actual individual, but also of a social abstraction such as "fatherland" and "liberty" (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 26). What Bontempelli's protagonist

seems to mourn are the values and ideals of the pre-war time, thus refusing to dispel "le lettere," the philosophical knowledge which, in capitalist post-war society, has surrendered to material goods and advertising. While he is intent on examining the advancement of demobilisation, he happens to meet a former lieutenant who, having dismissed his plans of working as an engineer for the railways, persuades the protagonist to leave behind his "velleità letterarie" (literary ambitions, *VO*: 168), and start working in advertising like him. Tellingly, when he starts "selling his ideas," looking from his window at the lively streets above, he is caught by a strange feeling he recognises as melancholia, which he ironically dismisses as not suited to the spirit of the new times: "non entra nello spirito dei tempi nuovi" (175).

In Bontempelli's text, the inability to mourn is exposed as a societal condition, as it appears most clearly in the section carrying the biblical title "nuova incarnazione del verbo" ("The New Incarnation of the Word", 156). While in *Mrs Dalloway* Septimus could read a divine message in the letters soared in the sky on the trail of the plane, here, "il Verbo" (The Word) has found its embodiment in the signs of modernity: the placards with the ode to the present time, OGGI (TODAY) written in capital letters are placed everywhere and should help one orientate oneself (157). In spite of the daimon's caution to avoid historical diagnosis, the protagonist muses that the Volontà di Vivere (Will to Living) which seems to possess all city dwellers, is borne out of the "trincee verminose" (wormy trenches, 156). The protagonist's tendency to "diagnosis" marks the compulsive examination of verbal and representational tools which, again, is proper to the melancholic condition. Indeed, behind the apparent *jouissance* and admiration he feels for all those men and women having gone through the war, like in Woolf, a gloomier thought takes him, namely that this lust for life comes from the resignation to death, the constant reminder of those "cinquecentomila ròsi dai vermi," the soldiers' verminous corpses in the plains of Piave and Carso (158). The loss of values and ideals in the post-war world causes a melancholic awareness in the narrator: he realizes that, in the temple of the new God OGGI (TODAY, 157), there are neither ideals nor cardinal points, and he thus questions, similarly to Septimus, the meaning of the world. However, far from being taken by nihilistic despair, he decides to take advantage in the present of what he learned at the "scuola di artiglieria," the military school, namely that each has to do what they can to get along (159). Hence, he guides his Dàimone from the dark to the light of the streets to enjoy that sunny day of January in productive Milan.

While, as Bahun notes, the primary role of mourning is to reconcile the mourner with society (*Modernism and Melancholia*: 60), I stress that

countermourning reconciles the subject with oneself, as shown by Septimus' final act of defiance. In the case of Bontempelli's texts, the protagonist's progressive move manifests itself in his repeated choice not to conform to socially accepted behaviours. For instance, when he resigns from his first job in advertising after having been caught by the feeling of "incomprehensible melancholia" at the sight of the life and hustle and bustle on the streets outside his window (*VO*: 175). He thus leaves an ironic note to his boss in which he pleads his cause of "letterato," an educated man who must resign for reasons of "forza maggiore," and thus, apparently, a victim to forces beyond his own control (176).

The recourse to a "surreal" dimension has been recognised as one of the key features of Bontempelli's work,[14] yet its relationship to the character's split melancholic consciousness, as well as its critical social function, has been overlooked. Significantly, in his *Stanzas*, Giorgio Agamben identifies as part of the "melancholic project" the entering/entrance "into relation with unreality and with the unappropriable as such" in order to "appropriate the real and the positive" (xix). The chapter on "via Belloveso" brings this to the fore; the experience of war is filtered through the myth and is used to lay claim to the power of creation. Particularly in the section called "fatale andare" (fatal going, *VO*: 195), the protagonist follows a devilish man with "due occhi quasi bianchi spiritati" (spirited white eyes, 193) he met on a tram coach, which slowly leaving famous squares and hit roads behind, leads them into the "unknown". While the coach seems to be driven by "occulte cagioni" (secret forces, 196), the landscape changes into a succession of dark walls and plagued paving broken by filthy buildings. As the carriage proceeds in its deadly course, the protagonist feels his soul "fasciarsi di lenta malinconia," swathing slowly in melancholia, and his body fading among the "spiriti crepuscolari," the twilight spirits which do not abandon him until he sees again the light and hears "sonorità umane" (human sound, 196). While the peculiar man seems to vanish once they reach city ground, the protagonist sees the camp of the Gauls of Belloveso, the founder of Milan standing in place of the Dom square, and is haunted for days by violent visions of flames and human sacrifices to the bloody warrior God "Hesus" (199). As the protagonist ironically admits, if he had still been a writer, he would have written a tragedy on Belloveso; but now he can only mourn the forgotten Belloveso as suited to the times, namely by dedicating the most modern street of the city to him. Hence, he plans on creating "via Belloveso" from scratch, a street full of skyscrapers ("tutta di grattacieli, di grandi grattacieli", 200) made of reinforced concrete, a work which seems to calm the soul, not only that of Belloveso but also his own, as he intends to settle in the street, at number 18 (203). Significantly, the chosen place

for this creation resembles a battlefield: a vast soaked plane trespassing into grey infinity, punctuated by iron poles and low bare trees (205). However, as the "Dàimone", who had been absent during the protagonist's creative act, turns up again the few houses on the street start to vacillate and then disappear, while the plain, covered by icy white lights, is swallowed by the ground and the protagonist is left "aggranchito," numb, in the midst of the fog surrounding the austere Milan (207).

It is worth noticing that the language of myth and religion is used parodically throughout the narration, as when the famous café Campari – popular for businesses – is compared to a Church with its altar and waiters bringing around their offers as priests who testify of the new religion born out of the influence of the faraway war ("dall'influsso della guerra lontana", 247). In the same vein, the harsh living conditions in the aftermath of the war are voiced by the strange guests of the "cenacolo platonico" (platonic cenacle) of Irene, the peculiar landlady who shares her flat with her two husbands. At her circle, if someone complains about the housing crisis or the price increase occasioned by the war and its aftermath, now 15 months away, they must pay two bottles of wine as penance (234-242). Hence, although less overtly than in Woolf, the war is present in the narration through the recurrent time indicators[15] and the references to its effects on the protagonist's condition; with the usual irony he identifies the cause of his headache in that, one month earlier, he had left the stability/stillness of military life for the whirl of the metropolis "er[a] tornato dalla quadrupedante e arcadica vita militare al cerebroso turbine della metropoli" (back from the quadrupedal arcadian military life to the cerebral whirl of the metropolis, 247).

If the death drive dominates *La vita intensa* (the tales to which *La vita operosa* is clearly connected, with the protagonist eventually killing himself to be reborn and then married), the destructive potential of melancholia is overcome here and, with typical irony, the protagonist reconciles with his own self. In the final section, titled "idillio" ("idyll", 285) – which interestingly recalls the "arcadica" (arcadian) used earlier to define military life – he misses the appointment with an important politician, the "Eccellenza," whose contact would have likely gained him a job. Indeed, as he states, while his effort on this occasion would not add anything to his own story, let alone contribute to the History of the world, he holds true to himself as he has realised that he is not meant for "collocar[si]… esemplarmente nel mondo sociale" (to exemplarily find his own place in society, 277). Hence, after having reconnected with his proud Dàimone, with whom he has now become one thing, indissolubly, he can keep on staying in bed and enjoy some deserved sleep, "[il] sonno dell'uomo giusto" (285).

Conclusions

In this essay, I have examined how the experience of war and feelings in the wake of loss affects the perceptions of post-war urban reality of the main characters of Bontempelli's and Woolf's novels, which share the modernist preoccupation with self-knowledge and the difficult negotiation of the social system in the face of madness, death and the irrational conditions occasioned by the war. While, for both Clarissa Dalloway and the narrator of *La vita operosa*, thoughts of death are replaced by the reality of social ritual and customs, the humorous perspective of both novels is darkly subversive as it asserts the arbitrariness of all social constructions that limit the life of human beings.

Focusing on the protagonists' melancholic condition in these works, I have relied on Bahun's concept of countermourning and on the consideration of melancholia as a progressive movement of the psyche, which rests on Freud's psychology and Kierkegaard's philosophy. This reconsideration of melancholia not only as a passive state of contemplation and the marker of an exceptional condition which allows a surplus of vision and cognition, but as the very expression of modern subjectivity has allowed me to uncover its neglected value as a coping mechanism through which one may participate in the world; this new perspective on melancholia also enables a reconsideration of the social and historical origins of one's suffering, and thus, of our subjective lives.

Finally, highlighting the critical function of countermourning and its ability to reconcile the melancholic with oneself, I have offered an alternative reading of the two novels and their endings, challenging their reductive view in terms of deviant subjectivities or simply as failed attempts of integration into society.

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[1]   For a historical account of melancholia since Hippocrates' understanding of *melaina-kole* to (post) modern theories of melancholy, see e.g. Flatley (*Affective Mapping*) and Radden (ed.) (*The Nature of Melancholy*).

[2]   For an examination of the influence of the world war in a novel that "does not seem to focus on War," see Lilienfeld (*"Success in Circuit Lies":* 113-133). On war neurosis and its influence on Woolf's poetics, see also Levenback (*Virginia Woolf and Returning Soldiers*: 71-88).

[3]   There are several studies of *Mrs Dalloway*, which also focus on the relationship between Clarissa and Septimus. See e.g. Hawthorn (*Virginia Woolf's "Mrs Dalloway"*); Bloom (ed.) (*Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway*); Acheson, (ed.) (V*irginia Woolf*); and Whitworth (*Virginia Woolf*).

[4]   On the modernist features of Bontempelli's work, with particular reference to *La vita intensa* and *La vita operosa* see Gallo (*Bontempelli modernista*); and Romano Luperini's enlightening essay *Il modernismo italiano esiste* (3-12).

[5]   I am not using the term "shell-shock", as it was from the onset rather controversial and dismissed during the final stages of the war when it was clear that explosions of shells were not to blame for the disorder, and that the term "shock" was ill-chosen too as in most cases the breakdown was softer and manifested itself more gradually.

[6]   All further references to this text will appear in-text as *MD*.

[7]   In her study *Male Hysteria*, Elaine Showalter highlights that emotional repression was an essential aspect of the British masculine ideal, and that the atmosphere of the war was strongly homoerotic. The study is enlightening, as it draws attention to the connection between war neurosis and male social obligations. The narrative also hints at Septimus' impotence and (latent) homosexuality: although his wife wants children and they have been together for five years their marriage is sterile. Moreover, it is telling that, when the doctor visits Septimus, he enquires whether he has "impulses." See Bourke (*Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma*).

[8]   Peter Walsh embodies the coercive power of (British) imperialism which also led to the War, substantiating what Robert Wohl (*The Generation of 1918*: 120) identifies as "the English myth of a lost generation," the powerful commemoration of the war dead. According to Levenfeld this myth invalidated returning soldiers for years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (*Virginia Woolf and Returning Soldiers*: 75).

[9]   On the dilemma of expressing individuality while participating in social life and on Septimus as the necessary "death in life" in *Mrs Dalloway* see Jean Thompson's enlightening study *Virginia Woolf and the Case of Septimus Smith*.

[10] Cinzia Gallo points to the disorientation of the narrated self in the post-war reality of Milan, yet she interprets it reductively as the expression of the "insufficienza dell'io" (failure of the self) and his inability to take charge of his life (*Bontempelli modernista*: 4).

[11] Further reference to this work will appear in-text as *VO*. English translations are mine. Critics tend to consider the adventures told in *La Vita Operosa* (and *La Vita Intensa* too) as self-contained narrative inserts, hence the term "micronovels".

[12] For what concerns Bontempelli's mixture of autobiography, narrative text, and autofiction (as defined by Doubrovsky and Donnarumma), see Gallo (*La vita operosa di Massimo Bontempelli fra narrativa, autobiografia e "autofiction"*).

[13] Woolf (*A Writer's Diary*: 57). Cited in Colletta (*Criticizing the Social System*: 39).

[14] Stefano Lazzarin speaks of "torsione surreale del reale" (surreal inflection of the real). While connecting Bontempelli's *La vita intensa* and *La vita operosa* to the tradition of the nineteenth-

century English adventure and detective novel (Arthur Machen and Conan Doyle), he also recognizes the influence on the two texts of French surrealism with its tenet of the "extraordinary in the reality" (*La città avventurosa*: 87-99). Lazzarin notices that that of Bontempelli would actually be a surrealism *ante litteram* and proposes the term "protosurrealismo" (92).

[15] As when he states: "La guerra è finita da due mesi e c'è il sole a Milano in gennaio" ("the war ended two months ego and it is a sunny day of January in Milan", 161), or "fu nel febbraio del primo anno del dopoguerra ("It was in February of the first year after the end of the war", 225).

Sensing World War II: Affect, Ritual and Community in Historical Re-Enactment

By Lise Zurné

Abstract: Re-enactments of the past have become an increasingly popular mode to engage with war-related history. In contrast to conventional modes of historical inquiry, re-enactment offers a "body-based discourse" through which the past is reanimated through physical and psychological experiences (Agnew, *What is Re-enactment:* 330). So far, most studies have focused on re-enactment's epistemological potential for the individual (Agnew, *What is Re-enactment*, *History's Affective Turn*; Braedder and other, *Doing Pasts*; Daugbjerg, *Patchworking the Past*; and Gapps, *Mobile Monuments*). This article will specifically explore how affective encounters in re-enactment are not merely acquired individually, but also collectively. This study is based on a sensory ethnography of two re-enactment groups portraying the *Volksgrenadierdivision* and Army Nurse Corps and aims to analyse how re-enactors create intimate encounters with World War II through collective multisensory experiences. The analysis demonstrates how re-enactors use authenticity as discourse to mediate their affective experiences. It shows how physical and emotional sensations associated with the "discomforts" of war are considered authoritative and experiential evidence and mediate one's position within the re-enactment community. Further, by drawing on Victor Turner's (*Liminal to Liminoid*) concept of the *liminoid*, I will explore re-enactment as a ritualized practice in which shared experiences of hardships serve to access certain sentimental and emotional states, in particular a sense of belonging. The analysis will also show how these immersive experiences are susceptible to conflicts, when re-enactment moves from play to obligation.

Keywords: *historical re-enactment, affect and emotions, World War II, ritual, embodiment, sensory ethnography*

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, I spent the night in a farm about an hour north of Prague to accompany eleven Polish and Czech women on the training weekend of their WWII United States Army Nurse Corps re-enactment group. After a night of preparation, we dressed up in our herringbone twill uniforms, hid our smartphones, and loaded our army duffle bags into a WWII Dodge. A four-hour-long drive separated us from the contemporary world: countless vehicles caught up with the slow pace of the Dodge as we passed by people waving at the odd sight of eleven WWII army nurses. Finally, as we reached a bumpy road up the Czech mountains, the "nurses" were laughing and screaming while trying to hold on as we drove through countless potholes. I was forced to put my camera away because of the large sand clouds our trail created. It was at that moment that I noticed the strong smell of gasoline and suddenly became

extremely aware of the hard bench I was sitting on, the wooden bar I hit my back against with every bump, the sound of the bags that were sliding on the floor, and the sand stinging my eyes. These profound physical sensations made me suddenly question: could this be what they are after?

Since the 1980s, an increasing number of people is seeking encounters with (war) histories, often via engagement with artefacts, sites, or texts of the past. Following what is known as the "affective turn" in the social sciences and humanities, studies increasingly emphasize the bodily and emotional dimensions of such encounters. As a result, scholarly interest in historical re-enactments has expanded. The term re-enactment is used for a diverse range of phenomena, from living history at museums and heritage sites, to re-enactments in television, film, theatre, and performance-art, and is predominantly concerned with issues of war (Agnew, *History's Affective Turn*). In contrast to other more conventional modes of representation, re-enactors use their bodies as mediums to reanimate historic events "as it really was" in order to gain insight into the emotions of past actors (Agnew, *What is Re-enactment?*). This quest for authenticity is re-enactment's most defining characteristic, predominantly defined in relation to the historical accuracy of appearance and material culture (Thompson, *Wargames;* Braedder, *Expertise and Amateurism)*. Re-enactment is therefore characterized by a "holistic" desire to "feel" or "touch" the past, and in turn, to be touched (Hetherington, *Spatial Textures*; Schneider, *Performing Remains*: 34).

Most academic discussions revolve around the question of whether re-enactment's focus on affect, daily life, and physical and psychological experiences can constitute historical knowledge and understanding (Agnew, *History's Affective Turn*: 309; Johnson, *Rethinking (re)doing*: 194; McCalman & Pickering, *Historical Re-enactment*; and Gapps, *Mobile Monuments*). Anthropologists have argued that by virtue of its sensory character, re-enactment can provide "other [bodily] ways of knowing" (Johnson, *Performing Pasts:* 41). They often draw on Merleau-Ponty's notion of embodiment to destabilize the binary opposition between cognition and experience, by demonstrating how material culture affects re-enactors through corporeal perception (Johnson, *Re-enactment's Embodying of History*: 9, 200; Card, *Body and Embodiment:* 30). So, exploring how re-enactors "make sense [of war histories] through the senses" is not new (McCalman & Pickering, *Historical Re-enactment)*. However, also within more empirically grounded studies, the focus often remains on the relationship between individuals and war-related objects (Johnson, *Rethinking, Performing, Re-enactment's*; Kalshoven, *Crafting the Indian*). This study will add to the existing literature by including re-enactments' social

dimensions as I aim to demonstrate how affective encounters are not merely acquired individually, but also collectively. The research question of this article is: how do groups of re-enactors of World War II pursue authentic experiences through affective encounters, and what kind of meaning is attributed to these experiences?

This paper is based on a multi-sited ethnographic study of two European re-enactment groups portraying Axis and Allied armed forces during World War II: the 277th *Volksgrenadierdivision* of Nazi Germany's Wehrmacht and the United States Army Nurse Corps. The data for this study consists of nineteen qualitative interviews with members from these groups and participant-observation at various re-enactment events. For this analysis, I focus particularly on data obtained in 2020 during a member's weekend of the *Volksgrenadierdivision* and the Army Nurse Corps annual training camp. As conventional research methods tend to centralize seeing (observing) and verbal knowledge (interviewing) (Pink, *A Multisensory Approach*), this study adopts sensory ethnography to take the affective and multisensorial experiences of both research participants and the ethnographer into account (Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*: 1; Van Ede, *Sensuous Anthropology*). This included a special focus on physical sensations and emotions in participant observation and interviewing, and videography to record the visual and aural aspects of the research and to evoke the tactile experiences of these encounters during the analysis.

Recent studies on emotion and re-enactment have shifted their focus from the simulation of emotions and mentalities of past actors to the emotional impact re-enactment practices may have on the participants themselves (Cook, *The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment*; Brauer & Lücke, *Emotion*). However, so far little empirical research has demonstrated how this specifically comes about. In order to do so, it is important to first clarify what is meant by emotion in re-enactment, or the much-preferred term "affect" (Brauer & Lücke, *Emotion*). While often used interchangeably, some scholars differentiate between feelings (personal), emotions (the sociological expressions of feelings) and affect (the "non-conscious" and physical response to feelings that "cannot be fully captured in language") (Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual:* 30; Gorton, *Theorizing Emotion and Affect:* 334). Other scholars have ignored these distinctions altogether, by focussing on what emotions do and how they work, "rather than what they are" (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*: 10; Driessen, *Touching War*; and Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*). Instead of differentiating between "feeling" and the mental recognition of that feeling, Sara Ahmed (2004) has for example argued that emotions should be regarded as bodily change itself: e.g. we feel

fearful because our heart is racing and our hands are trembling. Hence, I will refrain from distinguishing between feelings and emotions as they are not "distinct realms of human experience" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 6).[1] Furthermore, insights from cultural studies have taught us how emotions are culturally specific, bound to the body and communicated through practices of the body (Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?*: 199). Emotions are therefore not cultural constructs, nor something we "have", rather they are impressions left on the border "between the body and psyche" (Brauer & Lücke, *Emotion*: 53). Emotions therefore mediate between the body and mind, but also between the individual and collective, connecting and separating us from others in society (53; Skoggard & Waterston, *Introduction*: 111). This insight is particularly fruitful in studying re-enactment, as it understands emotions not just as something we may experience, but above all, cultural and social practices we *do* (Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?*: 195).

Furthermore, the field of ritual studies has a long history of analysing collective emotional experiences, albeit from a structural-functionalist perspective (Leavitt, *Meaning and Feeling*: 526). I will therefore draw on Victor Turner's (*Liminal to Liminoid*) notions of communitas and liminality to explore how specifically affective experiences impact group dynamics by analysing re-enactment as a "liminoid" phenomenon. Turner famously distinguished between liminal practices in pre-industrial societies and liminoid phenomena that emerged with the beginning of industrialization. Whereas liminal rituals are highly structured and obligatory for all members in societies, liminoid phenomena imply freedom of choice and encompass leisure genres like "art, sport, pastimes, games, etc. […] practiced by and for particular groups" (Turner, *From Ritual*: 86).[2] These contemporary practices involve a break from society in which participants make up their own rules, therefore immersing into their own (in this case historicized) reality. Or, as described by Turner: "One works at the liminal, one plays with the liminoid" (*Liminal to Liminoid*: 86). Adopting the liminoid as a "sensitizing concept" (Blumer, *What is wrong with Social Theory?*)[3] allows me to analyse how re-enactment may recharge or transform participants, while also highlighting how, as a ritualized practice, re-enactment may result in either integration and solidarity, or exclusion (Bell, *Ritual Theory*: 98).[4]

The outline of this article will follow Turner's (*The Ritual Process*) classical ritual model and distinguishes between different phases of re-enactment, including preparation, the liminoid condition (in this case, "immersion" into WWII) and (re)integration as "ideal types" (Weber, *Objectivity*).[5] First, I will "set the scene" by shortly describing the re-enactment groups and activities that

formed the basis of the analysis. I will highlight the requirement of certain elements for re-enactment, such as rules, war-related objects and place in the preparation for re-enactment. A dominant concern here is authenticity, often understood as a perfect simulation that aims to close the gap between past and present (Agnew & Tomann, *Authenticity;* Handler & Saxton, *Dyssimulation*). I aim to demonstrate how re-enactors use authenticity as discourse to articulate their affective relationship to war-related objects. In the second part of this article, I will describe in greater detail how this discourse ascribes authority to intense physical sensations associated with war histories, and how the experience of hardships may mediate one's position within the re-enactment community. The collective endurance of these hardships then serves to bolster the affective bonds between re-enactors. Lastly, I will describe how these immersive experiences are susceptible to conflicts, when re-enactment moves from play to obligation.

Setting the scene

In the period between 2019 and 2021, I became a (guest) member of two re-enactment groups portraying the armed forces during WWII: the 277ᵗʰ *Volksgrenadierdivision* of the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany and the Army Nurse Corps of the United States. While the most well-known re-enactments tend to focus on war and battle in distant pasts, such as Waterloo or Gettysburg, I anticipated that the reenactors of World War II would have a more intimate and emotional connection with the roles they perform, due to familial ties or simply because WWII occupies such a dominant position in popular culture. Similarly, some scholars had argued that twentieth-century war re-enactors seemed to grapple with more complex issues than others, due to their portrayal of foreign soldiers, the possible politicization, and their interactions with veterans (Gapps, *Practices of Authenticity*: 185; Thompson, *Wargames*: xx). Despite the relatively "fresh wounds" WWII left on our collective memory (Berens, *WWII Re-enactment*: 6), I had noted a small number of groups that considered it a useful narrative for their "play". I therefore selected two groups that performed opposing roles, namely the Allies and the Axis – although choices were limited for a women researcher in this male-dominated hobby (Tomann, *"You can't just put men in the field"*; West, *Historical Re-enacting and Affective Authority*).[6] The first group, the 277ᵗʰ *Volksgrenadierdivision* consists of 26 predominantly Belgian members, with a few from the Netherlands. Four of its members are female (although this number is expanding) and portray the roles of *Flakhelferinnen*, a relatively unknown section of the auxiliary staff of the German Luftwaffe. The second re-enactment group, the Army Nurse Corps, is the only organized and

all-female re-enactment group portraying the United States Army Nurses in Poland and the Czech Republic. It consists of approximately 15 women aged between 17-30 years old and is relatively equally divided in terms of Polish and Czech nationalities. The main activities of re-enactment groups can be broadly distinguished into two categories. The first and most common consists of what re-enactors call "display": "static" presentations of the group's material culture and/or demonstration of its weaponry and vehicles in a public event, such as a liberation festival. In contrast to many others, the two groups selected for this study also undertake the second category, which encompasses "immersive" activities designed to "experience" war-related history. These consist of less accessible, private re-enactment practices, where often audiences, the enactment of scripted historical narratives, or the embodiment of real historical persona is lacking. These exclusive performances involve community-building or training activities, such as camping, group trips to historic sites, specific skill-learning activities, or physical challenges such as overnight stays in the forest in mid-winter Bastogne with limited supplies. Due to their intensity and immersivity, they are often understood to offer more "authentic" experiences of war than audience-catering "displays" and will therefore form the basis of analysis. In 2020, this included a private members' weekend of the *Volksgrenadierdivison* and the third edition of the annual Army Nurse Corps training camp.[7] I will now introduce the elements required in the preparation stage of these events.

Pursuing authentic experiences in re-enactment requires a certain groundwork. During my fieldwork, I observed how re-enactments are built around a number of elements, including rules, objects, and place. Let me start off by asserting that the first one, namely the "rules" of re-enactment encompasses one dominant objective, namely that of "doing things authentically" as a perfect, historically accurate simulation (Handler & Saxton, *Dyssimulation*). This firstly implies building an authentic material representation of WWII through assembling a true-to-life uniform, weapons, and equipment, known in re-enactment terminology as one's "kit" (Daugbjerg, *Patchworking the Past*: 725). As described on the web page of the *Volksgrenadierdivision*: "modern clothing or utensils are strictly prohibited in this depiction."[8]

While re-enactment initially seems to revolve around creating this authentic tangible representation, re-enactors particularly ascribe authenticity to their sensuous relationship with these objects. While most re-enactors started off with collecting relics of the past, they often described a desire to learn more about them, simply by "feeling" their "kit", wearing it, and utilising them in action. This involves extensive archival research, experimentation, restoration and craftsmanship, a process that, according to some, resembles the research of

academic historians or early anthropologists (Johnson, *Re-enactment's Embodying*: 210; Kalshoven, *Moving in Time*: 197). The sensory qualities of the material culture used in re-enactment were believed to grant specific kinds of embodied knowledge. Evelyn, who re-enacted the First Lieutenant of the Army Nurse Corps (29), explained for example how she learned about the impractical design of the HBT [herringbone twill] uniforms through re-enacting: by wearing it in different circumstances, she experienced how "[they] really don't protect you either from cold or heat." Nonetheless, it was the experience of such discomfort itself that was believed to make one's impression more authentic by impacting for example the way one's body moves (Johnson, *Rethinking (re)doing*: 200). Thus, re-enactors constantly engage in processes of authentication by which they validate something as genuine or original (Cohen & Cohen cited in Agnew & Tomann, *Authenticity:* 21). This was further illustrated by Marc (27), a *Schütze* [shooter] from the *Volksgrenadierdivision*, who emphasized the importance of "pocket litter", a term used for the war-related objects that often remain invisible to the public. He described how the pockets of his uniform would be stuffed with small items as lucifers, a comb, a songbook and, even though he did not smoke outside of the hobby, a pipe and tobacco. "In the beginning you think, I have a uniform, [my impression] is complete. But eventually, you will have a uniform whose pockets are bulging. It is not comfortable, but that is what makes it more authentic" (my translation). According to Marc, authenticity was not related to the "pocket litter" in itself, but an embodied and physical sensation (Daugbjerg, *Patchworking the Past*: 730; Kalshoven, *Moving in Time*: 547; and Braedder and others, *Embodied Simulations*). The quote therefore demonstrates how authenticity should be understood as an affective experience, shaped in contact between individuals and objects (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics*: 45-46).

Lastly, crucial to pursuing authentic experiences is establishing a liminoid space. This often meant travelling to places in which the re-enactors could imagine themselves in the past, an "in-between" such as isolated or historical sites in which they were separated from daily life (Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*). While some settings had a specific historic value related to WWII as *lieux de mémoire*, other sites were actively authenticated by re-enactors through the creation of stories or imagining traces of the past. For the members weekend of the *Volksgrenadierdivision*, we for example camped next to an eighteenth-century mill, our modern cars parked at a distance so it would not disrupt the historicized scene. While checking out the site, re-enactors would discuss how the Wehrmacht could have used the mill to signal the local region during WWII. In the case of the Army Nurse's training camp, our stay was a nineteenth-century house owned by one of the group's members. Even though

there was no known relevance to WWII, it fit right in due to its relative isolation and old-fashioned interior (although the 1940s might have been a leap too far). While there was electricity, it only had a limited water supply, meaning that we could not shower in the upcoming days, a detail that, according to the Army Nurses, would only add to our training's authenticity. Evelyn explained that while we mostly see Army Nurses in films "looking pretty" with ironed uniforms, re-enacting taught her how stained clothing, greasy hair and the smell of sweat was more realistic. Thus, authenticity in re-enactment is used to describe what is felt and sensed, rather than an essential quality of material culture. It is therefore a discourse invoked by re-enactors to mediate their experiences. In the following section, I will demonstrate how this discourse particularly ascribes authenticity, and therefore power, to intense physical sensations and emotions.

Pursuing authentic sensations of war

In addition to the affective relationship between re-enactors and war-related material culture, re-enactors may engage in activities designed to provoke certain sensations. As explained by Sara Ahmed, we often only become aware of our bodies in the event of feeling discomfort (*Collective Feelings*, 29). Prickly sensations, for example, become "pain" through an act of reading and recognition, which is then followed by a judgement, pain is for example usually labelled as "bad" (ibid.). However, in the case of re-enactment, "feeling" the discomfort of war is considered crucial in understanding the experiences of past actors. Sensations of exhaustion, pain, being "dirty", greasy, cold, or extremely hot, a lack of sleep, muscle aches, are therefore not simply "bad" or unpleasant, but rather valuable. Such bodily experiences function as reminders of "how hard it was back then" and serve to bolster the seriousness of the practice (Gapps, *Mobile Monuments*: 410). Intentionally, both the members' weekend of the *Volksgrenadierdivision* and the annual Army Nurses Training camp were used to integrate new re-enactors, resembling therefore a kind of "initiation rite" in which they transitioned from "outsider" to group member (Dreschke, *Ritual*: 203).

Simulating the original Unites States Army Nurse training from 1942 and 1943, the training camp of the nurses followed a similar daily schedule. That meant that each morning at six o'clock, all participants had to be in 40's gym outfits in front of our basecamp to undertake a gym session. This consisted of a twenty-minute routine that included running and stretches, based on a study of pictures of these trainings and diaries of WWII nurses by Fran (28) who re-enacted as Second Lieutenant. Getting up at six often meant getting up about an

hour earlier, not just to dress oneself, but especially to remove the countless hair curlers and bobby pins from your hair, which had already prevented you from a good night's sleep by painfully stinging your head. Whereas beginners like me used plastic hair curlers in private events, more experienced re-enactors like Fran often received compliments for consistently using the original metal ones, even at home. She told me how she had "trained" to sleep with them, in order to become used to the curlers' sensory characteristics.

Authentic historical experiences thus required practice to get comfortable with the presumed reality of WWII. During the members' weekend of the *Volksgrenadierdivision* for example, I was woken up around five o'clock. Heavy rainfall had started leaking through the fabric of the *Truppenzelt* [troop tent] we slept in, drenching at least five re-enactors, their sleeping bags, pillows, and clothing. After moving their stuff around to avoid getting even wetter, I remember being astonished by the fact that they went back to sleep in their soggy sleeping bags. Discussing the matter the following morning, I was told "this happened every time." The headache of a bad night or the muscles aching for sleeping in a cold wet sleeping bag was just considered part of the experience.

Issues of authenticity are always related to questions of authority, since labelling something as genuine, true or real ascribes it to a certain power (Bruner, *Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction*). Mattijs van de Port has argued that bodily experiences are particularly powerful in processes of authentication: as one "cannot argue" with personal experiences as pain, they are presented as "incontestable facts" (Van de Port, *Registers of Incontestability*: 17). Similarly, in re-enactment, physical sensations as exhaustion, muscle aches were considered experiential evidence and contributed to what Brad West called "affective authority": the claim of knowing the past based on an empathetic experience of it (*Historical Re-enacting*: 400). I was for example explained how the most physically demanding and therefore "hardcore events" were therefore even widely regarded as the most authentic. Each year, the *Volksgrenadierdivision* would for example travel to Manhay in Belgium to re-enact the Battle of the Bulge for several days amid December. This meant camping in the freezing cold, with high chances of heavy snowfall and severely muddy terrain. Despite the group having installed a little kerosene heater in the tent that year, one of the members, Marc described his visit in 2019 as a "little bit of a traumatic experience":

> Even the mud of that year is still on the inside of my car, I just couldn't get it out. You would just sink into the mud, to the edge of your boots. The leather got completely wet,

your feet became ice-cold, it just felt like [they] were freezing, it was so painful. [...] I had less than a square meter to sit in front of the heater, [...] completely wrapped in cloak, scarf, and the smoke was constantly stinging my eyes. And then I just started crying, I couldn't take it anymore. I hadn't slept for two nights, I was broken and had to go home.[9]

The limited protection the WWII materials offered to the severe meteorological conditions may have given insight into the experiences of the German soldiers, Marc however mainly remembered the trip as "horrible". These "horrible" experiences did not only play a key role in creating communal memories, the mud serving as physical traces of historicized adventures, they also functioned as a form of capital within the hierarchy of the re-enactment community. Often, stories of hardships were rekindled during bonfires or dinners in a competitive manner. Since authenticity was linked to authority, the level to which one was able to endure physical challenges mediated one's status within the group, further materialized in the form of a reward. In the *Volksgrenadierdivision*, male re-enactors could receive different *Abzeichen* [badges].[10] Criteria for these badges included for example being physically wounded or sleeping for six nights in the freezing cold. Two members had earned a badge after one fell on his gasmask, breaking two of his cervical vertebrae, while the other fell on his bayonet during a battle, bruising several of his ribs. While this reward system was based on the original *Ostmedaille*, the military award for Wehrmacht personnel by ordinance of Adolf Hitler, it was also used to motivate re-enactors to challenge themselves to engage in more "authentic" experiences. As *Feldwebel* and chair of the *Volksgrenadierdivision* Jack (28) explained:

Before, I was chair, there was too much comfort at our events, people went to stay at hotels or slept in modern equipped tents. And because we wanted to change that, we came up with the *Ostfront Medaille* [Eastern Front Badge] [...] just to make the experience more authentic. And it is for you personally right, because the audience does not realize in what kind of conditions we sleep. I hope it will motivate everyone to seek more authentic experiences, because well, it was cold. We have all these luxury sleeping bags now, but people in WWII were just cold.

As demonstrated in the quote, Jack and other members of the group believed authentic experiences were rooted in physical sensations and the traces they left on the body. "Modern-day comfort" would detach one from the immersive experience of re-enacting, by making it less genuine. The military award which served as a symbol of appreciation for one's perseverance and commitment to the hobby, also signified the relationship between authority and profound bodily sensations as pain or cold. The following section will further elucidate

how affective experiences of discomfort were not only considered more authentic, but also particularly meaningful in establishing group ethos and solidarity. However, this proved to be a topic of contestation.

"My whole body is crying"

In Turner's distinction between the liminoid and the liminal, he argues that "[the first] is all play and choice, an entertainment, [while] the other is a matter of deep seriousness, even dread" (*Liminal to Liminoid*: 74). Despite being a "genre of leisure", re-enactment communities often represent an interesting hybrid with regards to obligation and optation (Kalshoven, *Crafting the Indian*: 135). While participating is a matter of individual choice, each member carries a responsibility to uphold the simulation by fulfilling certain requirements and tasks. Thus, a successful, in other words authentic, re-enactment, meant all re-enactors had to undergo physical and emotional hardships collectively.

Jack explained how in the *Volksgrenadierdivision*, re-enactors were assessed on their "contribution to the group" with each event. This contribution was defined in terms of "discipline" on three levels: discipline to stay in the past (behaving yourself "authentically", such as avoiding checking your smartphone), the discipline to bear the responsibilities of your role within the group (e.g., always carry ammunition if you are a *Schütze* [shooter]), and lastly and most importantly, the discipline to follow orders. This specifically applied during physical challenges such as tacticals (mock-battles), drilling, and going on patrol. Mimicking the hierarchy of the military, re-enactors like Marc would often emphasize how important it was everyone listened to their superiors:

> If you are not going to follow the hierarchy, you will get in trouble. If your commander says we are going to do this […] I know that is the best option. But if you think, I know better, you will create problems, because it is not just you but also your whole group that will be in danger. So that is the most important, [that's] how you learn about comradery, because then you will know that person supports me, I will support them. And that's how we are going to make it [*en zo komen we er wel*].

While the quote seems directed at situations of battle, I had posed a more general question about what Marc had learned from re-enactment. His answer therefore demonstrates how following orders in precarious situations was deemed similarly important in more mundane settings. Re-enacting the hierarchy of the military had therefore taught him to rely upon another, of listening, respect, and the importance of teamwork.

Conflicts may however arise when re-enactment moves from a "free activity" involving freedom of choice, to an obligatory practice (Kalshoven, *Is this Play*). A particularly illustrative moment within my research took place during an intensive hike that was part of the Army Nurses Training camp. On an extremely hot day of about 35 degrees Celsius, we left our basecamp around two o'clock to travel to the nearby mountain range. Following military protocol, re-enactors did not know anything about the duration and route of the hike to come, except Evelyn and Becky (29) who had assisted her in planning the activity. We had been told to prepare for an overnight stay outside, carrying all our equipment, food, supplies and water (although most only owned a 750ml canteen bottle for the whole 24-hours). As we would only have a layer of tent cloth to separate ourselves and the earth, I had been quite scared for the cold at night and secretly slipped a legging, wool sweater, and a few sleeping pills in the musette I borrowed. The video recordings I made of the hike capture its intensity quite well: shaky images, heavy panting, red faces, and the sound of the 1.3 kilo heavy helmets rhythmically pounding on our skulls. As we were walking up the mountain in the burning sun, one of the fellow re-enactors is heard telling me "my whole body is crying", pointing to the countless patches of sweat on her uniform. Already after a few hundred meters, some re-enactors had asked for breaks, as an increasing number were out of breath, had developed blisters in their stiff leather boots, or were just in need of some shade. As time passed, the group increasingly started to disperse, with the more enthusiastic hikers in front. When the people behind lost track of the others, frustrations started to emerge. Some criticized the First Lieutenant (Evelyn) for re-enacting the "military protocol" in which the "nurses" were not given any information about the hike beforehand, arguing they were not mentally prepared for its intensity. Others accused the hikers in front of leaving them behind. About six hours into the hike, the group gathered for a second break and tensions finally spiralled into a highly emotional conflict with accusations being thrown back and forth. About five re-enactors opposed continuing the hike, therefore deviating from the WWII simulation of the training camp as designed by Evelyn.

In studies on re-enactment, various scholars have sought to conceptualize the immersive aspect of re-enactment (Adriaansen, *Conceptualizing the Period Rush*). They hereby often refer to "magic moments" (Handler & Saxton, *Dyssimulation*: 245), "history flashes" (Hochbruck, *Between Living History*: 99), or in Victor Turner's own terminology, "flow", assuming this immersivity to consist of a holistic sensation in which past and present appear to coexist (Csikszentmihalyi cited in Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*: 87). Disagreements about what constitutes an appropriate simulation, such as illustrated in the hike, are a result of what

Petra Kalshoven described as "moral breakdown": when these "flows" are "ruptured and call for a performance of ethics" (Zigon cited in Kalshoven, *Moving in Time*: 137). What is interesting about "flow" in the context of re-enacting, is how it may induce a sense of "communitas", or as Turner explained: "it is not teamwork inflow that is quintessential, but *being* together, with being the operative word, not doing" (*Liminal to Liminoid*: 80). Hence, when the five re-enactors challenged the simulation this formed a direct threat to both the immersivity of the experience as well as the bonding process of the group. What followed was a group discussion in which re-enactors would attempt to define and redefine the authenticity of their performance, by negotiating how the hike might be altered. Short-cuts, longer breaks, and a swim session were proposed to cater to the five opposing re-enactors while still being attentive to the more enthusiastic hikers. Finally, as it became clear that the tensions could not be easily mended, it was decided that the group would split, each "nurse" had to decide whether she would continue the hike. Evelyn called her friends on the smartphone she carried for emergencies and agreed they would pick up the five nurses in a WWII Dodge. While they would be brought back to the basecamp, the others would continue their hike. As our tents were now incomplete, we would continue walking to the basecamp through the night, rather than camping outside, eventually reaching the camp at approximately three o'clock in the morning.

"We're sisters now"

Sara Ahmed (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion*) argued that while we often treat emotions as properties we "have", emotions take the shape in contact we have with others and objects. Feelings may be solitary but are never private: even though you may not feel exactly, let us say, the pain of others, you respond to it (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 31). In other words, emotions are not simply located in individuals, but move between bodies (Gibbs, *Contagious Feelings*). In the final part of the hike with the Army Nurse Corps, the withdrawal of the five nurses seemed to have a transformative effect on the rest of the group, as energy shifted from frustration to almost ecstatic. There seemed to be a new kind of appreciation of one another, namely that despite exhaustion, shakiness, blisters and headache's, the remaining "nurses" had decided to finish this together. As we continued walking through the night, they were cheerful, making jokes, and were physically closer to one another, illustrated by several "nurses" holding hands. One of the most significant moments was when some of them started singing, their voices echoing between the Czech mountains. While music is widely known to boost morale, we often

tend to think about lyrics, rather than the bodily engagement of music itself (Stengs, *Square Sentiments*). Singing along, harmonizing, making eye contact with one another, and in the case of the hike, our rhythmic tread all fostered a feeling of being part of something, even to the extent that people like me, who did not know the melody nor lyrics (and felt too uncomfortable to sing) were integrated through active listening and moving synchronically. In line with Emile Durkheim's famous work on crowds, this sense of cohesion did not emerge of an individual's consciousness or body, but through doing, as a collective practice (Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*; Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?*). Moreover, this was symbolically sealed when we paused at a local café. The relief of a break and the effects of beer on our empty stomachs seemed to make everyone giggly. When one of the "nurses" found sticky tattoos at the bar, she decided to break with the rules of authentic appearance and mark all of us to "represent our sisterhood." With this sticky tattoo on my arm, I seemed to have lost my status as an outsider as the others kept jokingly telling me "we're sisters now." Going through the same experience of suffering had remediated my relationship to the others: I had also sighed, complained, had an equally sweaty and red face and stains on my uniform. As Ahmed described, it is through an act of reading and recognition that we separate or connect with others (*Collective Feelings:* 29). I had made an impression. And while I had earned their respect, they had earned mine. At the same time I became an "insider", the nurses who had chosen to back to the basecamp became "outsiders." "Sisterhood," or in Victor Turner's (*Liminal to Liminoid*) terminology "communitas", emerged in particular *after* the group had split. This sentiment took shape in relationality, defining the "us" who endured the hardships of the hike versus "them" who did not endure (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 10; Skoggard & Waterston, *Introduction*: 111).

While hardships were considered crucial in creating authentic experiences and a sense of community, the extent to which the re-enactors were willing to undergo such challenges remained a topic of contestation. In the case of the Army Nurse Corps, this negotiation continued during a special meeting in which all re-enactors were invited to share their perspective on the conflict. Some "nurses" like Beth (29), praised physical challenges as opportunities for personal achievements, arguing she was "proud of [her]self that [she] didn't quit", and emphasizing that these moments make "the best memories". Others, like Vicky (25) argued that for her it "spoiled the weekend" and made her doubt whether she "should have come". Anne (26) explained to me that for her, "it [was] not about being realistic, but [about] having fun and doing something nice." Eventually, a compromise was proposed by Evelyn: next year, everyone would be able to decide between a shorter and longer route for a hike. Despite

such attempts to re-establish group ethos, a new member had decided not to join the Army Nurse Corps after the training. Also, within the *Volksgrenadierdivision*, I observed similar discussions. Within their group, they recently reached consensus with regards to the "most authentic" but physically demanding annual event in the forests of Bastogne: they would alternate each year between sleeping in their tents (including kerosene heather, and re-enactors were allowed to bring folding beds and several wool blankets) with renting a cabin for their stay.

These continual negotiations about the conditions of re-enactment demonstrate the porous boundaries between "play" ("having fun") and "work" (Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*). Since these discussions pervaded all re-enactment practices, they indicate how re-enactors do not necessarily engage in a linear process of preparation, "immersion" into the liminoid realm of WWII, and reintegration, but rather move between these phases. Similarly, in her studies on Indianism, Kalshoven argues how subjects may feel "uncomfortably conscious" during their re-enactment of Indianists: rather than "being-in-the-world", they constantly reflect upon the quality of their performance (*Moving in Time*: 562). While the multisensory nature of their practices may evoke a certain "flow" among some re-enactors, these moments are constantly disrupted by debating the practice itself. As described by Kalshoven: "moral breakdown is looming constantly, and therefore rather a state than an occurrence" (568). The significance of this reflection to re-enactors was exemplified when I asked a member of the *Volksgrenadierdivision* why he considered it important to experience discomfort in re-enactment:

> We can say, I feel ill, or I am tired, I am going home. But people during the war couldn't say that they would be killed or had to deal with the court-martial. You did not have those choices. If you had to sleep in a freezing cold and soaked bed, you had to do it. [..] And that is the importance of these challenges, since we can just say, I am ending this or this is enough, you realize: what did they have to feel when they were freezing to death? (Marc)

Some scholars have argued that re-enactment encompasses a holistic desire for "real experiences" and is a response to the alienation of modern-day society (Braedder and others, *Doing pasts:* 182; Handler & Saxton, *Dyssimulation*: 24). Taking this perspective, Marc's re-enactment of WWII did not only teach him something about the past, but more so about the present: it was not just the affective experience of discomfort, but rather the freedom to choose that was considered valuable. So, being able to quit re-enacting but deliberately deciding

to endure together is what bolsters the strongest sense of solidarity, as illustrated by the "sisterhood" during the final parts of the hike. In the re-enactment of WWII, difficult sensations and emotions are relational and intentional, they involve a direction towards each other. Or, in Evelyn's words: "Challenging things [...] really bring you together. None of us would probably go to the forest in the middle of the night with a shitty flashlight from the war, because I would probably die if I was there alone. But we were together."

Conclusions

The rising popularity of re-enactment practices is, according to some, indicative of the affective turn in history, by breaking with the ethical and political characteristics of post-war scholarship (Agnew, *History's Affective Turn*: 299). As an embodied practice, re-enactment is particularly insightful in the study of emotions, not simply because re-enactors aim to approximate the actions, thoughts, and emotions of historical actors (Brauer & Lücke, *Emotion*: 53), but also because emotions are experienced, learned, and mediated through practices of the body (Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice?*: 195). However, so far little empirical research has been done to explore how re-enactment practices may emotionally impact participants. In this article, I have analysed how re-enactors seek authentic experiences through affective encounters, and the meanings they attribute to these experiences. I hereby particularly focussed on WWII re-enactment due to WWII's prominent position in collective memory and the emotional impact it still has on many people in society, including re-enactors. I therefore drew on a sensory ethnography of my participation in two re-enactment groups portraying the armed forces in WWII. Data obtained during two private re-enactment events in 2020 formed the main body of the analysis: a members' weekend of the 277th *Volksgrenadierdivision* and the annual training camp of the United States Army Nurse Corps.

Analysing re-enactment practices as liminoid phenomena, I started off by describing how re-enactment revolves around creating authentic material representations of the past through war-related objects and sites. The authenticity of re-enactors' performances is further shaped in their experiential relationship with these objects, namely the way this materiality affects the body. "Pocket litter", the impractical design of uniforms, and the sensory characteristics of metal hair curlers granted the re-enactors in these cases with embodied kinds of knowledge that they deemed crucial in their understanding of WWII. Authenticity is thus used to describe what is "felt" and an affective experience rooted in bodily sensations, rather experienced than an essential quality of material culture. Additionally, I have demonstrated how re-enactors

engage in processes of authentication, by labelling what is genuine and true, and what is not. This use of authenticity as discourse particularly grants power to profound physical and emotional sensations associated with the discomforts of war such as pain, cold, muscle aches and exhaustion. The experience of such sensations mediated one's position within the social hierarchy of the re-enactment community, exemplified in the competitive comparison of hardships and material rewards as medals.

Furthermore, by drawing on detailed descriptions of a hike during the Army Nurse training camp, I also demonstrated how re-enactment activities may be considered transformative rites of endurance. Shared experiences of hardships had to be endured collectively in order to evoke a sense of belonging within both re-enactment communities, with physical traces such as mud or sticky tattoos as symbols for collective memories. Yet, as liminoid phenomena are initially characterized as activities in which participants make up their own rules (Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*), re-enactment then provides interesting dynamics between play and obligation. Throughout my fieldwork, re-enactors constantly debated the extent to which they were willing to undergo physical challenges. Conflict is therefore always "looming": "immersive" and "authentic" experiences can only be "successful" if all participants commit to the simulation. Disagreements about what constitutes the simulation may threaten both the immersivity of the experience as well as the bonding process, as illustrated in the conflict that emerged during the hike. Negotiation processes that follow indicate attempts to re-establish the simulation. In the case of the Army Nurse Corps, the group decided to split, dividing the ones who choose to endure the hardships versus those who did not, with one member later leaving the group altogether. These observations suggest that, in line with Kalshoven (*Moving in Time*), re-enactors find themselves more often in a reflexive mode rather than a holistic state of "flow" (Turner, *Liminal to Liminoid*). Yet, it is this reflexivity itself that bolsters the affective bonds between re-enactors, as it reveals the determination and commitment to their practices and each other. This sense of community or sisterhood is thus not a feeling re-enactors have, but something that is produced together through bodily practices.

While this analysis demonstrates the important role of affective experiences play in establishing communities, there is still a widespread tendency to see emotion as something private and inward (Leavitt, *Meaning and feeling in the anthropology of emotions*: 527). Similarly, most studies on re-enactment tend to focus on the individual, by exploring re-enactments epistemological potential and the affective relationship between re-enactors and material culture. However, as demonstrated by the conceptual framework on affect, emotions

take shape in relationality to others. Re-enactment then, which is almost explicitly performed in the context of a group, should be studied as a social practice. Subsequently, embodied and affective experiences are produced collectively, rather than individually. Paying attention to these social dynamics in re-enactors' attempts at authentic experiences offers opportunities to further explore how emotions are produced in the engagement with war histories.

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[1]   Ahmed further uses the example of pain to highlight how emotions involve sensations, as pain is often described as both. She argued that a distinction between these categories risks cutting "emotions off from the lived experienced of being and having a body" (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion:* 40).

[2]   Scholars like Czarniawska and Mazza reject Turner's preference to use liminoid instead of liminal for "modern societies" as they argue that anthropology and the social sciences in general seem to "have agreed that there is no "great divide" between so-called premodern and modern societies" (*Consulting as Liminal Space*: 271). While I agree with their claim, I have still chosen to use the liminoid in this paper to demonstrate the sensitivity between optation and obligation in re-enactment practices.

[3]   American sociologist Herbert Blumer's distinguished between definite and sensitizing concepts. Whereas definitive concepts "refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed benchmarks […] a sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes", he argued (Blumer, *What is Wrong with Social Theory*: 7). Instead, sensitizing concepts would give social scientists a general sense of guidance without functioning as a preconceived notion (Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity*).

[4]   Rather than understanding ritual as a "fixed" set of actions, Catherine Bell argued against universal definitions of ritual and uses the term ritualization to emphasize its dynamic process and fluidity (*Ritual Theory*: 74 and 82). This approach is now broadly accepted within ritual studies as it allows power relations, strategies, dynamics and change to be included in the analysis (Stengs, *Gepopulariseerde Cultuur*: 181).

[5]   I hereby refer to Max Weber's *Idealtypus* as abstract and fictional models that "cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality" (*Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy*: 90). Using ideal types will allow me to analytically categorize stages in re-enactment practices, while at the same time affirming the subjective nature of scientific knowledge.

[6]   Despite a recent study indicating that the number of women in re-enactment is increasing (Tomann, *"You Can't just Put Men in the Field and be Accurate")*, re-enactment remains a

dominantly white, male hobby, that is perhaps unsurprisingly centred around gendered and patriotic ideals (Daugbjerg, *Battle*; Thompson, *Wargames*; and West, *Historical Re-Enacting and Affective Authority*). Juliane Tomann (*"You Can't just Put Men in the Field and be Accurate")* has demonstrated that in the male power structures at play authenticity is often used as a regulating argument that excludes women from entering and partaking in (many) re-enactment activities. Subsequently, as a women researcher my possibilities to do participant-observation are limited. The gendered composition of both the *Volksgrenadierdivision* and the Army Nurse Corps is therefore far from representative in the broader re-enactment population. Future work will address the gendered challenges of doing ethnographic research in this male-dominated environment.

[7] As many public and private events were largely cancelled in the period 2020-2021 due to COVID-19, there were limited opportunities to do ethnographic research for this article.

[8] Accessed on 4-5-2021: https://die-gruppe-vgd.be/re-enactment/re-enactment.html.

[9] All translations are mine unless differently stated.

[10] Female members of the group could not receive these badges as *Die Flakhelferinnen* had never been stationed near the eastern front in WW2. Granting them a badge would therefore not be considered authentic, according to the participants of this study.

Images of Propaganda: Emotional Representations of the Italo-Turkish War

By Dalila Colucci

Abstract: This paper explores the emotional impact of the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1913) through the visual imagery that mediated its perception in Italy and abroad, depicting the conflict as a glorious mission of civilization and easy land appropriation. It does so by analysing a series of exceptional materials from a rich trove of Harvard Collections – featured in a 2014 exhibit, but never object of a critical study – which ambiguously comply with the propagandistic war narrative, rooted in a problematic entanglement of nationalism, racism and orientalism. Materials include: three stunning photo-albums belonged to Carlo Caneva (Supreme Commander of Italian forces in Libya between 1911 and 1912), Count Pompeo di Campello (a good photographer and officer in the higher echelons of the army) and Angelo Cormanni (a soldier in the 3rd telegraphic unit); commemorative postcards and trading cards. Focussing on how each of these media differently embodies the nationalistic clichés, my aim is to reconstruct how the emotional effects of visual propaganda shaped both direct and indirect encounters with the war, fostering a collective falsification mechanism, all the while unconsciously denouncing the colonialist gaze, hence triggering another kind of emotional response.

Introduction: framing the African emotion within the Italo-Turkish war

According to Nicola Labanca, "despite the geographically circumscribed and chronologically contained nature of the national colonial experience, the Overseas represented one of the greatest 'emotions' for the Italian people" (*Oltremare*: 219).[1] The Overseas is, first and foremost, Africa: a complex cultural chronotope where the belated desire for imperialism of post-unification Italy met the need for a "symbolic 'other'" (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 337), mixing violence, racism and orientalism in a powerful imagery of encounter and clash of civilizations, people and places. The rhetorical character of this imagery was mediated – from the late 1880s until the Fascist conquest of Ethiopia (1936) – by both written descriptions of the African colonies (e.g., travel accounts, pamphlets, reportages) and visual images, which took the manifold forms of illustrations, postcards and, following its massification at the end of the nineteenth century (Zannier, *La massificazione della fotografia*: 85-92), private and official photography. All these means displayed an ambiguous entanglement of reality, fiction and propaganda that responded to the dicta of colonial

domination and triggered an emotional response in the home public, in Italy and abroad, with the primary aim of strengthening the national identity.

Narrowing the attention on the sole visual aspects of the Italian colonial *koiné* – as images embody the most wide-ranging and manipulable medium for both authors and users – this paper focuses on the emotional representations of the African experience through the frame of Italy's first venture in the "scramble for Africa", after the tragic defeat at Adwa in 1896: namely, the attack on Libya, which was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and thus resulted in the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1913).[2] Italy's major attempt at colonial expansion, the Libyan campaign was depicted as a glorious mission of civilization and easy conquest of land by new and modern propaganda, which, for the first time, replaced the old naive exoticism with a coordinated political discourse on a large scale (Labanca, *Oltremare*: 236). In order to build consensus in the electoral base of the Liberal government, led by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, and fuel the enthusiasm of the masses, Libya was "invented"[3] by the press and the nationalist circles as fertile soil, teeming with luxuriant oases and rich caravan trades: a "promised land" (Corradini, *L'ora di Tripoli*: 74)[4] to be returned to Italy in the name of an ancient Roman hegemony over the Mediterranean, which could offer an escape valve to the problem of national unemployment and migration[5] (Proglio, *Libia 1911-1912*: 25-69). The press also promoted the idea of an effortless victory – whose virile rhetoric was meant to reinvent and sacralise the nation (Illuzzi, *Reimagining the Nation*: 423) – by presenting the whole operation as a sentimental adventure that would encounter little resistance from the scarce and disorganized Turkish divisions stationed in the region and could count on the sympathy of the Libyan population, tired of the Ottoman oppression and ready to welcome the Italian liberators. If it took only 10 months to unify Italy behind the war (Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Libia*), the truth was that Italians were completely unprepared for what they would find: Libya was a poor and largely desert region, occupied by countless sedentary, nomadic and semi-nomadic groups that lived throughout Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan under the system of the *qabila*, an intricate network of clans and tribes connected beyond any degree of relationship or specific territory (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 39-44). Italians lacked an anthropological understanding of this situation – that brought the natives to get allied with the Ottoman army – and were also unequipped for a guerrilla-style war, as the opponent refused to fight in a pitched battle, preferring to retreat into the interior and leaving the invaders in control of the sole coastal areas. "Liberal Italy thus went to war under the influence of emotions and false impressions rather than knowledge" (37),[6] opening a cognitive gap between the illusion fostered by the images of national persuasion – which continued throughout

the campaign via illustrated magazines, postcards, official and private photos of soldiers, newsreels – and the reality of the war in the Libyan context.

Such a gap, however, has been little explored until now, and almost never in the perspective of the interactions among visuality, propaganda and emotions. The existing studies on the visual imagery of Italian colonialism have rather concentrated on the early period of exploratory missions and the *Colonia Eritrea* (Labanca, *Uno sguardo coloniale*; Palma, *Fotografia di una colonia*), or on the Fascist military action in the Horn of Africa (Mignemi, *Modelli visivi per un impero*), considered the moment of maximum expansion of Italy's colonial politics; at the same time, they have often limited their attention to photography, relinquishing other forms of iconography and rarely connecting it to the written texts accompanying the images (descriptions, accounts, but also captions).[7] When the Libyan experience has been tacked, it has been either limited to the sporadic publication of collections of personal and official photos (e.g., Labanca & Tomassini, *Album Africano*; Rosati, *La guerra italo-turca*; and Folisi, *La "Guerra di Libia" 1911*); or included in broader historical *excursus* (Goglia, *Colonialismo e fotografia*; Palma, *L'Italia coloniale*; and Mignemi, *Un caso*), which have briefly focussed on the documental value of war photography in its military, commercial or private forms.[8] While these studies have stressed the importance of distinguishing different typologies, users and producers of the photographic imagery, recognizing its delicate existence between testimony and propaganda and its nature of socio-cultural product of a particular historical moment,[9] they have not provided a detailed analysis of primary materials alongside their emotional effects on the (mis)conception of the conflict and the colonial experience as a whole.[10] Deciphering the emotional component of the visual images that represent the Italo-Turkish War, instead, is essential not only to better understand how they shaped both direct and indirect encounters with the war, but to avoid the risk of what Triulzi, in *Fotografia e storia dell'Africa*, defines a "sentimental anti-imperialism": an irrational, hence ineffectual rejection of colonialism that lacks a conscious understanding of its emotive roots.

Upon these premises, this paper aims at shedding light on the emotional impact of the Italo-Turkish war by focussing on a series of exceptional visual materials from a rich trove of the Fine Arts Library's Special Collection at Harvard University, which were featured in a 2014 exhibit – *In Africa it is Another Story: Looking Back at Italian Colonialism* (4th April – 2nd May 2014, Pusey Library), but have never been the object of a critical study.[11] Materials include, first and foremost, three stunning photo-albums belonged to General Caneva, commander of the armed forces in Libya, Count Pompeo di Campello, a Roman

nobleman, a good photographer and high officer, and Angelo Cormanni, a soldier working as a telegraphist. These unprecedented photographic "documents" – which stand in between the military and the autobiographic, the official and the private, the propagandistic and the memorial, spanning from the cultural elite to the middle class – are flanked by other visual items conceived for mass persuasion and distribution in Italy and abroad: a nearly complete series of 50 trading cards narrating the war, produced by a Spanish chocolate factory; five black and white numbered trilingual postcards, featuring Italian military personnel and facilities; and numerous cartoony-style postcards that belong to the most popular war imagery, some of which were actually mailed. The following sections of this paper will linger on a selection of these materials, trying to identify their motivation, line of vision and emotional reach, comparing them with other modes of visual dissemination, their related text(s) and different audiences, and when possible combining the analysis of their content with that from other sources of the time. Establishing connections among multiple representations of the same or different nature and the universe of linguistic signs around them, particular attention will be paid not only to what they display but to what they leave out of their frame, complicating any (hi)story they were called upon to tell (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 339). By assuming the "emotive function" as a privileged means of perception and construction of alterity, and highlighting a central tension between the contemporary reader and the post-colonial one, my ultimate aim is to show how the emotional effects of the visual imagery of the Italo-Turkish War fostered a collective falsification mechanism: one that emphasized the experience of the conflict as a heroic adventure, in contrast with the reality of the combats and massacres that were taking place, all the while unconsciously denouncing the colonialist gaze.

Unfaithful narratives, equivocal memories: war through personal albums

On 5th December 1911, the day after the first battle of Ain Zara – an oasis located 8 km south of Tripoli, defended by 8,000 men of the Ottoman army and several 87-mm Krupp guns (Finazzer, *Dalla corte del sultano*: 293) – Count Pompeo di Campello, a cavalry officer during the Libyan Campaign, strove to take a majestic photo of the first Turkish cannons captured by the Italian troops since the beginning of the war (**fig. 1**). Son of Marie Bonaparte (daughter of Napoleon's nephew Charles Lucien Bonaparte) and the Roman nobleman Paolo Campello della Spina, Count Pompeo (1874-1927) was a skilled photographer and disposed of a high-end camera throughout his whole experience of the Italo-Turkish War, which spanned from 9th October 1911 to 28th May 1912. The

photo – one of the 247 of the personal album that chronicles this period, probably combining his snapshots with other professional pictures – stands at full-page and exhibits a compositional strategy of great emotional impact: it displays a close-up of the enemy's military equipment scattered on the sand to emphasise its status of abandonment as well as the power of the Italian army, symbolically represented by the figure of Captain Biancardi, whose contemplating pose stands out against the Italian camp in the backdrop. It is the perfect balance of the photographic ensemble that tricks the post-colonial viewer into thinking that what she is looking at are actually, as stated by the caption, some "Turkish cannons at Ain Zara the day after the battle". In truth, what is caught by the picture appears to be just the carriage – that is, the frame and mount that support the gun – of only one cannon, whose barrel is not even there. Furthermore, while several sources on the battle of Ain Zara confirm that the Italians did seize 7 Turkish cannons, the 87-mm Krupp artillery pieces were old, rigid carriage guns that belonged to a severely understaffed, second-rate Ottoman unit (the 42nd Division). Campello's scenographic photo and elusive caption thus succeed in offering an emotionally charged reading of the military facts, showing a complex interaction between the power of photography to reveal the ambiguities of the war and the attempt to contain the image within the nationalistic clichés. The tension among the indexical nature of photography – that according to Charles Pierce is the physical relationship of the image with its object (*Philosophical Writings*: 98-119) –, its calibrated staging and textual alteration, that is, allows this photo to signify outside the propagandistic structure, ultimately complicating the official history that it was meant to celebrate. But this is not all: it reflects a fracture between subjectivity and referentiality that widens the traditional gap always existing between experience and narration, unleashing a particular form of autobiography, in between visibility and invisibility. Indeed, Campello's story – that tracks the war from the very first day the troops landed, throughout the major battles, up until the day he headed for home – entails a complex emotional representation of his Italianness within the military and African context, which aims at enhancing the authentication effects of photography and writing, but often achieves an unfaithful narrative, both in his and our perspective. A double emotional response, in other words, is at stake: that of the Count, who tries to make us *see* his own vision of the war; and that of the post-colonial viewer, who *sees* also what he is concealing and thus perceives the photo in a completely different way.

Fig. 1. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The caption reads: "The Turkish cannons at Ain Zara the day after the battle. The officer is Captain Biancardi. 5th December 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

The most evident example of this dynamics are the photos that Campello devoted to the infamous Italian reprisal that followed the Sciara Sciat massacre, one of the most difficult episodes of the Libyan Campaign, which took place on 23rd October 1911 in a suburb of the oasis surrounding Tripoli. Here are the facts: at the down of 23rd October, the Libyan population joined the Turkish army and attacked the weak eastern sector of the Italian defence which, between Fort Messri and the sea, ran "through as many as two million palm trees of the oasis, that is in the middle of a real labyrinth of hollow paths and clay walls, strewn with obstacles, such as palms and olive trees, thick bushes, houses, tombs, wells" (Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente?*: 110). At Sciara Sciat, in particular, the 4th and 5th Companies of the 11th Bersaglieri Regiment were forced to retreat and surrender. Prisoners were then concentrated and massacred in the cemetery of Rebab: the Italian soldiers were crucified, buried alive, torn to pieces; many had their eyes stitched closed or their genitals cut off.[12] According to Del Boca (111), 21 officers and 482 soldiers were killed. The reaction of the Italians in the next three days was cruel, accentuated by the unfounded belief that the Arabs of Tripoli had betrayed them, whereas the events of Sciara Sciat were the result of a revolt to all intents and purposes. From 24th to 26th October furious revenge against the Arabs took place, with rapes, burnings, deportations of hundreds of Libyans to Italian islands (e.g., Tremiti, Ustica, Ponza, Favignana, where they mostly died of hardship) and more than 4,000 summary executions of civilians.

The narrative and visual manipulation of these facts from the Italian point of view embodies the most interesting case of sentimental misrepresentation of the Italo-Turkish War. Words and images, however, worked in slightly different ways. On the one hand, press correspondents spoke of the revolt as a treacherous ambush, lingering on gory details of the Italian retaliation, as did Giuseppe Bevione (*Come siamo andati a Tripoli*),[13] and even complaining, as Ezio Maria Gray (*La bella guerra*),[14] that the response had been too mild. Enrico Corradini, in his *Cronache della conquista di Tripoli*, written for the magazine *L'Illustrazione Italiana* and later republished as a book for Treves, insisted that the Arab-Turkish action had ended with the advantage of the Italians:

> Let us add that the combined Arab-Turkish action of the 23rd and 24th ended to our advantage: the plot was foiled, the revolt was suppressed, the attack on the outposts was once again repelled. That part of the oasis which we occupy is almost entirely free of snares. Thousands of prisoners were taken in the oasis. On the 23rd and 24th they were brought to the city by our soldiers in large herds. [...] All that human havoc covered in whitish rags could be seen trembling between the rifles' stocks and bayonets of our soldiers like a pack of dogs under the scourge. [...] Most of their faces had [...] the expression of the humblest misery and the most miserable, begging suffering. This is the expression of Arab pretence, of these Arabs covered with sweetness. (*La conquista di Tripoli*: 68-69)

On the other hand, images documenting the Italian reprisal – let alone those of the massacre of the Bersaglieri – were less frequent: even though many began to circulate in Italy, often through photos sent home by soldiers, they were generally controlled by censorship.[15] One thing was to narrate a counterfeited story; another for the public to see the horror that was being perpetrated. Some pictures of the Italian repression, however, found space – with contrasting intents – in two photographic reportages of the war, which can be compared with the Count's album. One, released in 1913, is the *Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912 per la conquista della Libia*, which consisted mainly of epic photographs previously appeared in *L'Illustrazione Italiana*.[16] The other is the thirty-two-page pamphlet *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*, published in 1912 by the socialist journalist Paolo Valera, who echoed the international press in condemning the Italian bloodbath[17] and collected pictures of the most atrocious acts against civilians. Indeed, since Valera had been denied permission to embark for Libya from Augusta (Sicily) for political reasons, the booklet – which appeared as a supplement to issue 14 of the weekly publication *La Folla* (founded by Valera himself in 1910) – was built on accounts and photos that came from other correspondents, who had been there and had chosen to

denounce the Italian government's lies about what had happened at Sciara Sciat. This – as Valera remarked in an article published a few months earlier, provocatively entitled *Carlo Caneva assassino* – did not diminish the testimonial value of the reported facts and images, but rather accentuated the historical significance of the journalistic document, to be entrusted precisely to those who, like Valera, could collect it and give it resonance ("It is up to us to sift through and unearth the material that has been produced in these nine months of military and journalistic mayhem"). Valera openly names several sources of his chronicle of the events: such as Bennet Burleigh of the *Daily Telegraph*; British Lieutenant Herbert G. Montagu, who worked for the Central News Agency; and Francis McCullagh, whose war correspondence for the *New York World*, the «Westminster Gazette» and the *London Daily News* had become in May 1912 a four-hundred-page account entitled *Italy's War for a Desert, Being Some Experiences of a War-Correspondent with the Italians in Tripoli* (Horgan, *"The Great War Correspondent"*: 548). Strangely, however, he does not provide the considerable amount of photos included in his booklet (30 in 32 pages) with exact metadata (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 91). While this could suggest a manipulative intent of its own, the fact is that for Valera journalistic photography – taken "not out of morbid curiosity, but to document" (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat*: 19) – functions as pure indexicality: as a proof of reality so incontrovertible, that there is no need to specify its provenance. Valera's *booklet* is hence a pivotal, yet usually overlooked testimony which, if put in dialogue with the version of the conflict promoted by the *Album-portfolio*, can help to demonstrate how the public propaganda corresponded to private reminiscences like that of Campello.

Campello's pictures actually have a lot in common with both these visual accounts, although the sentimental framing of the representation and the sought effects are very different. As we have seen already, in the Count's album the emotional relevance of the photos is entrusted to their position and relationship with the text. In this regard, the pictures of the after-Sciara Sciat display a different strategy compared to that used for the image of the Turkish cannon, which was placed alone in the middle of the page alongside its short caption; here, instead, the pages appear progressively more crowded with images, in some cases accompanied by longer and dramatic narrative explanations. The initial page (n. 8 in the album) dedicated to Sciara Sciat features three photos (**fig. 2**). The first two, dated 23rd October, show a dead horse in the oasis of Gurgi – first alone and then surrounded by Italian officers – after "the charge of the Arab cavalry", as stated by the caption. The last one, instead, is the crude image of a corpse, wrapped in a white burnoose and thus identifiable as an "Arab", as Italians generically called all Libyans. The caption

reads: "Henni. 24th October." The normalization of the brutality in this representation of the war exposes what Adolfo Mignemi has referred to as "macabre details of the bodily destruction of the opponent" (*Un caso*: 111); opponent which is moreover subjected to a form of animalization, due to the specularity of the picture with that of the dead horse, without further specification. Not only is this photo made to speak the language of propaganda – according to which, after Sciara Sciat, extreme methods against the insurgents were justified –, but it entails a complex sentimental dynamics: that which assigns to the "small print of the 'horrible subject'" a propitiatory value, capable to function as a "symbolic equivalent of the rites of reparation towards the enemy" and to transform him into a friendly object (111-112). This fetishist attitude – that turns the goriest experience of the war into a pocket product of emotional and self-absolving value – appears all the more evident if we compare the photo with one from Valera's reportage, taken from McCullagh's account (where it is credited to the author himself) and showing the body of an "Arab girl killed" (**fig. 4**). The photo serves, like all the others in the booklet, to intersperse and reinforce the harsh denunciation of the Italian violence. This is the text placed just below the image in the original edition:

> [Arabs] were killed because they were afraid to die, because they disobeyed, because they kept silent, because they swore by their innocence, because they called Allah to their rescue. They were always killed. They have all been executed. It has been a carnival of blood. Full of horrors, of mutilations, of indecency, of aberrations. (Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 18)

The accusatory force of Valera's prose explodes here through denotative parataxis that mirrors the objectivity of the photo and its essential caption (Schiavulli, *Il dibattito dei letterati italiani sull'impresa di Libia*: 142-143). The latter is not dissimilar, from a stylistic point of view, to the one used by Campello; and, although the sentimental impact pursued by the two is antithetical – implying disdain for Valera, revenge and hygienic emotional restitution for Campello – the reaction provoked in the post-colonial reader is ultimately the same: horror and condemnation for the Italian conduct.   Yet again, photography reveals its ambiguous documental and emotional power at once.

This ambiguity becomes all the more striking if we compare Campello's image of the Arab corpse with another visual token of the war, which appears much later on in his album, precisely on page 22, dated 28th November: a very small – and very rare – photo of a "Bersagliere found with his eyes stitched closed in the cemetery of Rebab" **(fig. 3)** that is almost hidden in a series of six

other photos, four of which have nothing to do with the massacre and instead depict a recaptured fort in Sidi Messri and some moments of life in the trenches. If the separation of this picture from the others related to the Sciara Sciat episode can be ascribed to the fact that many missing Italian soldiers were found dead a month later, with obvious signs of torture (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 84), Campello's arrangement of the photo is a clear sign of emotional manipulation. Indeed, while the image remains shocking and reveals the reality that the Italian authorities were trying to cover up, discouraging photos of brutalized corpses of Italian soldiers (Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile*: 338), it nevertheless falls back into the reassuring frames of propaganda because of its caption and place on the page. On the one hand, the caption – previously denied to the enemy's animalised body – restores humanity, dignity and at least partial identity to the corpse, which appears half-wrapped in a cloth that suggests an imminent burial; on the other, the small size of the image contributes to minimising its effect, ultimately defused by the larger photo at the bottom of the page, which portrays a torture house in the Rebab cemetery now set on fire by the Italians, hence providing justice for the dead.

The idea that Italian troops were bringing order into the colony after Sciara Sciat is a core theme throughout the rest of the album. Two pages after the one containing the image of the Arab corpse, for instance, we find a four-photo series displayed clockwise that represents a large group of civilians (called "rebels" in the captions) arrested and led to the Italian headquarters, their bodies piled up after the execution and then carried away on a cart (**fig. 5**). Here, the iconographic message turns once again into its opposite and ends up coinciding anew with the one achieved by Valera. In particular, the photo of the piled-up bodies appears almost identical to one published in *Le giornate di Sciarasciat* (**fig. 6**) – originally by Frank Magee of the *Daily Mirror* (Forgacs, *Messaggi di sangue*: 94) – with a detailed caption that documents the number of the dead (about fifty, including young boys) and describes the scene as "an open tomb" (14). Campello's photo, however, is even more ambiguous if compared to another couple of pictures published on *L'Illustrazione Italiana* (n. 45, 5th November 1911), which are advertised as "unique photos" representing the shootings of Arab spies and Turkish rebels (**fig. 11**). In both these images, we can see the firing squad posing for the photographer, with the condemned civilians standing in front of them, or the shot bodies lying at their feet. While this choice is an enthusiastic exhibition of a clear-cut propagandistic nature, Campello's photos are less explicit and sentimentally more shaded, generically referring to "an execution" and excluding from the frame the Italian perpetrators of the violence. If this exasperates the cruel indexicality of death from the post-colonial point of view, in the Count's perspective it serves the

purpose of fostering the idea of the Arabs' guilt without referring to the barbarity of the Italians. Something similar happens when, later in the course of the war and hence in the album, he includes an appalling photo of fourteen Arabs hanging from the gallows infamously set up in Piazza del Pane (the Bread Market) in Tripoli on 5th December 1911 (**fig. 8**). The photo is denied the most basic descriptive note: the caption states only the month and the year of the execution, without mentioning anything else. This harsh essentiality is especially poignant if compared to the magniloquence that Campello reserves to the sacred burials of the Italian soldiers who died in the massacre, which he visited just before documenting the hanging. He filled the four pages that precede that of Piazza del Pane with photos of tombs, transcribing the epitaphs written upon each grave (**fig. 7**): words such as "glory", "hero", "revenge" appear in the captions, alongside the names of the soldiers, their regiment and the date on which they fell (indeed, October 23rd).

The absence of further specifications below the photo of the hanging, however, has probably something to do also with the fact that this image had a particularly controversial relevance in terms of propaganda. In fact, the execution of 5th December had been widely documented, both by the Italian General Staff and the foreign press, but with different emotional objectives. For instance, a very similar picture to the one included in Campello's album – evidently taken from the same perspective – was authored by Gaston Chérau and published in the French newspaper *Le Matin* on 26th December 1911 as part of a four-photo series entitled *Ce qu'on voit en Tripolitania*, with an effect of dramatic denunciation of the Italians' violence (**fig. 9**). At the same time, Campello's image could also be compared with a 56-second tracking shot along the gallows filmed by Luca Comerio or one of his operators on 6th December 1911,[18] with the official purpose of testifying the order achieved by Italians over the rebels. The mute footage – which almost equates to a series of photos, for the stillness and unsettling insistence of the images – embodies the disturbing morbidity often deprecated by Valera and provides a valid example of what Luca Mazzei has defined as a dislocated (in time and space) perception of the war's emotions (*L'occhio insensibile*: 342-344). The disturbing reaction of horror and disbelief triggered in the post-colonial viewer by both uses of the same violent event is enhanced here by the awareness that these images are virtually identical and can be differentiated only on the basis of their intention and presentation. For a contemporary reader, that is, the emotional perception of the image strongly depended on its (para)textual surroundings. That is why Campello leaves the image to speak for itself. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Valera assigns instead all the emotional brutality of the fact to the commentary, specifying the name and age of almost all the condemned, adding

that they were left hanging for three days and opting – this one time in the whole booklet – for a drawing taken from a photo (**fig. 10**): almost as if the violence was too extreme to be tolerated *dal vivo* (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat*: 28-29).

Fig. 2. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The bottom-left caption reads: "After the charge of the Arab cavalry. Oasis of Gurgi. 23rd October 1911." The other caption, under the photo of the Arab corpse, says: "Henni. 24th October." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 3. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The page is dated 28th November 1911. The captions of the four smaller photos read (clockwise from top-

left): "Mesri Fort recaptured on 26th November"; "Marabout of Sidi Mesri"; "Bersagliere found with his eyes stitched closed in the cemetery of Rebab"; "Fences where the soldiers have hanged empty cans of meat." The caption below the vertical photo reads: "Trenches of Henni. Lieutenant Gastinelli"; the one below the horizontal one: "House in the Cemetery of Rebab where 5 bodies of tortured Bersaglieri were found. Photograph taken while the house was being burnt down." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Una fanciulla araba uccisa.

Fig. 4. **Paolo Valera,** *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate***: 18**. The caption reads: "An Arab girl killed." The photo is taken from Francis McCullagh, *Italy's War for a Desert* (1912), where it is credited to the author and faces page 268, with the caption "Dying Arab Girl."

Fig. 5. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions read (clockwise from top-left): "Rebels led to the Castle by the cavalry. 24th October 1911"; "Rebels arrested in the oasis by a unit of the 82nd Infantry. October 25th 1911"; "After an

execution. 25th October 1911"; "Transportation of the executed bodies. 25th October 1911."
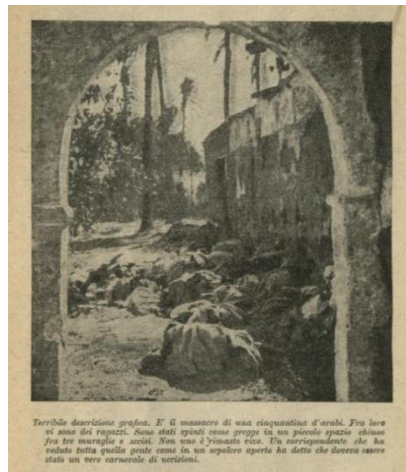Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 6. **Paolo Valera,** *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate***: 14.** The caption reads: "Terrible graphic description. It is the massacre of about fifty Arabs. Among them, there are boys. They were pushed like a herd into a small space enclosed in three walls and killed. None of them remained alive. A correspondent who saw all those people as if in an open tomb said that it must have been a real carnival of killing." The photo, by Frank Magee, was also included (slightly cropped on the left side) in Francis McCullagh, *Italy's War for a Desert* (1912), where it faces page 286, with the caption "Pile of Fifty Men and Boys."

Fig. 7. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions are all epitaphs written by soldiers on the tombs of those killed at Sciar Sciat. Clockwise, from top-left: "Amerigo De Murtas, medical lieutenant, here had martyrdom and glory on 23rd October 1911"; "You, hero, lie in this land on which you fought for the Homeland: we do too for the love of it and the revenge of our soldiers… (the rest has already faded)"; "Sleep quietly, rest in peace! He who dies for the Homeland has lived a long time"; "Here five brave men of the 11th Bersaglieri, who heroically fell on 23rd October 1911, rest in peace. The comrades of the 93rd Infantry"; "A corpse has been found. It was consumed by dogs.

Borlacchini and Provini, two soldiers of the 93rd Infantry, 4th Company, buried him. He is a Bersagliere"; "Here, radiant with Glory, lie 19 brave men of the 11th Bersaglieri fallen on 23rd October 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 8. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. The captions read (clockwise from top-left): "December 1911"; "Pond of Mellaha"; "Mosque of Tagiura"; "Occupation of Tagiura. 13th December 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.
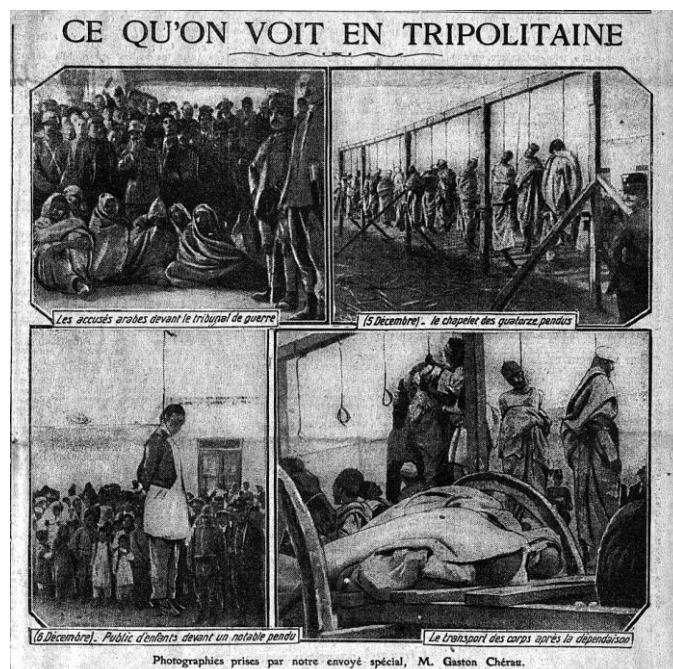

Fig. 9. *Ce qu'on voit en Tripolitania*, **photos by Gaston Chérau**. *Le Matin*, 26th December 1911: 1. The captions of the images read (clockwise from top-left): "The accused Arabs before the war tribunal"; "(5th December). The array of the fourteen men hanged"; "The transportation of the bodies, after the hanging"; "(6th December). Children in front of a hanged dignitary." Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.
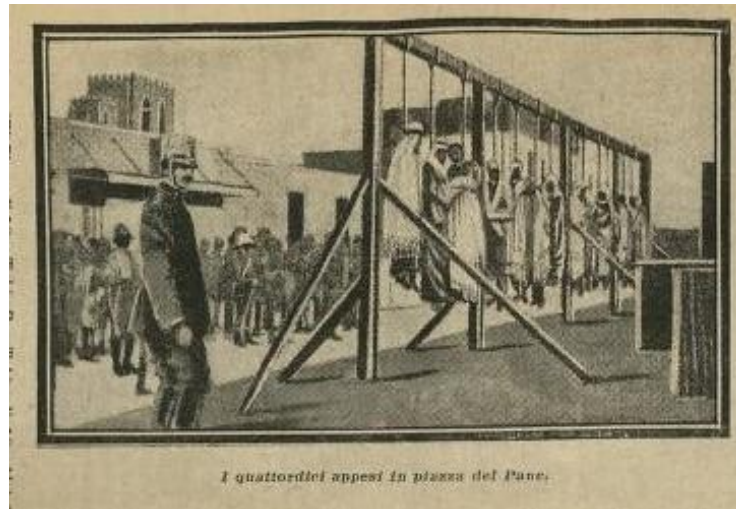
Fig. 10. Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate***: 29.** The caption reads: "The fourteen men hanged in Piazza del Pane."

Fig. 11. *Shootings of the Rebels of 23rd October in Tripoli*. *L'Illustrazione Italiana*, XXXVIII, n. 45, 5th November 1911: 487. The captions read: (1) "Shooting of two Arab spies on the beach of Gargaresch"; (2) "Shooting of 30 Turks disguised as Arabs, after the revolt of the 23rd."
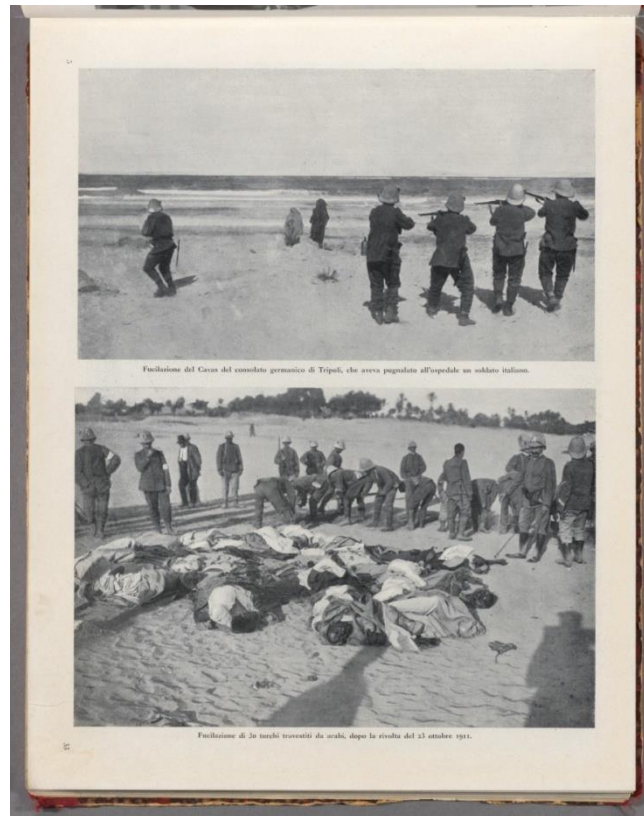
Fig. 12. *Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912 per la conquista della Libia*: **33.** The captions read: (1) "Shooting of the Kavass of the German consulate in Tripoli, who had stabbed an Italian soldier at the hospital"; (2) "Shooting of 30 Turks disguised as Arabs, after the revolt of 23rd October 1911."

Campello's album thus confirms its careful propaganda staging, which is much more subtle if compared to that of *L'Illustrazione Italiana*. Indeed, when the Treves brothers published the *Album-portfolio della Guerra italo-turca 1911-1912*, the first of the two photos of shootings appeared on n. 45 of the magazine was involved in a blatant manipulation and passed off as visual proof of another event: namely, the execution of Hussein bin Ahmed, the young *kavass* (the indigenous guard, spelt *cavas* in the Italian reports) of the German consul in Tripoli, falsely accused of having stabbed an Italian soldier (**fig. 12**). Beyond the unequivocal comparison with the original photo (**fig. 11**), it would be enough to note that in the falsified image the condemned are two, while Hussein was executed alone after what was more a farce than a trial. Valera registered the facts – which had a great echo in the Italian press (Bono, *Tripoli bel suol d'amore*: 47) – in narrative and photographic details (**fig. 14a and 14b**), offering a scene of the court-martial and one of the firing squad ready to shoot (which exposes the deception passed as truth in the *Album-portfolio*). Count Campello provides slightly different photos of the same moments, by inserting two small images of

the trial and the *kavass* surrounded by soldiers, on his way to the execution, in the lower right corner of a page already filled with three other pictures of Italian troops between Henni and Messri, on October 24th (**fig. 13**). This page is interposed, in the album, between that containing the photo of the Arab's corpse (**fig. 2**) and that of the bodies piled up after the shooting of civilians (**fig. 5**) and seems thus to fulfil a function of attenuation and normalization of the violence, which this time is expressed by the caption alone. Of the process, in fact, Campello immortalized only the army officials seated in the assembly, without Hussein being in the frame. Furthermore, the choice to exclude the moment of the actual execution distances the shock of death in favour of a scene of military order, capable of triggering feelings of admiration for the efficient Italian colonial machine.

Fig. 13. Pompeo di Campello, *Campagna di Libia (9 ottobre 1911 – 28 maggio 1912)*. Captions read (clockwise from top-left): "Between Henni and Messri. 11th Bersaglieri Regiment. 24th October 1911"; "84th Infantry – Messri. 24th October 1911"; "Trial and shooting, under the Castle, of the Kavass of the Consulate of Germany Ben Hamed Hussein (*sic*.). 24th October 1911"; "My attendant Luigi Capotondi – 24th October 1911." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.
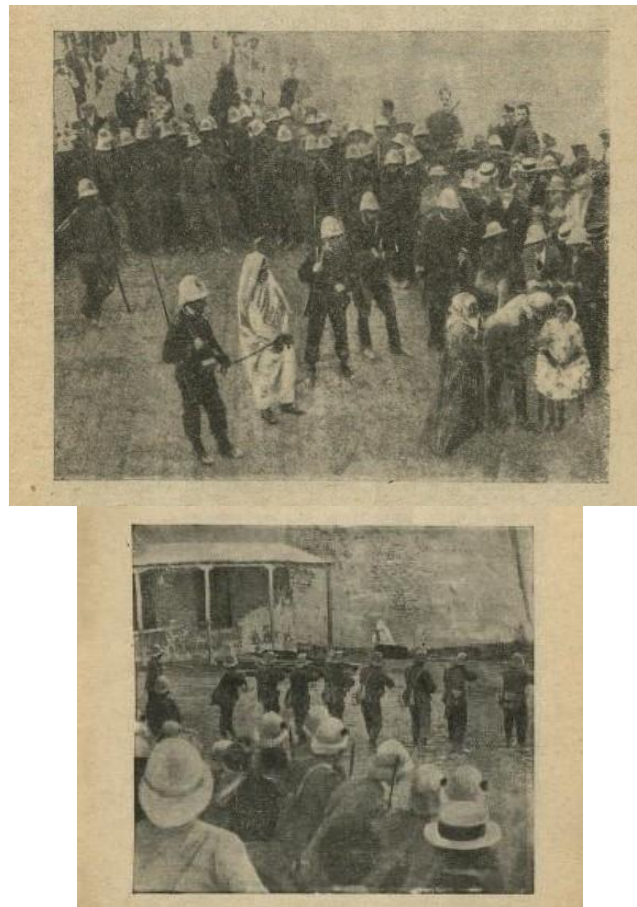
Fig. 14a and 14b. Paolo Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate***: 24 and 26.** Both images have a caption: **(a)** "The scene at the court-martial. The accused is the kavass of the German consul. He continued to say that he was innocent. The military judges sentenced him to death on the testimony of a little girl. It should be noted that all Arabs in the burnoose look alike. You can't tell the young from the old, nor the rich from the poor. The Arab has his wrists chained and the chain is in the hands of a soldier"; **(b)** "Revenge against the Arab attaché at the German consulate. Immediately after the verdict he was taken to the beach, placed on a pile of hay with his back to the guns, wrapped in his burnoose and shot by eight soldiers. The first round of bullets left him unharmed. The second had him rolling on the hay with shudders. The third failed to kill him. It took two revolver shots in the head to finish him off."

The peculiarity of Campello's photographic choice is even more significant if we consider that there were certainly many available photographic documents of Hussein's trial and execution. This is confirmed by Valera, who gives us an important testimony on the use of photography in the military departments during the Libyan Campaign:

> The trial took place spectacularly on a public street on 24th October 1911. Hussein went there in his white burnoose, with his hands tied and surrounded by an overflowing number of soldiers and Carabinieri [military police]. The *Kodak* cameras caught him in all

poses. Hussein was luckier than others who were shot without procedural pomp. His status as kavass forced the authorities to perform a *mise en scène*. […] In half an hour everything was finished. He was led a hundred paces from the tribunal that had condemned him to the torture, under the high walls of an ancient, run-down Spanish castle, in a corner that served the soldiers as a water-closet. […] The firing squad consisted of eight men commanded by Lieutenant Vercelli. At his order they loaded their rifles. Behind them was a line of correspondents and officers, some with cameras. All the officers owned a camera. Almost all the spectators had cigarettes in their mouths. The cinematograph occupied the best position. Carlo Caneva was obsessed with cinema. He had given *carte blanche* to the photographers. The official one was Luca Comerio. (Valera, *Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 23-25)

Hussein's trial is treated as a spectacle, as a display of the legitimacy of the Italian actions after Sciara Sciat, to be celebrated and spread through sanctioned channels (namely, the Comerio Films Company and the officers who owned amateur Kodak cameras). Leaving out its most inhumane moment, Campello manages to attenuate this insensible use of photography as a means of both social entertainment and cold anthropological record documented by Valera, reinforcing the calibrated emotional representation of the war that we have recognized in his album.

A strong anthropological interest and entertaining tone transpire from yet another album, belonged[19] to General Caneva, Supreme Commander of the Italian forces in Libya from October 1911 to August 1912, who according to Valera was obsessed with photography and cinema. Carlo Caneva had believed in a quick and easy war, rooted in the certainty that the Arabs and Berbers would welcome the Italian occupation and that the Turkish garrison, unsupported by the tribesmen, could be brought to surrender with little or no difficulties. This would result in the successful establishment of an Italian protectorate over Libya. His mindset, soon deceived by the reality of the conflict – that drove him to excessive caution and to reinforce the army's positions in the occupied coastal cities – is reflected in the selection of 26 large-format photos that fill his precious brown leather album, adorned by lateral curlicues and featuring a paper label in the top-centre, which reads: "Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi – Libia / gen. Carlo Caneva". The pictures convey a prominent ethnographic fascination, interspersed with scenes of improvements carried out by Italians, as well as with images of local architecture, spanning from Roman ruins in an archaeological site 120 km east of Benghazi to the city's synagogue and main mosque, or the Pasha's villa in the district of Berka. This is all the more shocking if we consider that Valera accused Caneva of instigating the soldiers' fury against the Arabs after Sciara Sciat:

> The greatest criminal of the Sciarasciat days is Carlo Caneva […]. General Caneva never showed up during those dreadful days. He remained cloistered in his residence protected with sandbags and bomb-proof coverings, with soldiers on the rooftops around his building. It is clear the soldiers were in a state of great agitation after the attacks of the 23rd. Unleashed with orders to kill mercilessly anyone wearing the burnoose, they started a massacre that continued on the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th. It was Caneva who gave them that fury and had them running in the suburbs like madmen looking for Arabs to slit their throats. (*Le giornate di Sciarasciat fotografate*: 4-14)

Caneva's detachment from the massacres – ordered but then hygienically kept at a distance, like the whole war – seems to mirror the representative choices of his album, which reveals a tendency to self-absorption that passes through an emotional relationship with the colonized city and, although apparently harmless, reinforces the principles of the most abused orientalism. The sentimental scope of these photos, that is, is not rooted in an unfaithful albeit ambiguous military narrative, as it was for Campello, but rather in the inability of seeing the colonial reality without the lens of cultural mythologies that are connected to the imagination of the African space. Without being too intellectually complex, Caneva's album shows a Libya belonging to a bunch of colonial stereotypes: in its religious, housing, female customs; in its exotic landscapes, astonished at the arrival of Italian technology; in its yielding to the myth of an ancient connection with Italy built on the thread of Roman domination. The first three pictures begin to set this tone by alluding to the civilization brought by the Italian conquerors to the colony. The opening photo features a grand representation of the Italian operation base at the new Gran Palazzo in Piazza del Re (**fig. 15**), on which the sign "Albergo Italia" (Hotel Italy) stands out signalling the idea of quasi-touristic colonization shared by the military, as well as by the larger home public. The album continues with two rare pictures of the disembarking of the first locomotive in Libya (**fig. 16**): a symbol of progress and power that would ensure the newest technological means of the homeland in the colony as well. The rest of the album reflects an ambivalent attitude, combining a superficial interest for local diversity and a search for familiarity, as well as a desire for a modern self-representation of Italianness and an appropriation of Libya as "a historical and imaginary site" (Fuller, *Preservation and Self-Absorption*: 138). In these mostly urban photos, we recognize the same attitude noted by Mia Fuller in describing the behaviour of Italians with respect to the city of Tripoli: a naive attempt to minimise the difference of the indigenous environment, preserving it "without necessarily exploring its Otherness" (139), all the while presenting Italians as generous

colonisers, champions of innovation and modernisation. Indeed, except for a few photos dedicated to the construction of homes for Italian Customs officials (**fig. 22**) and to a military radio station in Merg, the remaining images feature a great number of street scenes, which show local life – e.g., the funeral of a notable, an Arab district (**fig. 17**) – in a mixture of intimacy and enchantment. Exemplary, in this respect, are the picturesque images (**fig. 18-19**) of the laundresses at sunset and the milling of barley; or those of the main mosque and the synagogue during prayer (**fig. 20-21**). The latter, in particular, are not to be considered proof of attention for native architecture (nor of religious tolerance), but rather as part of a map of the non-threatening population of the Libyan city, made up mostly of Muslims and Jews. On the other hand, three photos – one in the middle and two at the end of the album – represent a village near Benghazi, whose inhabitants are indicated as "Sudanese" (**fig. 23-24**), hence separating them, in terms of ethnicity and kinship, from the urban area, which Italians believed to be more controllable and trustworthy. This negative prejudice against the extra-urban populations went alongside the importance assigned to the Roman ruins equally located outside the main urban areas – such as the archaeological sites of Ptolemais (*Tolmetta* in Italian, **fig. 25**) – which reinforced the colonisers' reason for owing Libya.
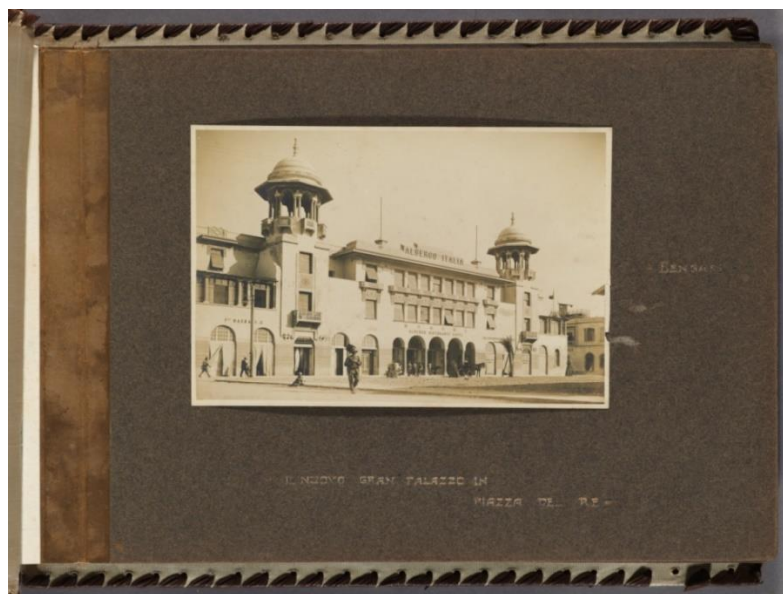

Fig. 15. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "The New Gran Palazzo in Piazza del Re." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 16. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* **/** *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "Disembarking of the first locomotive." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.
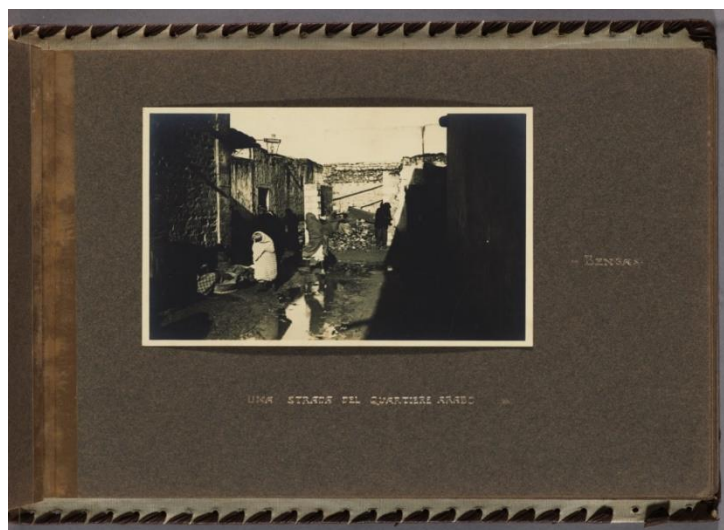

Fig. 17. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912* **/** *Ricordi di Bengasi*. The caption reads: "A street in the Arab district." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 18-19. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi.* The captions read: "Laundresses"; "Milling of barley." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.
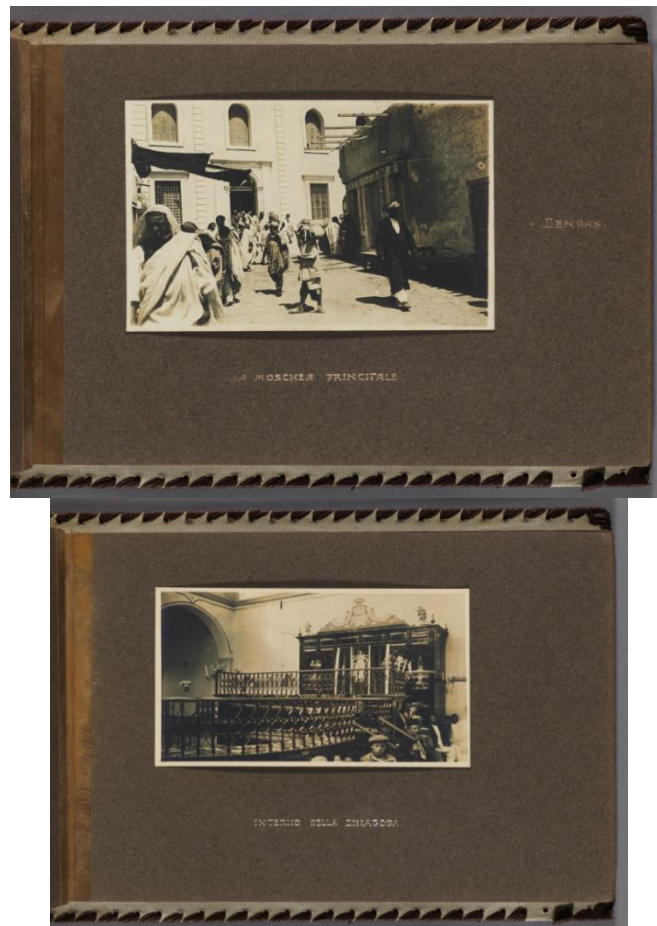

Fig. 20-21. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi.* The captions read: "The main mosque"; "Inside of the synagogue." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 22. Carlo Caneva *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi.* The caption reads: "Major renovation works." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 23-24. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi*. The captions read: "Sudanese village"; "Sudanese traditions." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 25. Carlo Caneva, *Guerra Italo-Turca 1911-1912 / Ricordi di Bengasi.* The caption reads: "Ruins of Roman antiquities – Tolmetta." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Although devoid of military references, General Caneva's album thus offers a representation of the Libyan Campaign that is equally adherent to the dicta of nationalistic propaganda. The photos, this time, speak to the post-colonial viewer not through their contrast with captions or other sources of the time, but rather through the clash between the cultural information conveyed by the images and their inappropriate, out of place nature: they seem more similar to travel shots than to war documents, being especially problematic against Caneva's responsibility in the bloody aftermath of Sciara Sciat. This contrast – which recalls, albeit in negative forms, the one between *studium* and *punctum* advanced by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* – embodies, in a way, the experience of the Italo-Turkish War in its own right, for Caneva as much as for Italians in general: their "self-absorbed" attitude toward the soon-to-be-colony, perceived as "'already' theirs" at least in its urban spaces (Fuller, *Preservation and Self-Absorption*: 138-139), ended up colliding dramatically against the complex reality of Libya. On 30th August 1912, after an overall unsatisfactory campaign with no strategy, Caneva returned home, recalled by the central government. He was replaced by two generals, Ottavio Ragni in Tripolitania and Ottavio Briccola in Cyrenaica.

Briccola – who had already led the occupation of Benghazi – appears in the third and last personal album featured in the Harvard Fine Arts' trove: that which belonged to Angelo Cormanni, who served with the 3rd "Genio Telegrafisti" under this General. Cormanni was thus a rank-and-file soldier, who put together a military album of 20 well-described albeit of lesser quality photos, dedicated – and possibly donated upon return to Italy – "to the Kind Lady / who lavished me with her care / in everlasting memory" (*Alla Gentil Dama / che mi prodigò di sue cure / in perenne ricordo offro*): probably a nurse who had cared for him during his travel back home, since the dedicatory is signed "Palermo 26-6-1912." The album documents the operations around Benghazi in 1912 and ultimately works as a sort of photo-diary, of whom the soldier is subject and object at the same time: Cormanni appears in fact in the very first photo (**fig. 26**) on the back of a camel held by a native man, against a background filled with palms, as in a postcard dripping with exoticism. The "advent of oneself as other, a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity" (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*: 12) starts like this: with the photo used as a physical testimony of presence and souvenir for remembrance by one anonymous individual, allowed by the democratization of photography. Cormanni's representation of the Italo-Turkish War is, in this perspective, the most sentimental one, as he aims at immortalizing his own smaller experience of the Otherness within the great national adventure. Hence, he often captures the telegraphists at work in the standard pose of the servicemen (**fig. 28**), simple

soldiers in various occupations (e.g., drawing water from the Fojat oasis), and then scenes of local life that suggest a sort of touristic curiosity of the photographer, already testified by the opening picture: camel transports, local farming, an Arab fisherman, a caravan resting at the village of Sidi-Hussein, the harem of the Pascha at Sidi-Daud. Cormanni's photos reflect the penetration of propaganda at the microscopic memorial level, influencing his emotional perception of the war, represented as a celebration, as a festive moment of encounter and glory. Accordingly, no documentation of the crude violence of the conflict occurs in the album, although, as anticipated, General Briccola is often mentioned and once also represented while visiting the military barracks in Piazza del Sale (**fig. 29**). As Nicola Labanca has explained, Briccola's military strategies were particularly harsh:

> From Benghazi, Briccola and his troops carried out collective punishments of the villages that had launched assaults against the Italian army, took hostages the notables of the towns that did not cooperate or deported them to a forced residence in Italy, and had the military ships carry out coastal bombardments with their powerful naval guns. Briccola was also the author of some rather daring proposals, such as hiring an Arab adventurer to lead local people to wage the irregular war that the Italian troops could not and, in his opinion, should not wage. His faith in the blockade that was supposed to drive the Libyan populations to the brink of exhaustion certainly did not translate into a humanitarian strategy: Briccola was convinced that hunger would push the native chiefs, at that time allied with the Ottomans, to surrender under the pressure of the population. (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia*: 82)

If even historiography has been mostly silent on these terrible practices, we can understand why they have been removed from Cormanni's photographic *memoire*. Memory, after all, "is at best an unfaithful tool and can also constitute a helpful alibi if there are parts of a story which an author (or an entire country) wishes to marginalize, or simply erase" (Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*: 339). The selective use of memory in Cormanni's photographic diary goes alongside the fact that there is almost no *punctum* in his pictures: images and their captions are so standardized and plainly descriptive that it is difficult to scrutinize them in post-colonial terms. There is, however, in the album, one exemplary propagandistic misinterpretation of the war that concerns the battle of 12th March, also known as the Battle of the Two Palms, which took place in Suani Abd el-Rani. Cormanni includes a photo of the oasis of the Two Palms (**fig. 27**), referring to the battle as a "celebrated fight", in line with the official glorification of the event (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia*: 92). In truth, although Italians achieved a momentary success, discouraging the Turkish army from moving further action against Benghazi, the victory at the Two

Palms was not at all decisive, as the bulk of the Ottoman forces did not intervene in the battle and continued to threaten the region. Furthermore, this battle saw one of the first joint efforts of the indigenous resistance of the Sanusiyah – an Islamic mystical brotherhood based in Cyrenaica – and the regular Ottoman army, which would stop the Italian advance into the interior. This last album thus confirms the dissemination of nationalistic clichés at all social and cultural levels and allows us to move on to the other kind of visual materials in the Harvard trove, intended for more popular circulation: postcards and trading cards.

Fig. 26. Angelo Cormanni, album. The caption reads: "Benghazi – The garden of the Berka, in the background you can see the barracks." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 27. Angelo Cormanni, album. The top-right caption reads: "Benghazi – The Oasis of the Two Palms, where the celebrated battle of the 12th March took place." The bottom-left one,

instead: "Sidi-Daud – The Pasha's house after the bombardment." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 28. Angelo Cormanni, album. The captions read: "Benghazi. - A section of telegraphists at work. - During the tension of the telegraph wires" (top-right); "Again the telegraphists assigned to scientific and geographical operations" (bottom-left). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 29. Angelo Cormanni, album. The captions read: "Benghazi – Gen. Briccola visits the barracks of Piazza del Sale" (top-right); "The village of Sidi-Daud. The minaret – The Pasha's Harem" (bottom-left). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Stirring emotions: the Italian national imagery through (post)cards

In 1912, the Liebig Company – established in London in 1865 and soon grown into a multinational corporation, with branches and factories all over the world – released a trading card series dedicated to the Italo-Turkish War (*Catalogo Sanguinetti*). The cards, which were meant to advertise its famous meat extract, belonged to the third and last genre that, according to Gabrielli, informed the massive circulation of Liebig small paperboard pictures featuring colonial images since the beginning of the twentieth century: namely, the commemoration of the "imperialist appropriation" of Africa by European countries (*Trading Cards*: 196). The other two themes – epitomized, in Italy, by the racialist series *Moretti dalla testa grossa* (Big-headed Blacks) and *Moretti scherzosi* (Fun-loving Blacks), published at the end of the 1880s – were "the grotesque […] that derides the idea of primitive black people" and the "ethnographic", heavily tainted with orientalism (196). The Italo-Turkish War series poignantly embraced the colonialist clichés, putting Italian soldiers and settlers at the centre of the illustrations and excluding almost completely any reference to the Ottoman army, as well as to local customs and people:

> All the cards refer to the conquest, and the images focus exclusively on Italian soldiers, riflemen and sailors, who are shown landing, advancing and hoisting flags. The only signs of any Turkish soldiers at the scene of a pitched battle are a few caps and rifles left behind as they made their hasty escape, while a group of diplomats are represented in the act of receiving the Italian ultimatum. In another image, Arabs are pictured lying face down in an act of submission. (197-198)

For their incredible diffusion, the Liebig cards are a most powerful testimony of the collective Italian imagery of this period, all the more because they were issued also in other languages and countries, thus helping the circulation of the nationalist emotional stereotypes, upon which they were constructed. These stereotypes seem to have passed, albeit in a much more ambivalent way, in yet another set of trading cards devoted to the Libyan Campaign, which were produced in Spain: those distributed by the chocolate factory Juncosa between 1911 and 1913. A near-complete series of the Juncosa cards (50 in total) entitled *Guerra Italo-Turca* – and indicated by the letter A, which suggests that other series might have been printed as well – ended up in the Special Collections of Harvard's Fine Arts Library, and was featured in the related exhibit. These incredibly fascinating cards display the heading "Guerra Italo-Turca" in capital

blue letters in the centre of the upper margin, except for the very first card, which functions as a cover of the entire series, where the title stands in large red letters in the middle of the image (**fig. 30a**). Eventually, the back of each card features the name of the brand, with the famous Juncosa label (**fig. 30b**). According to Trevor Denning, Juncosa had the habit of choosing well-known historical episodes to draw the public's attention to its products, at least since the late nineteenth century:

> The Barcelona-based chocolate firm of Evaristo Juncosa entered enthusiastically into the use of promotional *cromos* of various kinds and issued decorative albums crammed with textual information in which collectors could arrange them. Theirs is the name most commonly associated with a set of playing-cards of historical characters symbolising the union of Castille, Aragon, León and Navarre. These too were printed by Litografía Madriguera and extended into many editions. […] Some versions made no commercial reference at all on the face of the cards except to the printer. More commonly they carried publicity for Juncosa, with the firm's trademark of a *chocolatera* appearing on the 4s of cups, coins and clubs and the words "Chocolate Juncosa" towards the edge of every card. In some editions these words were in red, in others blue. Furthermore, some versions were printed on coated paper and others on more substantial cards, so noticeable variations in thickness may be found. (*The Playing-Cards of Spain*: 105-107)

While it seems to comply with the conventional traits of other contemporary trading cards – the immediacy of drawing, bright colours, vivid representation of historical chronicles intended as "a sophisticated game for the young bourgeoisie" (Gabrielli, *Trading Cards*: 195) – the Juncosa series on the Italo-Turkish War offers an interpretation of the conflict that is, from the point of view of the cultural experience of the event and its emotional significance, quite different from the one ingrained in the majority of other examples. The Juncosa cards, too, focus on detailed military episodes, described through formulaic structures, but they also show the uncertain outcome of the war. The quality of the design is slightly standardized (as proved by the very first card, **fig. 30a**, where an Italian Bersagliere and a Turkish soldier respond to their typical characterisations of the time), but it still manages to acknowledge both the contenders' diversity and the distinctive Libyan landscape of deserts, oases and villages. It is also interesting to note that, although the cards express some commonplaces about the Arabs (e.g., their proverbial cunning and bloodlust – **fig. 33**), they also convey an overall negative impression of Italians, which are often shown engaged in massacres (**fig. 31**) and abductions of women (**fig. 36**), or shooting and mercilessly killing their prisoners (**fig. 34**). On the other hand, Turks and Arabs often emerge as heroic figures, because they prefer to die rather than surrender. There is also a touching scene of family love, in the

episode of a father saved by his daughter (**fig. 37**). Nor are spared scenes in which Italians appear defeated (**fig. 35**) – a thing which, as already mentioned, is almost never visually depicted in Italian sources. Space is also granted to often silenced episodes of political opposition to the war in Italy: that is the case of a terrorist attack, probably organized by the anti-colonial fringe of the socialist movement, directed against a train carrying troops from Rome to Milan (**fig. 32**).

The Juncosa cards thus show relative independence of judgment with respect to the (emotional) representation of the Italo-Turkish War promoted by the Italian official propaganda, one which is willing to recognize the substantial equality of the opponents.[20] On the contrary, Italians and most parts of the international public looked at the Libyans as an exotic, inferior population, and to Turkey as a tyrannical and cruel giant, ruled by incompetent sultans and subjected in all respects to the stricter precepts of Islam. It is probably not a case, after all, that these trading cards come from Spain – a country which, although welcoming the Italian ultimatum to Turkey with no opposition, remained always at the margins of the colonial adventure in Africa – and in particular from Catalonia, a historical enclave of a liberal and avant-garde culture in the Iberian context. The Spanish public, moreover, was not addressed by the Italian propaganda postcards specifically produced for foreign countries, which were rather directed to France, England and the United States.

Fig. 30a. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 1 (front): "Once the war was declared against Turkey on September 29th 1911, Italy blockaded Tripoli's and Cyrene's coast, starting the bombing of Benghazi and disembarking in Tripoli." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 30b. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 1 (back). Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 31. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 11: "Women, children and old people from the village of Homs run away from the Italian troops, which stab them mercilessly." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 32. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 13: "Bomb dropping on a train that carries Italian troops from Rome to Milan, which causes heavy damages and many victims." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 33. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 17: "The Arabs, whose cunning is proverbial, build traps covered with branches where the Italian soldiers who chase them fall and are assassinated." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 34. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 19: "An Arab, servant of the German consul in Tripoli, is executed for having assassinated an Italian soldier treacherously." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.
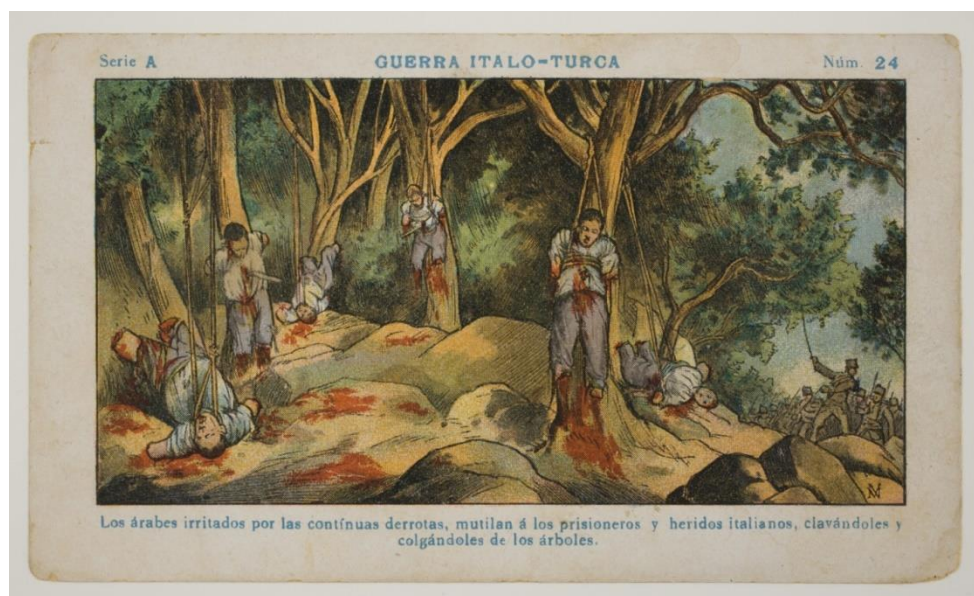

Fig. 35. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 24: "The Arabs, who are irritated at the continuous defeats, mutilate the Italian prisoners and wounded, hammering and hanging them from the trees." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 36. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 45: "The Italian troops kidnap the Arab women of an *aduar*, after having shot all the men." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 37. Italo-Turkish War Series. N. 46: "A Young Turkish girl saves his father from two Italian soldiers who took him prisoner, killing them both with two gunshots, while she stays hidden in a bush." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

The rich trove on the Libyan Campaign in Harvard Library's Special Collections includes five black and white trilingual photographic postcards of this kind, numbered 4, 5, 10, 24 and 49 – thus belonging to a wider series – that show only

Italian military personnel and facilities. In the bottom margin, a brief description of the photo is reproduced in Italian, French and English and, in two cases, the back provides printing indication: the Milanese Traldi & C., known at the time as a printer of historical postcards. Meant both for local and foreign circulation, these images – which are nevertheless high-quality products – are much more tainted with clichés and self-justifying, heroic rhetoric, if compared to those made in Catalunia: they recover themes already encountered in the private albums, especially that of Campello (e.g., the cannons abandoned by the Turks, the punitive patrols organized by the Italians to "liberate" the oasis, the pitiful burial of the fallen – **fig. 38 a-b-c**), but they add a patina of virile grandeur, a static and rigorous pose of the army, without neglecting the exotic background, made of luxuriant vegetation, palms and sand. The result sought by these trilingual postcards is similar to the "patriotic emotion" described by Silvana Patriarca in reference to the Risorgimento – another capital moment of national construction – and also evoked, in the context of the Italo-Turkish War, by Jennifer Illuzzi as an attempt to remould the concept of Italianness, by means of a masculine display of power, violence and glorious sacrifice:

> The story of the Libyan War, related on all levels of Italian society, by people of various political leanings, emphasised the masculine qualities of the new Italy and highlighted the link between masculinity, empire and the nation. The story both unified the public in support of the war, for at least a short time, and attempted to change the negative and effeminate image of Italy abroad. (*Reimagining the Nation*: 432)

The obsession for a narrative of greatness and strength, "intimately linked with nationhood", obliterated, from the visual horizons of propaganda, the parallel "destruction of men, women, and children in Libya" that were paying the price of this emotional project of national re-fashioning (Illuzzi, 427-429). This is all the more evident if we compare the elusive choice of subjects of the trilingual photographs with the more honest story told by the Juncosa cards which, even though through simpler drawings that lack the display of documentary authenticity often claimed by photography, end up offering a truer iconographic testimony of the Italo-Turkish War.

If the post-colonial observer can glimpse some fragments of truth by means of the confrontation of different kinds of propaganda in terms of production and intended audience, visual items created for less-educated segments of the Italian population should also be taken into account. This is the case of a few other photographic postcards – still from Harvard's trove – that belong to an

unnumbered series (entitled "Guerra Italo-Turca") and whose themes are military operations, the desert and artillery pieces. The appearance of the photos, which, in some cases, are identical to those produced by Traldi in three languages, indicate the same printer, but these pictures were thought for national use only and their captions look more explicitly apologetic. Number 24, for instance, mentions the "enemy in sight in the treacherous oasis of Sciara Sciat" (**fig. 39**), combining feelings of love (for the nation and its honourable fallen) and hatred (for the African other) to solicit a passionate reaction from the home viewer. Similar combinations – of national-patriotic and aggressive feelings, sometimes bordering on both the sacred and the blasphemous – take the centre stage in the most popular military and colonial imagery, diffused through cartoony-style postcards: the last iconographic medium of visual propaganda in the Italo-Turkish War. Some of those collected in Harvard's Fine Arts Library were mailed – to family and friends in Italy – and show plenty of military events, depicted as moments of glory (**fig. 40**); one is even featuring Jesus leading the troops and has a prayer on the back ("May God protect and guide our soldiers, and bless he whoever does good unto them", **fig. 41**). These images and corresponding texts play on the emotional parallel between the manly love for family, friends, even God and that for the *patria*. The latter had been represented, alongside its Libyan colonial extension, as a beautiful, desirable woman to be conquered and possessed since before the beginning of the war. At the Belbo Theatre in Turin in 1911, in fact, on the very eve of war, Gea della Garisenda, a prosperous star of the operetta, had sung *Tripoli, bel suol d'amore* – a mixture of banality, rhetoric and rudeness – covered only by a three-coloured drape as the Italian flag, raising the enthusiasm of the audience and sending the Italian soldiers off for the Libyan front as one would leave for a romantic affair. The myth of the war as an easy, passionate – and ultimately anti-female – experience would last at least until the end of the first phase of the conflict, closed in October 1912 with the Peace of Ouchy. After all the defeats, massacres and manipulations, the national propaganda would go on to produce a postcard that retraced the three pivotal moments of the Campaign (Italian disembarking, proclamation of sovereignty, peace), illustrating them with the symbolic image of an Italian soldier embraced with a veiled and seductive Arab woman (**fig. 42**): hence sanctioning, at once, the virile conquest of Libya and the collective falsification mechanism that allowed it to be perceived as such.

Fig. 38 a-b-c. Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 39. Guerra Italo-Turca. The caption reads: "The enemy in sight in the treacherous oasis of Sciara Sciat." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 40. Postcard "The battle of Benghazi. 19th October 1911." The caption on the top-right reads: "Forward, garibaldini of the sea!..." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 41. Postcard. The text in the back, signed by Mario Beltrami, is addressed to Ms Clotilde Boveri from Parma and reads: "affectionately mindful, I reciprocate, thank and pay tribute." On the right margin of the postcard, there is a prayer: "May God protect and guide our soldiers, and bless he whoever does good unto them." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Fig. 42. Postcard. The text reads: "5th October 1911 - First disembarking in Tripolitania. / 5th November 1911 - Proclamation of Italian Sovereignty over all Libya. / 15th October 1912 – Peace Treaty with Turkey drafted in Ouchy (Switzerland)." Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Conclusions

The visual imagery of the Italo-Turkish War – investigated in this essay through the lens of private photographic albums, national and international postcards,

trading cards – embodies a colonial and military politics of emotions, capable of generating a communal process of mythologising and falsification of the conflict and the African space, which informed all levels of society, from the highest echelons of the government and army, to the lower classes of soldiers and citizens. As different as they are for the type of iconographic products they offer (ranging from photos made with high-end cameras to low-quality drawings), as well as for the main perspective of their emotional representation (which takes the forms of autobiography, ethnography, orientalism, or apologetic justification), all the materials examined share a substantial similarity of aesthetic canons: they obsessively repeat the same motifs, fostering a collective narrative tainted with exoticism, nationalism and racism. This narrative – grounded on the aggressive display of patriotic love and the search for a new Italian identity of strength, power and modernity – was promoted both in the homeland and abroad, as proven by the realization, in Italy, of materials intended for other countries and by the circulation of a few stereotypes regarding the war in foreign visual artefacts, such as the Juncosa trading cards. However, the analysis of the images through the very emotional perspective that framed them – while taking into account their nature, content and absences, as well as their pivotal relationship with other visual or textual elements – has shown how passions in their own right can reveal the weakness of the propaganda machine to the post-colonial viewer. Indeed, the contradiction between the documental value of visual representations and the pronounced attempt to emotionally manipulate them, changing the reality that they were meant to depict, opens a gap that allows to capitalise on the uncertain position of the resulting images and to rewrite – or at least critically reconsider – the story of the Italo-Turkish War, returning the actions of Italians to the truth of history, hence recognizing their faults, misinterpretations and crimes.

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[1]   All translations from Italian in this essay are mine.

[2]   The Italo-Turkish War officially started on 28th September 1911 (ultimatum to Turkey) and ended on 18th October 1912 (Treaty of Lausanne), although hostilities continued until 1913. This did not mean that the Libyan conquest was by any means completed: "The war continued until and beyond 1921, when Liberal Italy decided *in extremis* to 're-conquer' the territories occupied and then lost between 1911 and 1915. The war on the ground ended only in 1931, when the armed resistance […] against the Italian colonial conquest was definitively crushed" (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 10).

[3]   In 1911, the unitary name of Libya – which Italy would use alluding to the ancient Roman possession – did not exist on maps. The regions that composed it were Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan (Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911-1931*: 15).

[4]   Enrico Corradini, leader of the recently founded (1910) Italian Nationalist Association, wrote about a wonderful garden visited in the oasis of Tripoli in his travelogue *L'ora di Tripoli*,

promptly published by Treves in September 1911: "It is a reddish soil, very fine, without stones of any kind. What thick, dark, unpruned, wild olive trees! Vines are forced to the ground by the weight of the bunches. No desert at all! We are in a promised land" (74). Giuseppe Bevione would add, a few months later, in *Come siamo andati a Tripoli*: "I have seen mulberries as large as beeches, olive trees more colossal than oaks. The alfalfa can be cut twelve times per year. Fruit trees develop spectacularly. Wheat and melic yield, in average years, three or four times the yield of the best rationally cultivated lands in Europe" (171).

[5] These themes were famously tackled by Giovanni Pascoli in his speech *La grande Proletaria si è mossa* (1911).

[6] Similarly, Angelo Del Boca ascribes Giolitti's preparatory speech for the war, delivered on 7th October 1911 at the Teatro Regio in Turin, to the sphere of the irrational and the supernatural, well beyond the realm of politics and economics (*Italiani, brava gente?*: 108).

[7] An exception to this tendency can be found in Polezzi, *Il pieno e il vuoto*, which tackles "written and visual components of Italian accounts of Africa" (337), focussing on both photographic materials and "other forms of visual representation" (337), namely drawings, *bozzetti, stampe illustrate*. However, Polezzi's essay – which addresses manifold kinds of travel writing – skip directly from Gustavo Bianchi's *Alla terra dei Galla* (1884) to Fascist and post-colonial travelogues, eluding the Libyan phase. The Libyan Campaign is instead at the centre of Illuzzi, *Reimagining the Nation*, which focuses primarily on materials from the illustrated press, but excludes photography completely, thus reaffirming the diffused compartmentalisation of media in scholarly contributions on the Italian colonial visual imagery.

[8] The Italo-Turkish War represented the first great opportunity to apply photography to military and commercial situations on a large scale. The Photographic Military Section – created on 11th April 1896 with the Specialist Brigade of the 3rd Engineer Regiment, based in Rome (Mignemi, *Un caso*: 116) – set up laboratories in Tripoli, Benghazi and Zuara, and worked from dirigibles and aeroplanes to provide snapshots of tactical importance, principally related to the equipment of the Ottoman army. Photos from the frontline were taken by newspaper correspondents and professional photographers (such as Luca Comerio), as well as by Italian officers with their private Kodak cameras, which "were able to penetrate the fabric of families and society as a whole" (Valtorta, with Hill & Minghelli, *Photography and the Construction of Italian National Identity*: 58) and to later reveal otherwise erased aspects of the war (Palma, *L'Italia coloniale*: 78). These images were soon transformed into illustrations for magazines destined to readers of the upper and middle classes, and into a series of postcards meant to reach the less literate parts of the Italian population.

[9] On the complex reading of colonial photographs practised in the last 50 years, see the 2006 bibliographic essay by Tania Rossetto, *Africa in fotografia*.

[10] Recently, the socially emotional role of images in shaping the perception of the Italo-Turkish War in Italy and abroad has been tackled on the side of cinema. In his article *Dramatizing the Italian-Turkish War (1911-12)*, for instance, Giorgio Bertellini has explored the power of "contemporary melodramas of national sacrifice, war newsreels, and *actualités*, as well as historical and literary film epics" (131) to affect the national and foreign public opinion about the Italians' conduct in the conflict. Also, at the end of *L'occhio insensibile*, Luca Mazzei has recognized especially in the use of documental cinematography "a technological and emotional conception which is at the basis of all nationalist thinking of the time" (341). The specific contribution of cinema to emotional propaganda, however, falls *outside* the *scope of this essay, which builds on a particular trove of printed visual materials.*

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[11]   The exhibit was promoted by the Lauro de Bosis Fund (Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard University) and curated by Giuliana Minghelli, Matt Collins, Dalila Colucci, Eloisa Morra and Chiara Trebaiocchi. It featured, besides a vast range of materials related to the Italo-Turkish War (which I specifically curated), maps, photos and postcards from 1900 to Fascism, and tackled four themes: "exploratory missions; colonial wars; containment of the colonial other through photography; and colonial dominion through architectural and urban planning" (from the website of the exhibit that displays most part of the digitalized materials, alongside portions of the original explicatory labels: http://www.italiancolonialism.org/intro.html). Mention of all three photo albums examined in this essay is in Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile* (328, 331 and 333). Three photos from Cormanni's album have also been reproduced in the volume *Stillness in Motion*, edited by Hill & Minghelli, as examples of the construction of "a collective memory": "In photographs such as these, the soldier, both photographer and photographic subject, is at the same time the producer and consumer of colonial images, thanks to which he establishes a dialogue with those left at home. […] In these colonial snapshots, even the anonymous soldier can construct his own image on a model produced by the myths of war propaganda and participate in adventure and conquest: sadly, the element of exotic Africanness adds a new and spectacular element to the photographs, enhancing the mass appeal of the images" (Valtorta, with Hill & Minghelli, *Photography and the Construction of Italian National Identity*: 58). My deepest thanks go to the Special Collections of the Fine Arts Library at Harvard University – and in particular to Joanne Bloom, who worked with my colleagues and me on the 2014 exhibit – for allowing the reproduction of all images featured in this essay and for their generous support to my research.

[12]   This is the private account that the journalist Luigi Barzini sent to Luigi Albertini, director of the newspaper *Corriere della sera*, on 4th November 1911: "At noon the captain commander of the 6th Company arrived, wounded, and told General Pecori that his company had been crushed, that the enemy was inland. The general did not take him seriously. […] Two companies of Bersaglieri, meanwhile, a thousand meters away, were annihilated, slaughtered, martyred, group by group, and the corpses stripped entirely and the wounded stabbed and the dead had their genitals cut off and put in their mouths and the wounded had their ears cut off" (in Nardi & Gentili: *La grande illusione*: 15). None of these words ever saw the light on the *Corriere*, which published only vague and rhetorically oriented reports of the episode.

[13]   "The reaction of ours, when they were certain of the betrayal, was violent. They fired without mercy on the suspicious Arabs who approached them, shooting them dead. A major of the Bersaglieri, who must have a prodigious aim with the revolver, entered alone into the gardens from where shots were fired, with two weapons in his hands, and opened fire on anyone he saw in front of him. The raid was so swift, the shots so fast, that the Arabs had no time to react. With every shot, a casualty" (Bevione, *Come siamo andati a Tripoli*: 333-334).

[14]   "Sentimentalism, which is a typical and torpid disease of our race, polluted our defence even on that day. […] Only the indispensable blood was shed, and not even the necessary one, while the *possibility* of the same *betrayal happening agai*n would have required the maximum harshness" (Grey, *La bella guerra*: 14-16).

[15]   According to Mazzei, censorship was limited to images of mutilated or decomposing corpses of Italian soldiers, while there were virtually no limits in showing the mangled bodies of the enemies (*L'occhio insensibile*: 338-340). If it is true that there was an absolute suppression of pictures of tortured Italians – while sometimes the press indulged in portraying Turkish

soldiers, mostly dead on the battlefield – the determination to deny the evidence of Italian atrocities after Sciara Sciat led to a limited circulation of images of summary executions of civilians. That would explain the scandal that broke out in Italy after the publication – on 5th December 1913, hence much later on – in the socialist newspaper *Avanti!* of a series of six photographs in which Italian soldiers were portrayed hanging Arabs (Del Boca, *Italiani, brava gente?*: 117): a sign that the home public was not so used to that kind of images.

[16] Several weekly magazines in Italy followed the war closely, through drawings, photographs and articles. Among others, *La Domenica del Corriere*, a supplement of the «Corriere della sera», worked as a more popular alternative to *L'Illustrazione Italiana*, celebrating the conquest by means of traditional illustrations mostly drawn by *Achille Beltrame, who authored its* famous *covers (see* Folisi: *La Domenica del Corriere nella Guerra di Libia*).

[17] A hard condemnation of the Italian actions came, especially early on, from the Anglo-American press (the most used by Valera): Bennet Burleigh from the *Daily Telegraph*, Francis McCullagh from the *New York World* and Thomas Grant from the *Daily Mirror* were particularly critic. On the complex balance between denunciation and forgiveness of the international press, as an effect of the diplomacy and counter-information orchestrated by the Italian and other European governments alike, see Bertellini (*Dramatizing the Italian-Turkish War*) and Forgacs (*Messaggi di sangue*).

[18] David Forgacs indicates that a copy of the footage owned by the British Pathé, wrongly titled *Public Hanging of 14 Turks*, can be watched online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EprSRy_cG0A (*Messaggi di sangue*: 100-101, endnote n. 1).

[19] The album was possibly assembled and donated to the General by an unnamed author. This wouldn't be the first photographic homage offered to Caneva, who was also gifted the album *La conquista della Libia* by Luca Comerio (Mazzei, *L'occhio insensibile*: 332-333, footnote 35).

[20] This is especially important if we recall, alongside Illuzzi, that "the Italian imperial project in Libya […] served as a specific nationalist response to a historical discourse that posited Italian men as degraded and effeminate, and women as immoral seductresses" (*Reimagining the Nation*: 438): hence as an attempt to differentiate Italians from Arabs and Turks, to which a large portion of the European discourse used to equate them, explicitly or not.

Fellow-Feeling in Childhood Memories of Second World War France: Sympathy, Empathy and the Emotions of History

By Lindsey Dodd

Abstract: This article examines fellow feeling in oral narratives of French Second World War childhoods to argue that more attention should be paid to the complex ways that emotions affect the story(ing) of the past. Fellow feeling is understood as *a claim to feel for, with or about someone else*. The claim might be implicit but nonetheless leaves its imprint on the narrative. Fellow feeling exists in the happening past of the story (the early 1940s), the recounted story (the interview), and the disseminated story (e.g. this article). There is a gap between what can be known and what must be (imaginatively, empathetically, arrogantly, wrongly) filled with assumption. Assumptions run counter to positivistic demands for evidence. Yet, I argue, thinking into the gaps and spaces of our knowledge is both generative and illuminating. After a brief discussion of approaches to empathy, I draw on oral history narratives to illustrate the interplay of time, memory and affect in relation to fellow feeling. Using examples about the 1940 civilian exodus, the billeting of Germans into French homes, and experiences of persecution, I show that fellow feeling undergoes a recalibration when recounted in later life. It is bound up with desire, regret and hope, what a person wishes they had felt, or wants a listener to feel.

Introduction

Waged by humans upon humans, war is always an intersubjective affair. And like all encounters of humans with humans, it is saturated with emotionality, which we might see as "a responsiveness to and openness towards the worlds of others" (Ahmed, *Collective Feelings*: 28). Emotions can be understood as a cultural politics, operating between and across individuals and collectives, shaping desires and aversions, preferences and choices, and cultivating power relations (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*). Perhaps inevitably, then, accounts of the lived experiences of war are filled with claims to feel for, with or about other people. Even if such claims are not explicit, they impress themselves on narratives, shaping what gets told as affective intensity gathers around particular incidents and people. Broadly speaking, I am interested in what memory stories – spoken and recorded autobiographical narratives which might also be called oral histories – recounted by those who experienced the Second World War can tell us about the emotions of history at personal and collective levels. By the emotions of history, I do not mean the history of

emotions. I mean the ways in which feelings *about the past* are generated, experienced, and circulate, publicly or privately, between groups and individuals, affecting the ways that the story of the past gets told.

More specifically, this article examines fellow-feeling in oral narratives of French Second World War childhoods to argue that careful attention should be paid to the complex ways it affects the story(ing) of the past. Fellow-feeling, understood as a claim to feel for, with or about other people, is bound into ideas of sympathy and empathy. The more modern concept of empathy is frequently invoked as a necessity for building respectful, peaceful, inclusive societies but, as this article suggests, empathy has both risks and limits. Sometimes sympathy may be the only – and the only ethical – form of fellow-feeling possible.

Oral history as an affective methodology

This article analyses short extracts from three oral history interviews to illustrate some of these complexities, which are situated in both the narrated past and the narrating present. This present-past relation is what distances this work from history of emotions territory. The article aims to suggest what such complexities may mean in the aftermath of the Second World War in relation to guilt, shame and loss at private and collective levels. The three oral history extracts deal with three incidents which happened to three French children during the Second World War, later recounted by the adults they became. Marie-Rolande Cornuéjols reflected on her mother's behaviour during the refugee crisis of May-June 1940 known as the exodus. As the Germans invaded, perhaps eight million Belgian and French civilians fled south in fear, forming long columns of refugees on the roads, leading not just to social upheaval but also to traumatic outcomes, as refugees were machine gunned and bombed from the air, families were separated, and people left bereft by looting and destruction. The extract taken from Sylvette Leclerc's interview focuses on her experience of having German soldiers billeted in her family home, following the Armistice of June 1940. This was not an uncommon experience for families living north of the demarcation line established by the Armistice, and is a recurrent, and gendered, cultural trope of the era (depicted, for example, in Vercors' 1942 novel *La Silence de la Mer* and Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française*, published posthumously in 2004). The striking scene extracted from Remy Ménigault's interview centres on his experience, as a little boy, of witnessing a train of Jewish children pass by the railway platform on which he stood. In total, nearly 76,000 Jews were deported from France and killed, with the complicity and active involvement of the French government; among these

were 10,500 children aged seventeen years or younger (Klarsfeld and others, *Le sauvetage des enfants juifs*: 152).

The three interviews were recorded by or for different organisations, at different points in time, and for different reasons. None were recorded by the author. Marie-Rolande Cornuéjols's interview was made available by the Archives municipals de Beaune, without any documented context of its date or origin. Sylvette Leclerc's was recorded in 2010 for a cultural organisation called Le Son des Choses, which operates across the Champagne-Ardennes region recording memories of its inhabitants' lives. The 2013 interview with Remy Ménigault is part of a collection recoded by the national railway history society, the Association pour l'histoire des chemins de fer (AHICF, or Rails et Histoire); Remy's parents were stationmasters. All interviews were recorded in French, and all translations are the author's.

This article contributes to discussions on the secondary analysis of already-recorded oral history data by highlighting the value of intersubjective and inter-affective relationships between the listener and the story(teller) when the listener is distant in time and space. Listening to other people's interviews can be as feeling-laden as conducting one's own, if listening practices are consciously attuned to the affective dimensions of the storytelling (Trivelli, *Exploring a "Remembering Crisis"*; Matthews, *Romani Pride*). I employed practices of affective listening, transcribing words, but also noting and reflecting on the emotional expression and weight of recorded words and gestures, noises off, mood, interaction and so on, as I felt and experienced them as an attuned listener. Selective translation took place long after the listening process occurred; listening and transcription were conducted in French; affective annotations to the transcript were made in English, the author's native language. Affective listening is by no means an objective, detached process, and its results derive from inferential interpretations drawing both on the evidence of the recording and the evidence of the listener's felt experience. Evidently, this is a subjective interpretive methodology, which draws on ideas from nonrepresentational, critical theoretical and cultural studies practices, not normally deployed in traditional positivistic scientific enquiry (e.g. Thrift, *Nonrepresentational Theory*; Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* and Knudsen & Stage, *Affective Methodologies*). In interpreting these stories, both against the grain and faced with all sorts of unknowns, I am comfortable with the inconclusiveness of what I propose, and recognise that I make only one interpretation among any number which are possible.

Cultural theorist Sara Ahmed notes that fellow-feeling always involves a fantasy of what you imagine others to be feeling (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 41).

She highlights the gap between what can be known and what must be filled with assumption. This inconclusiveness can be productive. Drawing on the researcher's own affective processes of feeling and imagining, and avoiding claims to omniscient knowledge of historical actors' lives, are honest and ethical ways of engaging with the people of the past (Code, *Ecological Thinking*: 41). In epistemological terms, we cannot *know* whether what these oral histories suggest is *true*; truths are filtered through many interpretations. But the fact that they suggest *something* to this researcher – made them feel, ponder and imagine – provides the basis for questions and responses (Vogel, *By the Light of what Comes after*: 257). Willing to risk the scholarly crime of speculation, I argue that thinking into the gaps and spaces of knowledge is both generative and illuminating.

This article is not just concerned with children's emotional encounters with war in the 1940s, but with adults' reflections on those encounters. Emotional encounters with war last a lifetime. The concept of "composure" has often been used in oral history, to describe the double action of "composing" (constructing) one's version of the past, and achieving "composure" (a version of one's past one can accept at the time of telling) (on composure see, e.g. Thomson, *Anzac Memories*). Composure implies dichronicity: the evolution of memory over time, moving from "then" (or various "thens") to now, the moment of telling. Inspired by Henri Bergson's concept of durational time, this article's interpretation takes dichronicity further, into multitemporality. Memories are not just about "now" and "then": *all time* is inescapably present in a memory (see Hamilakis, *Sensorial Assemblages*). A single recounted incident holds within it the lived events which preceded it, family and national histories predating it, the contents of lives lived afterwards, national and family trajectories, and virtual histories of futures not lived. Memories rest as much on what is articulated as what goes unsaid but may be discernible, affecting and affected by many things including the narrating context. The interpretive processes deployed in this article are as concerned with what is unarticulated; evidently, this relies on a different kind of interpretation and listening, against the grain of language. What is clear is that fellow-feeling in the past is recalibrated when recounted later in life, as it is bound up with desire, guilt, shame, loss, later-gained knowledge, worldly experience, and hooked into national and international narratives about the wartime past. As will be suggested, fellow-feeling recounted in the present complicates the original emotions of a wartime encounter, with consequences for coming to terms with violence and injustice, and for individual composure.

Children, war, emotion

Historians have studied many aspects of children's lives in war, including the various ways in which children become victims of war. Children's close encounters with war may result in injury, psychological damage, and lasting chronic conditions, mental and physical, such as the effects of malnutrition or bereavement (see e.g. Carroll and others, *Evaluation of Nutrition Interventions*; Daniele & Ghezzi, *The Impact of World War II*). Scholars have also investigated children's indoctrination by belligerent regimes (see e.g. Kater, *Hitler Youth*; Frierson, *Silence Was Salvation*), and there has been interest in children as participants in or bystanders to crimes against humanity (see e.g. Wessells, *Child Soldiers*; Donà, *"Situated Bystandership"*); both of these themes invoke issues around children's agency, a contested subject in the history of childhood (see e.g. Gleason, *Avoiding the Agency Trap*), and not one central to this article. My research on children in France in the Second World War has taken in children's experiences of bombing, evacuation and other forms of parental separation, their interaction with the wartime authoritarian Vichy regime, and aspects of their daily lives in war (see Dodd in references). I have drawn on the evidence of children's letters and drawings, local and state archives, and adult and child media such as press and radio.

But as my interest lies in both how war is experienced by children and how those experiences are remembered, oral history has been a key source. Oral history is a valuable methodological tool to study encounters with war because of its capacities both to reveal undocumented aspects of ordinary people's everyday lives, and to mediate past and present interpretations of individual and collective experience (see e.g. Ugolini, *Experiencing War*; Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out*; Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*; Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda*; and Clifford, *Survivors*). As such, it opens more of the past to historical scrutiny, and complicates it by refusing a clear divide between now and then.

It is worth commenting on how the present article differs in emphasis from history of emotions work. The history of emotions is a well-established sub-field, and has produced fascinating accounts of past emotional lives, with some exploring specific emotions over time, others analysing "emotional regimes" or "emotional communities" by thinking through the embeddedness of historicised emotional experiences in past societies and cultures (see e.g. Plamper, *The History of the Emotions*). These studies usually draw on the representational evidence of written or artistic expression; they can only get at emotion in the past by way of its representation in language or art. Such work may define itself as unwilling or unable to analyse the "embodied, sensate"

world of past emotions (Trigg, *Introduction*: 11). Yet research which focuses solely on the discursive representation of emotion cannot tell us what was "experienced" or, indeed, what was "processed" by a sensate body in time and space; texts can only *represent* experience. It is uncommon, because of the evidentiary requirements of the historical discipline, to move, as this article does, into nonrepresentative and affective terrains in order to attempt to understand how feelings felt and feel.

Such attempts notwithstanding, oral history is not a black box recorder. All sorts of shifts, mutations and recomposures take place in the retelling of past experience, many of which are unknowable. Psychological research has examined memory for emotion in numerous experiments, the aims of which are often to determine whether past emotion is accurately recalled (e.g. Levine and others, *Functions of Remembering*). Psychologists have concluded, among other things, that emotional memories laid down under stress tend to be more accurately recalled (Henckens and others, *Stressed Memories*), and that happy memories are more malleable over time (Scollen and others, *The Role of Ideal Affect*). However, no such controlled experimental context can replicate the conversational processes of an oral history interview conducted sixty years after events. And while emotional experience was sometimes expressed in interviews in the mutually comprehensible language of emotives (I was afraid, she was happy), or observable emotional behaviours (smiling, crying), it can be as fruitful to consider how past emotional experiences press upon memory narratives, contouring what gets told, and to think about what exists in affect rather than in (spoken and body) language.

Oral historians have long been interested in emotion in interviews, but have tended to take emotion as the object of their analysis rather than the means (e.g. Thomson, *Indexing and Interpreting Emotion*). Despite the post-positivist turn in oral history, which saw scholars reaching "beyond facts to meanings" (Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*: 2), those meanings have still usually been sought in the expressed words and gestures recorded on audio or video. And although emotion may not be explicitly represented in spoken or body language, like a heavy stone on a rubber sheet, the story bulges with its felt traces. These feelings stick in memory, gather importance, and create the conditions for later retrievability. We may only be aware of this manner of feeling through affective attunements in our listening practices: feeling should be an important part of our interpretive toolkit (e.g. Matthews, *Romani Pride*). Emotions press upon us; they leave traces of feeling in our bodies, our minds and our memories. Sara Ahmed suggests that emotions "define the contours of the multiple worlds that are inhabited by different subjects" (*Collective Feelings*: 25); she attributes to

them a quality to shape the social; they are "bound up with how we inhabit the world "with" others" (28). She writes that the *press* of the im*press*ion "allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very "mark" left by the press of one surface upon another. So not only do I have an impression of others, but they also leave me with an impression; they impress me and impress upon me" (29). Sociologist Eduardo Bericat states that "as human beings we can only experience life emotionally: *I feel, therefore I am*" (*The Sociology of Emotions*: 491; his emphasis). If that is the case, then memories of experiences must be memories of feeling. We can therefore consider many – if not all – oral history narratives to be structured by feeling and that feeling may be discerned by looking for affective intensities (Massumi, *The Autonomy of Affect*: 87). Thus tracking articulated and inarticulated feeling can provide insight into past emotional states when memories were laid down, and present ones as they are told.

Empathy and history

In contrast with emotion, which is usually taken as the object of analysis rather than its means, empathy is more commonly understood *by historians* as the means of analysis rather than its object (not so in other disciplines; see e.g. Lanzoni, *Empathy*). Empathy is a particular kind of felt relational engagement with another human being; we can put it, along with sympathy, under the heading fellow-feeling. Tyson Retz has outlined the opportunities for empathy in historical practice as the "emotional engagement" with the people of the past, the "imaginative exploration" of the past, and bringing the "possibility of freeing history from evidentiary limitations and entering more fully into the experiences of everyday and marginalized people" (2). Michael Roper has written that "the ability to imaginatively connect with the subjectivities of people in the past is what historians understand as empathy" (*The Unconscious Work of History*: 174). Empathy is seen as "an imaginative tool that can expand understandings of the suffering of others" (Field, *Critical Empathy through Oral Histories*: 663), and Retz notes its presence in history teacher training initiatives since the 1970s as the means to promote among students "an enriched understanding of historical context [via] reference to the beliefs, values and goals of the people who lived, thought and acted in it" (*Empathy and History*: 1). Yet making empathy nothing but an accessory to "understanding" or "connecting" does not do it justice. Samuel Moyn has criticised historians' "rediscovery" empathy, and particularly its status as a "methodological requirement". He says that "everyone feels the pressure to 'empathize' with the experience (and notably the suffering) of others" (*Empathy in History*: 397), but

notes that empathising in the right kind of way is normatively and non-transparently controlled. This methodological tool called empathy lacks clarity in its definition, workings and applicability, and Moyn questions whether it should be "morally – not to mention historiographically – obligatory" (398). It has indeed become commonplace to invoke the necessity for empathy, and Moyn is right to urge caution, given the limits of empathy's reach.

Sean Field recalls the importance of empathy to oral historians who, he says, tend to 'see empathy as central to their listening techniques", marking it out once more as a methodological imperative (*Critical Empathy through Oral Histories*: 663). He notes that they may succeed or fail in their empathising, citing his own comment to an interviewee: "I know how you feel". He recognised afterwards that he did not and could not (665-666). He cautions that the "empathetic imaginings of researchers are at best approximate visualizations" of interviewees' lifeworlds (663), and continues: "Empathy for qualitative researchers is neither sympathy nor an emotion but a tool of understanding, which involves imagining what the interviewee possibly experienced and thought at specific moments" (663). Caution is necessary, but Field's decoupling of empathy and emotion is problematic, as is his disconnection from sympathy. Although sympathy has become rather unfashionable, its uses and functions matter in human interactions. As Sara Ahmed proposes, empathy and sympathy complicate the politics of emotion because they shape relations of power between individuals (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: chapter 2). Empathy, then, is clearly of interest to historians and oral historians, but has usually been seen in methodological terms. This article is just as interested in empathy – and other forms of fellow-feeling – as the object of research.

Fellow-feeling

Debates about sympathy and empathy reach across morality and ethics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, into poetics and aesthetics, and cultural studies. Not only do the different branches of psychology define empathy differently, they do not always agree on the meanings of each other's research. Beyond ongoing work on so-called 'mirror neurons', research suggests two levels of empathising: the first, a form of mirroring – involving these neurons – which allows us to resonate with others' mental states immediately, but in an inflexibly responsive way not accessible to consciousness; and the second, a form of mental projection, which is cognitively more complex, flexible and reflexive, and accessible to consciousness, allowing us to project our mental states to infer another person's mental state (Corradini & Antonietti, *Mirror*

Neurons and their Function: 1153). The variety of ways that empathy is being researched and understood leads to further questions about what it is actually for (Smith, *What is Empathy for?*: 709). Is empathy "the cognitive act of attributing a context to another person's behaviour in order to make sense of it"? (Retz, *Empathy and History*: 6) Does it, more precisely, enable humans "to understand what others intend to do", thus giving it anticipatory value? (Corradini & Antonietti, *Mirror Neurons and their Function*: 1152) Or does it exist to "provide us with knowledge of how others feel"? Not just that they feel something, but how that feeling feels (Smith, *What is Empathy for?*: 711). In each case, empathy is a prosocial behaviour; given history's concern with the social above almost all, it is surprising, then, not to see empathy more commonly discussed by historians as motivation and intention for action in the past.

Terminology is slippery. The popular psychologist Brené Brown has described empathy as connection with others, and views sympathy as disconnection, and less desirable.[1] If we turn to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, however, we see sympathy described as sharing feelings, and empathy as understanding feelings without sharing them.[2] Robert Solomon places empathy, sympathy, compassion and pity under the banner of "fellow-felling", while Elizabeth Spelman differentiates compassion as "suffering with' others and pity as 'suffering for" others (both cited in Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 41). Even if we agree that empathy is, in some way, "feeling what another person feels", how can this be possible with historical actors? How can we "catch" their feelings, asks Tyson Retz? (*Empathy and History*: 6) Sara Ahmed might respond that we do not "catch" emotions from other people. Feelings are generated inter-relationally and do not seep in from outside or emanate from the inside; they grow *between* people and things. She writes:

> Emotions are not simply directed at nearby others: a *feeling for and with others* can also occur when others are remote or distant. Such distance is transformed into proximity through the very "impressions" we make of others, which transforms others into objects of feeling. (*Collective feelings*: 34; my emphasis)

Like others, Ahmed makes use of the prepositions *for* and *with* to think about fellow-feeling.

Yet it seems that both sympathy and empathy are feeling *with* others, in some way, and, as Adam Smith wrote, "nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow feeling with all the emotions of our own breast" (cited in Smith, *What is Empathy for?*: 720). It satisfies us to be "in tune with" others (711). Bringing the Greek-rooted English words sympathy and empathy together with

their German translations helps make distinctions. In English, the Greek-rooted prefix "sym" gives a sense of *feeling together* or *with*, whereas "em" gives a sense of *feeling in* or *within*. In German, the translation of sympathy is *Mitleid*, which carries the sense of *feeling along with*, whereas empathy is translated by *Einfühlung*, which gives the sense of *feeling into*. In English and German, the word sympathy integrates companionship in the act of feeling *along with* and *together*, which feeling "for" cannot convey, as it objectifies one of the parties. And in both languages, the word for empathy points to an internalisation of feeling. In contrast with Brené Brown's description above, it seems as though sympathy reaches out from the sympathiser, while empathy happens inside the empathiser. Although these words help delineate *where* feeling might be happening, and the relation between two feeling parties, it gives no sense of *what* is felt.

Empathy is often described as putting yourself in someone else's shoes, or seeing things from their point of view. One of empathy's great puzzles is to do with this displacement. Kramer asks: "Are we only *imaginatively – as if –* putting ourselves into really foreign situations? Or are we truly thinking, seeing, and feeling as would the other or as we would from the other's perspective, no matter how dissimilar?" (*As if*: 279, his emphasis). Adam Smith wrote that "it is by changing places *in fancy* with the sufferer, that we come either to conceive or to be affected by what he feels" (Smith cited in Sugden, *Beyond Sympathy and Empathy*: 70; my emphasis). For Smith and others, this displacement is an act of imagination, or as Ahmed would have it, a fantasy or a "wish feeling" (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 30). Thus empathy carries a great many risks. It rests on assumptions of what it might feel like to be in someone else's shoes. At worst, it may fall into "sadistic solipsism", where the other's individuality is subsumed; identity of perspectives is assumed, and thus the other's identity is effaced (Kramer, *As if*: 285). At best, empathy achieves some level of accuracy, but a number of conditions must be met. The observer must be "consciously aware" that another person feels in a particular way, and must be "consciously aware" of what being that particular way feels like (Smith, *What is Empathy for?*: 712-713). They must be "acquainted with the feel" of a particular feeling, either by feeling it themself, simultaneously, or reaching into episodic memory to locate an experience of being "in some state that affectively matches" or "is similar enough" (714). The first risk, then, stems from empathy's rootedness in imagination, which opens the door to misrepresentation, misinterpretation and misappropriation. Its second risk derives from its moral ambivalence. To empathise does not mean to care. Empathy may lead to care, or it may simply lead to a morally neutral comprehension of another perspective. A torturer uses empathy to anticipate the response of the person on whom he inflicts pain, in

order to torture better (716). So while empathy may appear desirable to promote greater understanding of other perspectives, it has limitations in relation to imagination, experience and care.

Sympathy is also risky. Returning to the question of *what* is being felt, we might say that in empathy, we should be feeling *it* with someone else, where *it* is the same thing they are feeling. Sympathy pertains to non-identical feeling. We feel *something* with someone else, as in alongside them, but our feelings differ from theirs. Sympathy therefore has a reputation for objectification, condescension and insincerity. But there is more to it. First, sympathy does not collapse the boundaries of otherness, nor does it assume that feelings are transparently replicable between individuals. Second, in the gap between the sympathiser and the other person, there is space to develop critical judgements. As Phillips notes in relation to compassion, the Latin-rooted companion to sympathy, we make a judgement about how what is happening to the other person affects their capacity to flourish (Phillips, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage*: 53). The torturer might empathise with his victim, but if he sympathised he could not do his job. Yet sympathy's non-identity of feeling may be twisted:

> The pain of others becomes "ours", an appropriation that transforms and perhaps even neutralizes their pain into our sadness. […] It is not so much that we are "with them" by feeling sad […]. Rather we feel sad *about* their suffering, an "aboutness" that ensures they remain the object of "our feeling" (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 21; her emphasis).

Again, here is a route into solipsism and effacement. Yet Ahmed turns the inability to feel *it* with someone else – to empathise through an identity of feeling – into an ethical call:

> The impossibility of feeling the pain of others does not mean that the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me. I want to suggest here, cautiously and tentatively, that an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot feel. (30)

Genuinely felt, sympathy does not appropriate the feelings of others and upholds an ethics of care. We cannot care only for those into whose shoes we knowledgably and consciously step. Sympathy extends fellow-feeling to those with experiences alien to our own, whose feelings, unlike the torturer's, we see as justifiable and appropriate. "Care", Joel Smith writes, "clearly falls on the

side of sympathy" (*What is Empathy for?*: 716), while "[e]mpathy can be consistent with the indifference of pure observation or even the cruelty of sadism" (Darwall, *Empathy, Sympathy, Care*: 261). For these reasons, empathy may suit the traditional objectivism of historical enquiry as a methodological tool; and for these reasons, sympathy deserves further exploration.

A mother's despair

The rest of this article draws on extracts from the interviews with Marie-Rolande Cornuéjols, Sylvette Leclerc and Remy Ménigault, which were introduced above, to think about three things. First, the children's different experiences of fellow-feeling in relation to various others, occasioned through their own close encounters with war in the past. Second, the recalibration of that fellow-feeling when the story gets told in later life: this is an important issue in relation to understanding how oral histories about childhood might be methodologically different to oral histories recorded about periods of adulthood, a question which is undertheorised by oral historians, who frequently use memories of childhood but rarely discuss their specificity (for two recent examples see Cullinane, *"The Man Was the Fella that Went Out to Work"* and Byrne, *Growing up in "The Mental"*). Third, these three extracts enable reflection on the complex problems of French war memory (e.g. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*; Gildea, *Marianne in Chains*; Ledoux, *Le Devoir de mémoire*; and Wieviorka, *La mémoire désunie*). In a population that actively collaborated with the Nazis at state and societal levels, *and* actively resisted the occupation and the Vichy regime, *and* stood by, simply trying to survive amid widespread violence, family separation and extreme penury, all memories are bound into bigger stories of suffering, perpetration and victimhood.

In May and June 1940, as the Wehrmacht advanced into France and millions of civilians fled (Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*), Marie-Rolande was around ten years old. Her father had been mobilised into the army, and so her mother, with Marie-Rolande and her younger brother, had moved to Antibes (Alpes-Maritimes) from Paris, to live with her own parents. But after the Italians declared war on France, lacking a bomb shelter, they began to feel increasingly anxious. At the invitation of her sister, Marie-Rolande's mother decided to move with her children to the interior of France, to Peyrat-le-Château (Haute-Vienne), where other family members had sought refuge. Two incidents on the journey struck the girl Marie-Rolande, and their affective intensity causes them to stick in her memory. Marie-Rolande's feelings about her mother show a reasoning child, who recognized the gulf between how things were and how they should be. She said:

So we left, leaving my grandparents there, and I'll always see, but this is because I was so young, I'll always see my mother, completely exhausted, sleeping on the ground [she emphasises the words] in Limoges station. That's really stayed with me. Mum lying on the ground! [Again, she emphasises the words] Really, on the ground! In the station – , I wasn't asleep, I was next to my brother, looking after my brother, and I was cross. I said to myself "It's not possible to do such things." The shame of it! I don't mean to overstate it, but it was really shocking. And after that, we took an old [tram] to get from Limoges to Peyrat-le-Château, and Mum was watching night fall [from the window], it's a flash memory which has really stayed with me. I was sitting next to Mum, and Mum was looking out, at the countryside as night was falling, and she said to me "Do you think we'll get used to it? Do you think it will be alright?" And I remember thinking to myself, "How can an adult ask advice from a child of ten?" It really shocked me. Because it wasn't for me to tell her if it would be alright. (*Interview with Marie-Rolande Cornuéjols*, Archives municipals de Beaune.)

Marie-Rolande articulates remembered emotions: shock, annoyance, shame. Her recognition that her mother was exhausted justifies why she slept on the ground, and the older Marie-Rolande includes this detail. But the young Marie-Rolande was astonished at behaviour that transgressed the norms of respectability, and left Marie-Rolande responsible for her brother.

Marie-Rolande's narrated self – the young girl – struggled, it seems, either to empathise or to sympathise with her mother during these moments. This marks the child as separate from the adult; she inhabits a separate lifeworld, and is not dependent on her parent for the interpretation of what is around her. The clarity of these remembered feelings in relation to her mother flags them as striking. Perhaps – thinking into the gaps of my knowledge – one reason they strike her is because of the discomfort which her recollected inability to empathise or sympathise generates in her memory. Sugden notes the philosopher Adam Smith's point that the "dissonance between our sentiments and those of others is a source of pain" and that we feel "unease and irritation [when] we cannot sympathize with someone else's apparent sentiments of distress" (*Between Sympathy and Empathy*: 72). The emotions that impress on memories are not just emotions experienced in the past, but emotions generated in between past experiences and present evaluations. Of course, the young Marie-Rolande might struggle to empathise with her mother at the time, given that it was probably impossible for her to find in her own episodic memory an emotional state which "affectively matched" her mother's despair. Sara Ahmed has noted that "how feelings feel in the first place may be tied to a past history of reading [those feelings]" and that "recognition (of this feeling, or that feeling) is bound up with what we already know" (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 25). With little experience of life, Marie-Rolande could not share in her mother's affective

state. This uncomfortable gap in part creates the affective intensity of these incidents; it is why the story got told.

The recalibration which occurs later is not explicitly articulated in language, but listening affectively to the story suggests feelings of regret are present. As noted above, emotional resonance with others is highly valued. Adam Smith proposed that we approve of other's feelings to the extent that we "go along" with them; as Sugden paraphases "to the extent that we have fellow-feeling for them" (*Between Sympathy and Empathy*: 74). Marie-Rolande did not go along with her mother's feelings in the past, but her retelling of the story denotes a shift; we see her process of composure. She may still not go along with them, but she recognizes they were, perhaps, legitimate in the circumstances. The older Marie-Rolande does not necessarily put herself in her mother's shoes, but she can feel something other than her child's disapproval, which validates the her mother's despair as appropriate to the situation. In this non-identity of feeling, in her care for her mother's condition which emerges through the uneasy child-adult gap, and in the granting of approval by telling the story, fellow-feeling appears as sympathy.

Marie-Rolande is a victim of war, although she does not label herself such. War created suffering in her life. She experienced the trauma of Italian bombing in Antibes, she was deprived of her father, on the road as a refugee for the second time, and emotionally abandoned by her overwhelmed mother. Marie-Rolande's memories are contoured by the impressions made by fear and anxiety across 1940. Enemies and perpetrators are absent from the story; they are not in the next two cases. Marie-Rolande's victimhood rests not an encounter with physical violence, but within her involuntary, inevitable imbrication in the waves of anxiety that the German invasion sent rippling across France. While French civilians who were neither collaborators or resisters have often been stigmatised as *attentiste* – waiting it out, looking out for themselves – such a label ignores the complex, minute, interpersonal emotional interactions taking place in ordinary everyday life which are the mark of war's impacts on young lives.

The young German

Sylvette was born in 1932, and spent the war in Saint-Mesmin (Aube) in the Occupied Zone of France. German soldiers were billeted in her family home:

> At first, I was really scared of these Germans, and then afterwards, they requisitioned a room at my parents' house. There were only two rooms: one downstairs, and one upstairs. It

wasn't really even an upstairs actually, it was more of a loft with a mansard window […]. In winter, it was too difficult to heat that room, so we all slept downstairs in the same room. And they requisitioned the upstairs room. We had Germans billeted there for quite a while. It wasn't always the same ones, because they got moved around. And well, some of them really frightened me, and made a big impression on me. But others were nicer. And as the years passed, they became younger and younger. They didn't have enough men for their troops, so they were really young. I remember the last one. He can only have been eighteen, that's all. You could see he really missed his family, because he was always with us, the children, my goodness – ! [There is a pause, an audible catch in her voice. She sighs audibly.] (*Interview with Sylvette Leclerc*, Le Son des Choses)

Sylvette's narration moves between an articulation of past emotional states (being scared, frightened), and a non-explicit articulation of fellow-feeling in this wartime encounter. Sylvette does not describe the billeted Germans in detail. She passes over the earlier men, but dwells on the last young man, probably there in 1944.

Unlike Marie-Rolande, Sylvette does not narrate her child-self's feelings towards this young man; she just says he spent a lot of time with the children of the household. As with Marie-Rolande's story, though, it is the case that what is remembered and retold is what was felt. Given that she does not recount shared activities, conversations, or how she felt at the time, it could be suggested that no strong feelings were evoked by this relationship. Yet Sylvette knew what it was like to be separated from family members; her father had been taken prisoner of war in 1940. Perhaps – thinking into the gaps of knowledge – this was how she inferred that he missed his own family. But she had no experiential resources to enable her to empathise with the young man's experiences as a Hitler Youth, a Nazi, a soldier entering a dangerous war that was nearly lost, as a perpetrator of violence. From the limited account she gives, we cannot know much about the child's feelings, except I assume – based on my analysis of a corpus of 120 oral history narratives like this one – that if they were strong, shocking or unusual, she might have said more. Strong feelings are sticky in memory. The young German was a brief part of her everyday life, and we do not know whether she regarded him with empathy, sympathy or anything other than the habit of regular acquaintance. Nor do we know the fate of this young man, but we – and she – might assume the worst. Over 700,000 Germans were killed, went missing or were taken prisoner during the period of the liberation of France in July and August 1944, and as the German army was forced into retreat, soldiers were being taken prisoner or going missing in action at a rate of 70,000-75,000 per month across the winter (Biraben, *Pertes allemandes au cours de la deuxième guerre mondiale*: 520).

We know more about Sylvette's fellow-feeling for this young German at the point the story is recounted. The clue to this recalibration comes in the vocalisation of her narrative. The intensity of feeling comes through her final exclamation "My goodness – !" with an audible catch, a sigh and a pause. She holds back, perhaps regretful of the loss of life his presence in her childhood home implied as the Nazis had "used up" Germany's male population by then; perhaps saddened, even horrified, in the face of war's excess. Sylvette cannot put herself in his shoes, but her exclamation speaks of compassion for him, or for his loved ones. There may be empathy here, alongside sympathy: the two are not mutually exclusive. Sylvette may have had children and grandchildren herself (none are mentioned in the interview); even if not, as an adult she would have observational knowledge of the deep scars bereavement leaves on parents. She might empathise with the young German and/or his family, and/or sympathise with them.

Yet the young German man was an enemy. Aged eighteen in 1944, he likely joined the Hitler Youth around 1940; membership for eligible populations was around 98 percent in 1939 (Kater, *Hitler Youth*, cited in Miller and others, *Indoctrination and coercion in agent motivation*: 202). Research suggests that the Hitler Youth generation of soldiers had "internalized Nazism" (210) and observers remarked on their fanaticism (195). Sylvette, as a child civilian, was a victim of the Nazi quest for dominance, struggling with the severe food shortages that German requisitions created in France, and deprived of her father for several years as a prisoner-of-war; when he returned, he was seriously ill and immediately bereaved when his own mother died. Sylvette was not a victim of *this* young German, however, and her compassion for an enemy of France, and a member of an anti-Semitic perpetrator society, complicates her fellow-feeling in the post-war world. It has been said that there is a "madness" in trying to "understand" perpetrators, and such acts are "morally inappropriate"; on the other hand, Gobodo-Madikizela writes of the "critical and foundational role that understanding and empathic connection with the Other play in forgiveness" (*Empathic Repair after Mass Trauma*, 342). There is empathy in Sylvette's recognition of what fear and loss felt like; but more powerfully there is sympathy: her bleak sorrow at war's devastating consequences. Just as there was a gap for Marie-Rolande between her girl-self's feelings towards her mother and what, in the adult recollection, appeared a reasonable response of a struggling mother, so there is a gap here between the sympathy Sylvette feels, and what might be deemed morally appropriate, given that such sympathy works to neutralise his guilt, transforming *this* war to *any* war, *his* loss to *all* loss, his crimes to her sorrow.

Cries from a train

Remy was born in 1937, and his parents were stationmasters at a rural railway crossing near Audeville (Loiret). The crossing was about twelve kilometres to the north of Pithiviers, where an internment camp for Jews in France was situated. Six convoys of Jews rounded up in Paris left Pithiviers for Auschwitz between June and September 1942. It was usually the case that children were separated from their parents at Pithiviers before the adults were deported. The children themselves may have then been transported to Drancy camp in Paris, from where many were also deported. Remy was only five or six years old, and knew nothing of this. In his interview, he described a vivid memory:

> I'm on the platform with my mother, and a train is coming, it's slowing down, it's not going to stop, but we hear children screaming, crying, they were throwing things from – , and so I asked my mother, "Why are those children crying ?" And she said, "Well, what can you expect, they're just little children and they've been taken from their parents, and they're sending them to Germany." That was it. Just, they're little children – she didn't say Jewish children – just little children, they've taken them from their parents. Who had taken them? We didn't know – in fact, it was French people, not Germans – and they were taking them to Germany. To do what? That was it. And me, […] well, I was barely six years old, I asked her questions anyway, lots of questions. But that, the story of those children left such a mark on me; why? Well first, because it was children, they were in cattle wagons, do you understand, and you couldn't see their faces, but you could hear the screams, screams […]. (*Interview with Remy Ménigault*, Rails et Histoire)

At this point, the interview jumped to a more solid-voiced Remy speaking about another topic. A note was included with the interview: the archivists explained that they had decided to cut out part of the recorded interview, out of respect for the interviewee's distress. They recognised that this was an erasure of important non-verbal communication but had chosen, nonetheless, not to archive the full extent of his emotional breakdown. It was, and this was their hope, clear how he felt.

As a little boy, Remy struggled to understand what he was witnessing, or rather, what he could hear. As Plessner has written, "the aural impression [of crying…] holds us in its spell, it is contagious […] The […] crying of our fellow man [grips] us and [makes] us partners of his agitation without knowing why" (Plessner, cited in Kramer, *As if*: 285). What Remy saw was incomprehensible to him, but what he heard made sense: the child recognised other children's distress. Remy's mother's explanation – that the children had been separated from their parents – was likewise comprehensible insofar as he knew he would

not like being separated from his own parents. As a causal explanation, it matched the distress he heard. Without knowledge of why *these* children had been taken, a certain affective intensity may have gathered here as the little boy feared a similar fate for himself. Remy's fellow-feeling towards the sightless, screaming children, a puzzling empathy comprised only of partial knowledge, left a powerful impression.

The recalibration of Remy's fellow-feeling for these Jewish children in adulthood provides evidence of the limits of empathy, and a further role for sympathy in the face of empathic impotence. What Remy has learnt across his life about the fate of such children transforms his child's pained curiosity into overwhelming horror at what he had witnessed. The Jewish children's anguished cries resonated to a degree with the child, but the adult understands that he can never know how their fear felt; nothing can "affectively match" their pain; nothing is "similar enough" (Smith, *What is Empathy for?*: 712 and 715). So Remy cannot empathise; his feelings are not theirs. But sympathy is a source of unease, for what can sympathy *do* in the face of abjection? Sara Ahmed notes that "stories of pain involve complex relations of power" (*Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 22). Remy's compassion reflects the "patterns of […] subordination responsible for such suffering" (Spelman, cited in Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*: 22). Remy was in a literal sense a bystander to the persecution of these children; but years later, *he* is protected by the archivists, his distress respectfully effaced from the record. Michael Rothberg has developed the analytical category of the "implicated subject" to explore what it means to be "a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator […but] in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles" (*The Implicated Subject*: 1). The category of the implicated subject helps move away from "categories of guilt and innocence" (34), both expanding the "ethical burden" to include the beneficiaries of violence towards others, but also "loosens the terms" of that burden by separating it from the ambiguities of guilt (20-21). The little boy Remy did not perpetrate the crimes against these Jewish children. Yet part of Remy's deeply felt distress may stem from his being an "onlooker to violence" (Gobodo-Madikizela, *Empathic Repair after Mass Trauma*: 333) from a perpetrator nation. In his interview, Remy states that "it was French people" who were responsible here. Nearly 76,000 Jews were deported from France with the complicity of the French government. Very evidently, Remy-the-child may have feared being on the train, but he never would be; Remy-the-man lived to cry in his old age, but those children did not.

Hannah Arendt wrote that during the deportation of the Jews, non-Jewish populations "could not have cared less" (Arendt, cited in Gobodo-Madikizela,

Empathic Repair after Mass Trauma: 334). Remy did care, to the extent that he was upset by what he heard; a child recognised other children's distress. Remy, unlike Marie-Rolande, was not old enough to reason his emotion, however. The recalibration of Remy's fellow-feeling for these children creates acute discomfort in part because of his impotence; as a child onlooker, his feelings are not consonant with those expressed in public memorials and apologies where responsibility can be assumed and forgiveness sought. He heard them crying, but did nothing; he could do nothing. There is a gap between the child upset by other children's distress, and the man who can never feel *those* feelings, never know *that* pain. It would be wholly inappropriate to try to put himself in their shoes; empathy can only fail here. Remy is left with sympathy: with compassion that overflows language and resists composure. His sorrow rests on the knowledge of their pain, but acknowledges the gulf that separates him from them. It is this affective gulf, into which are poured all the complexities of the implicated subject, which breaks him. That he cares is evident. But when empathy has reached its limits, it is left to sympathy, respecting the essential separateness of souls, to recognise the enormity of past wounds.

Conclusion: the "ethical demand" at the limits of empathy

Feelings with, for and about other people, and claims to feel with, for and about other people, are complicated and intriguing. Fellow-feeling, whether sympathy or empathy, engenders a set of moral and ethical questions about who should or can feel what about whom, why, and with what consequences. As this article has suggested, the intimate realm of the everyday is rich terrain for examining instances of fellow-feeling in wartime close encounters, whether they be within families, across the enemy-victim divides, or in relation to persecuted-persecutor populations. It has also indicated some of the shifts which become evident when past attitudes are recounted in later life, following changes in life experience, knowledge and emotional range, and in post-conflict cultural and political contexts. The article has analysed past fellow-feeling through oral history interviews, although it is of course possible that other sources – particularly qualitative ones – might be useful for thinking about how feelings towards and about other people provide evidence for complicated political and moral judgements inside populations at war. These may be important insofar as they encourage or dissuade action – including care – and so have a very real historical value in relation to the intention and motivation of historical action. A further intention was to demonstrate that secondary analysis of oral history interviews can be undertaken using affective practices, including a conscious, subjective attunement to the beyond-language

impressions that the felt realm of experience leaves in the narrative. These may be interpretively discerned through intensities of feeling that accrete around particular people or events, or by thinking about why particular memories might get stored, retrieved and told.

Empathy is something of a buzzword in its popular usage, sold as a cure for intolerance, hate and exclusion. But empathy may not always be the route to caring more or caring better. This article has attempted to show where sympathy steps in, given empathy's limitations in terms of assumption, effacement and experience. Sympathy matters because it invokes care, concern and responsibility for another's wellbeing. Ahmed writes of the "ethical demand" in relation to fellow-feeling: "I must act about that which I cannot know, rather than act insofar as I know" (*Cultural Politics of Emotion:* 31). As an historian who is not French, who is not a war child, and who is not Jewish, this injunction feels pertinent: I research and I write about that which I cannot know, and I shall not pretend that I do. For this reason, many conventions of traditional historical writing – conclusiveness, confident argumentation, mastery – are inappropriate. Instead, this article opts for many perhaps, and offers the alternative of being open to being affected by that which I cannot know and feel, thinking into the gaps and spaces of knowledge to expand the possibilities of past experience, rather than to insist on its certainties.

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"It's a Very Emotional Kind of Thought". An Appraisal of Five Community Workers' Accounts of their Involvement during the Troubles in Northern Ireland

By Joana Etchart

Abstract: The conflict in Northern Ireland started in the 1960s and rapidly deteriorated between 1968 and 1971. As violence escalated, various forms of community activism developed at grassroots level with the overall aim of improving living conditions locally. The role of nonviolent community workers in fulfilling a range of key purposes was crucial. Given that they experienced a truly "close encounter" with conflict and its local ramifications, this paper will analyse how they refer to their "involvement" in personal accounts and, particularly, which links the interviewees establish between the events – "what was taking place" – and their decision to "do something". Based on the assumption that emotions serve as a means to establish a connection between oneself and the historical event, the paper will analyse how this link is construed by focusing on the feeling of fear (Bourke, *Fear and Anxiety*). Eventually, on the basis of Bede Scott's contribution on affective disorders (Scott, *Affective Disorders*), the paper will seek to identify what emotional patterns may be drawn from the sample interviews. Overall, by relying on theoretical contributions made by specialists in the history of emotions and oral history, this article will also seek to identify means by which subjective accounts of contested events may be used a source of historical knowledge.

Keywords: *Northern Ireland, conflict, community workers, history of emotions, oral history*

As in most conflict situations, the Northern Ireland conflict is composed of events that took place, as well as various – often contested – accounts of what took place. Numerous interpretations have been given on the nature, origins and causes of the conflict from the outset (Boyd, *Holy War in Belfast*; De Paor, *Divided Ulster*; Cameron, *Disturbances in Northern Ireland*; Scarman, *The Scarman Report*; and Trevor-Roper, *Why Ulster Fights?*). During the conflict, two major trends of explanation were identified, one internal, and the other external (McGarry & O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland*). The internal interpretation focused on the religious, cultural and political divisions between nationalists and unionists whereas the external one considered that the factors which contributed to the aggravation of the conflict were either economic, or related to international events and movements, or concerned with decisions made by national governments.

Since the transition to a post-conflict situation from 1998 onwards, there have been various attempts at finding mechanisms to "deal with the past". The 2014 Stormont House Agreement constituted a breakthrough, yet the need for

effective investigations into the deaths of the Troubles has not been properly addressed and various key aspects still remain pending (Bryson, *Victims, violence, and voice*; Bryson and others, *Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's Past*; Hamber & Kelly, *Practice, Power and Inertia*; and McEvoy, *The Legacy of the Troubles and the Law*). Accordingly, accounts of past episodes are given in that context of fundamental disagreement as to how to interpret the Troubles.

Arguably, such a context creates a specific type of reserve – shall we say a suspicion – in regard to what is sometimes perceived by historians as partial accounting. Yet, specialists in oral history have long proven that so-called subjective accounts and recollections constitute an important resource for the historian, provided that a scientific framework is elaborated that permits to use them as archival sources (Portelli, *The Peculiarities of Oral History*). In Northern Ireland, Anna Bryson conducted an oral history project on the memories of 1945-1969 in the town of Maghera in which she developed an interesting reflection on the subjectivity of the people interviewed. For example, she acknowledges that there are "shadings, contradictions, and tensions within each testimony" (Bryson, *"Whatever You Say, Say Nothing"*: 45). In line with this, this article posits that personal accounts may be taken into consideration in the historical analysis even when they are subjective or, shall we say, because they are so. The focus will be on feelings, emotions and affective experiences – the various labels will be used interchangeable– in line with recent works on the history of emotions (Boddice, *The History of Emotions*; Boddice, *A History of Feelings*).

As a starting-point, following Joanna Bourke's consideration that fear stands as "one of the most influential emotions in history" (Bourke, *Fear and Anxiety*: 111), the article aims to examine whether and how fear is displayed, particularly the fear of dying, and what other affective experiences are recalled by the interviewees when confronted with a situation of extreme danger. Besides, it also looks at the emotions which remain unidentified, even though they are perceptible during the interview, for example when the pace or the voice are altered.

But, before proceeding any further, the scientific approach must be clarified: the author does not seek to act as an analyst of the emotions of each interviewee. She does not intend to provide an explanation of the participant's emotional state. What this article seeks to do is to adopt a wider perspective. In order to do so, it relies on the ground-breaking work of oral historian Alessandro Portelli who studied the recollections of the event of the Fosse Ardeatine in Italy in 1944. Portelli contended that the historical event he studied had a double entry point as "both an event that actually happened and one that

is intensely remembered and conflictually narrated" (Portelli, *The Order has been Carried out:* 15). The Italian example applies to Northern Ireland, where the conflict is a ground of intense remembrance, but also of intense contestation of remembrance. Thus, the person who gives an account is also intervening in the contextual debate on the interpretation of the past.[1]

Moreover, when seeking to appraise emotions in history, Jan Plamper developed the notion of a "temporal difference between the experience of an emotion and its memory" (Plamper, *The History of Emotions*: 290). In other words, the emotional recollection may be posited both as historical – how one felt when the events took place – and contemporary – how one feels when telling about it. This ambivalence constitutes the basis of the analytical approach adopted in this article. Firstly, we wish to identify the events that affected the interviewees and that mattered in their decision to become involved in various forms of community work. But, in addition, the article seeks to establish whether the affective experience that is recalled is part of a wider pattern. The framework for this interpretative grid – which is largely under construction – is influenced notably by the work of Bede Scott on affective disorders in colonial and post-colonial literary texts (Scott, *Affective Disorders*). He explained:

> Rather than understanding emotion as necessarily subjective or individualized, then, I shall regard it here as a relational practice that may be socially or even politically determined. Or to put it another way, I will argue that literary representations of emotion need not be interpreted solely at the level of character, individual psychology, or the contingencies of plotting, but could also be related to wider historical processes. This shift in emphasis acknowledges the intersubjective quality of such emotional responses and, in so doing, challenges some of the boundaries that have traditionally insulated the individual from the collective, the psychological from the social. (7)

The "shift in emphasis" developed by Scott provides a sketchy yet promising framework to analyse interviews, by promising to study how the personal is "related to wider historical processes". The leading question concerns the affective signs that are perceptible in the testimonies under scrutiny: are they part of an "intersubjective" pattern? If so, the feeling might mean that the person is being infiltrated by more global historical events, by political decisions, or by social developments. When that occurs, Scott identifies that there is an "affective disorder" (10-16) of historical importance, which must be fully identified and then integrated into the historical account. This opens a very promising field of research into the various affective disjunctures of a historical nature that are perceptible in the oral testimonies of the Troubles in

Northern Ireland. The scope of the research being extremely ambitious, as a starting point, this article offers to look into the experiences of five key community workers who were involved in nonviolent initiatives locally during the three decades of the Troubles from the 1970s to the 1990s.

The emotional encounters with conflict

This article analyses accounts of community workers who practised nonviolent forms of activism such as community development and community relations during the Troubles in Northern Ireland (Etchart, *Community Development*), when such activities were thriving. For example in 1974, there were approximately a hundred local community groups in Belfast alone (Fortnight Magazine, *Belfast Community Groups*: 1), and about 500 in Northern Ireland in 1975. This means that there was on average one community group for 3000 people (Griffiths, *Paramilitary Groups*: 194). But why focus on nonviolent community workers?

When one looks into the history of public policies supporting community groups and voluntary work during the Troubles, several key figures stand out for a variety of common features: firstly, they got involved locally in various forms of nonviolent community activism such as trade unions, women's groups, tenants' groups and facilitation, and, secondly, they did so incessantly throughout the Troubles. The role of community workers in fulfilling a range of key purposes during extremely difficult times has been documented by authors such as McCready, who shed light on the value of community development (*Empowering People*).

Moreover, in the 2000s, Michael Hall published the transcripts of interviews with community leaders in a series of booklets where he sought to define who these people were: "A list comprising not only those individuals who had never deviated from the peaceful pursuit of bridge-building between our estranged communities, but also former combatants who subsequently became involved in community work when the self-defeating nature of violence became ever more apparent to them" (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 1). This article is rooted in the definition provided by Hall in order to contend that these people constitute a coherent group of nonviolent community leaders. What brings them together is their activism in a variety of local development initiatives during the Troubles and, consequently, their experience of activism during the conflict. In that regard, they represent an interesting, original entry point into the history of the Troubles.

Besides, as explained by Hall, some figures of nonviolent community activism were former combatants who had experienced paramilitarism themselves, and had concluded that this approach failed to improve local living conditions. Overall, community activism was practised within communities where coercive and violent actions were also promoted by local paramilitary leaders and activists.[2] The two served antagonistic aims, yet they were concomitant and community workers sometimes acted as liaising agents. For example, some of the fieldworkers employed by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Commission (NICRC, 1969-1975), the Community Development Officers (CDOs), had contacts with local paramilitary leaders as part of their liaising task and of the overall inclusive policy adopted by the leaders of the said Commission (Griffiths, *Paramilitary Groups*), even though they disagreed with paramilitary agendas (Etchart, *Les premières politiques de réconciliation*). This constituted one "encounter" with conflict, among many others.

In order to analyse how nonviolent community workers refer to their involvement and to their experience of the conflict, this article is concerned with the empirical analysis of five testimonies given by May Blood, "Joe" Joseph Camplisson, "Kate" Kathleen Kelly, Father Des Wilson and Joanna McMinn, who all have in common a commitment to improving local conditions during the three decades of the Troubles from the 1970s to the 1990s.[3] May Blood was a trade union activist in the local mill where she was employed (Blackstaff Linen Mill). She also contributed to setting up a residents' association in her neighbourhood in the 1970s (Springmartin, Belfast). She then worked for the Greater Shankill Partnership and became involved in the Women's Coalition.[4]

Joe Camplisson worked as a CDO for the NICRC and, as such, guided local people in various community initiatives. He also acted as a facilitator in liaising with local paramilitary leaders. He continued in the Community Development Centre (CDC) up until the late 1970s.[5] Kate Kelly also worked as a CDO and she helped set up various community initiatives, especially with women. In the 1980s her activity became her full-time job through the funding available under the Belfast Action Team scheme. She later worked for the Department of Health and Social Services as an expert in community development. Father Des Wilson was a priest in the Ballymurphy area of Belfast. He helped people set up community projects of various sorts, including community centres such as the Springhill Community House. He also helped establish the Conway Mill Education Project. Joanna McMinn worked in the field of adult education with the Workers' Education Association and then the Open University. She helped

set up various women's projects to improve women's education, health and welfare rights.

Traces of their work may be found in the reports of some community groups, in books and pamphlets (Blood, *Watch my Lips*; Wilson, *An End to Silence*; Wilson, *We didn't Take "No" for an Answer*; and Wilson & Sheehy, *A Diary of Thirty Days)*. But the main source of information is the interview. Joe Camplisson was interviewed by the author on a variety of occasions between 2005 and 2010. His testimony was also published by Michael Hall, so was May Blood's (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*). This article also relies on interviews conducted by the local community media centre Northern Visions TV (NVTV) as part of the "Our Generation Archive project". The interviews were conducted and broadcast between 2009 and 2011.

Interestingly, in the introduction to the series of pamphlets, Michael Hall acknowledged that the community workers he interviewed were hesitant to speak at first. He identified two sorts of "anxieties":

> All the interviewees were initially reluctant to reminisce about their experiences, concerned that such personal accounts might read as self-promotion. I endeavoured to assure them of the wider benefit in sharing their successes and their failures. Some reminded me that personal accounts were inevitably highly subjective, and that others might have different recollections of the same periods in our history. Nevertheless, despite such anxieties, they all agreed to be interviewed. (Hall, *Introduction)*

Generally speaking, community workers tend to adopt a modest position, and they avoid talking about the personal. But some of them might also be reluctant to share an account that they consider "highly subjective". This reserve indicates that they are aware of the context of fundamental disagreement as to how to interpret the past. Precisely, this might represent a major scientific challenge: how may such subjective accounts become an integral part of the history of the events they describe?

Examining the meanings of fear

Several historical episodes resurface in conjunction with a personal – or an emotional – reference to the notion of fear. Yet, the following examples show that the meaning of fear is variable. As a case in point, in the NVTV interview conducted in 2009, May Blood recalls an episode during the Troubles where fear predominated in the neighbourhood where she used to live with her family (near Rodent Street in West Belfast). May Blood is a Protestant and she used to

live in a mixed neighbourhood. She describes the moment when they were forced to move out of their family home in 1971. This is how the events unfolded:

> We were actually burnt out of our home by Protestants. They came one night to put the neighbours next door out. My dad came out and said to them "catch yourselves on, this woman's not doing any harm." There was a great fear in the community at that time because people were disappearing. You went to bed and when you got up the next morning there was another two neighbours gone, nobody ever knew where they went. And the fear was, that they were taking all of the Catholics and then they were going to come and shoot all the Protestants. […] Luckily my mum and dad were on holiday in Newcastle. They lit the bonfire right up against our house and all the ceilings came down and every window in the house was broken. It was a definite message. We decided we had to move. (Blood, *NVTV Interview*: 21:20-25:00)

Roden Street used to be a mixed neighbourhood with Protestants and Catholics living next door to each other. This episode describes intense intimidation by people coming at night and highlights the fact that the two communities were at risk, that it was the mixed nature of the place that was being targeted. Such forced movements of population occurred sporadically in various parts of the city of Belfast during some of the extremely violent episodes that took place between 1968 and 1971 (Cameron, *Disturbances in Northern Ireland*; Prince & Warner, *Belfast and Derry in Revolt*; and Walsh, *From Hope to Hatred*). Rodent Street is mentioned especially in the context of the "Flight", which was a brief yet intense episode of population movement that took place in August 1971, in the aftermath of the introduction of internment on August 9th. Internment without trial was a special measure, introduced by the regional unionist government in Stormont with the approval of the British government, allowing the police force – the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) – and the British Army to arrest people suspected of belonging to paramilitary groups and to detain them in internment camps. This targeted essentially suspected republican paramilitaries of the PIRA (Hennessey, *The Evolution of the Troubles*; McCleery, *Operation Demetrius*).

Police officers and British Army soldiers raided houses and made arrests *en masse*, which contributed to increasing tensions locally and, combined with various other factors, triggered population movements. According to a report issued soon after by the NICRC Research Unit (*Flight*), hundreds of Catholic and Protestant families were forced to leave their homes in chaotic conditions. This led to extreme poverty as people generally left with little to no belongings to seek shelter elsewhere. It affected both Protestants and Catholics, as

indicated in the report: "of the total number of movements 40% were Protestant while 60% were Catholic" (*Flight*). May Blood's account sheds light on extreme levels of destitution. She explains that they "ended up squatting in Springmartin – that was the only way we could get rehoused" (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 5). In the interview conducted in 2010 by the NVTV, Kate Kelly also refers to an episode, in which she got involved in an ad hoc relief committee to try and help the people who had been forced out of their homes and were now homeless (Kelly, *NVTV Interview*: 17:26).

Interestingly, the fear of dying as described by Blood in her account is experienced at the level of the community ("great fear in the community at that time"). There is a double entry into the risk of dying: the personal risk of being shot or of dying in a fire in your house, and the global danger of vanishing as a community of mixed identities. This shows the importance for her of having grown up in a mixed neighbourhood in the 1950s, and of having experienced the destruction of such a community.

This also surfaces in the testimony provided by Father Des Wilson who grew up in Ormeau Road in Belfast, where Catholics and Protestants were "good neighbours" (Wilson, *NVTV Interview*: 01:30):

> I was very fortunate, I grew up on the south side of Belfast in the Ormeau Road area. And it was a very mixed area. We had a man living near us who was a tremendous preacher, he was one of the old Huguenot stock, Professor [Douglas] Savory and he was working at Queens, he was a Professor of French. He used to go out every weekend or so, preaching against the Catholic Church [laughter] which is an interesting kind of neighbour to have. But the district was very, very mixed indeed. Because two doors from him there was another family, one of whose members was put in prison for six months for wearing an Easter Lily for the republicans. So how much more mixed can you get? [laughter] So I was very fortunate in that way. (01:15 – 02:23)

Des Wilson insists on the "very, very" mixed nature of the area as regards religious identities and political aspirations – the Easter Lily is a symbol that is worn to commemorate the republican/nationalist struggle in Ireland during the revolutionary period and the War of Independence (1912-1922). Incidentally, although that aspect is not made explicit by the interviewee, the families also belonged to different social classes, one neighbour being a University Professor and Des Wilson's own family being of modest origins (01:10). He describes the extreme differences between them with a touch of irony, which indicates that no sense of danger emanated from living in close proximity to each other. He even feels "very fortunate", which shows that he appreciated the diversity.

This is quite typical of people who grew up in the 1950s.[6] May Blood also says that the situation deteriorated notably during the intense rioting of the late 1960s (Cameron, *Disturbances in Northern Ireland*; Scarman, *The Scarman Report*) and during the episode of the Flight, which, according to her, put a "strain in relationships with Catholics". But there was an "underlying feeling that we were friends", especially in the local mill where she worked and where she got involved as a trade unionist (Blood, *A History of Feelings*: 18:00 – 20:00). Interestingly, the strain is presented as circumstantial, but the feeling of friendship is perceived as deeper. This analysis is quite common among community workers belonging to the generation who had grown up in mixed neighbourhoods. This came to an end in the early years of the Troubles as a result of "fear in the community", as described by May Blood. In her case, this was induced by members of the Protestant community – which she also regards as her community Farset Community Think Tanks Project, *Grassroots Leadership (1), Recollections by May Blood and Joe Camplisson*. She was not afraid of what people from the other community might do to her, but of what members of her own community were capable of doing. Her recollections also indicate that what used to be safe – the family home, the street, one's community – suddenly became dangerous.

Sensing danger: when violence and fear penetrate into homely sets

When Father Des Wilson became a priest in the late 1960s, he was appointed to the area of Ballymurphy in West Belfast. He describes the destitution and extreme levels of poverty in the area. In his account, the streets became a very dangerous place: "In the early 1970s when terrible things were happening, people simply couldn't be sure when they left their house in the morning that they'd come back in the evening." (Wilson, *NVTV Interview*: 13:05). He refers to "shootings", as people were "being shot" in the streets (13:30).

Highly intense episodes took place in the early 1970s and, as mentioned previously, in the days that followed the introduction of internment and the intrusion of police and army officers in homes. In the neighbourhood of Ballymurphy specifically, a dramatic episode took place between August 9th and 11th. As explained by investigative journalist Ian Cobain (*Ballymurphy Shootings*), who looked into the "Ballymurphy Shootings", soldiers from the British Army took over a local community centre and used it as a base. The next 36 hours were chaotic: the soldiers raided the homes of suspected members of the IRA and shot people on the streets. The events left ten people dead, one of whom was a priest, Father Hugh Mullan. Fifty years later, in May 2021, the Lord Chief Justice's Office in the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast stated that

the ten victims were innocent, that the use of force against them was not justified, and that no measures were taken to protect civilians (Judicial Communications Office, *Summary of Findings*). That it took fifty years to properly investigate the shootings and publish the findings testifies to the immense difficulty of "dealing with the past". Although an initial investigation into the deaths was conducted in 1972, it was deemed unsatisfactory and the account of the events became intensely contested during and after the Troubles until 2018, when the new investigation into the shootings began. The soldiers argued that some people were armed and that they belonged to the PIRA (Cobain, *Ballymurphy Shootings*). But the relatives of the ten victims incessantly claimed that they were innocent civilians. The political and historical stakes of such disagreements are obviously high, and this episode constitutes one example of the numerous unresolved cases of the past in Northern Ireland, which accordingly remain "highly subjective", and constitute historical "anxieties" per se (Bourke, *Remembering War*).

Des Wilson's account testifies to the tense atmosphere that prevailed in the streets of Ballymurphy and also to the fact that civilians were targeted. At one moment, he recalls a traumatic episode when, after providing assistance to a local family whose son had been shot by military fire, he left to go home: "As I was going out of the house, I suddenly became conscious of the fact that there was a number of women who had formed themselves around me, and they never said a word! When I think about it today… it's [pause] it's a very emotional kind of thought you know." He then goes on: "We moved out to the main road. You could hear people shouting away." And he remembers thinking: "My God, they'd have done that for any cleric, any person" (Wilson, *NVTV Interview*: 13:00 – 15:30). The tension is palpable in his account when he remembers people shouting – that is a very precise sound which testifies to a high sense of alertness. The precision of some aspects of the moment represents the tension generated by the possibility of dying, given that he felt he had become a target too. Is this why the recollection is such "an emotional thought", as he puts it? He is also possibly impressed with the spontaneous, brave attitude of women who shielded him from bullets. But, arguably, the "very emotional kind of thought" might also be a contemporary emotion generated *during* the interview, as he remembers not only the events, but also his own position in it. This stands as a case in point of the dual meaning of a feeling as both a past experience and a contemporary comment.

The account given by Wilson of the transformation of a safe place into a dangerous one also concerned rural settings, as shown by Joanna McMinn's oral testimony given in 2011. McMinn was born in England and moved to

Northern Ireland in 1974. She lived in the Glens of Antrim, which was considered "a safer place to be, to be out of Belfast" (McMinn, *NVTV Interview*: 07:20).

> Even there you were very aware of the things happening, you know, just the patrols […] one of things I remember is the presence of the UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment 1970-1992] and how our Catholic neighbours would tell us that they could be stopped by somebody who knew them, but asked them who they were and where they were going from [sic] and where they were coming from […]. I was so conscious of the actual hurt of it to people, to be treated like that by people who knew you. (07:20 – 08:00)

This account describes the intrusive nature of Army patrols "even there", that is to say in the countryside, and the very special feature of the UDR as a locally recruited regiment of the British Army, who employed local people (mainly Protestants). She describes her awareness of the "hurt" to "people", who in this case were Catholics. She did not experience the hurt personally, as she was not a Catholic, but she nonetheless knew that this represented a humiliating experience. This hints at the intersubjective quality of the feeling of humiliation that possibly circulated from one person to another, in this case from those who experienced it to those, like McMinn, who knew about it.

When asked by the interviewer if she was frightened, she says she felt safe given that she was considered an "outsider". However, she recalls one episode when she did feel frightened. It concerns the death of John Turnly, who was from a traditionally unionist family. Yet, in the 1970s, he joined the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and then set out to create the new Irish Independence Party (Connla, *John Turnly Remembered*). McMinn recalls:

> At one time my husband had been involved supporting somebody who was standing for election, John Turnly [founder of nationalist Irish Independence Party, shot dead in 1980 by loyalist paramilitaries]. And then he was murdered, he was shot dead by the UVF, I think,[7] in Carnlough and his wife had been driving him somewhere and wasn't aware that somebody, you know, was following them and so on. And after that I was frightened. My husband had had a close association with him. Now people who knew said, you know, you actually have nothing to fear. We'd lived for seven years without a lock on our door, and, we got a lock on the door, and a dog and, you know. (McMinn, *NVTV Interview*: 08:10 – 09:25)

McMinn suggests that Turnly was assassinated because he was a Protestant nationalist, and was thus perceived as a traitor by members of the

Protestant/unionist community. That loyalist paramilitary leaders locally perceived Turnly's nationalist activism as deviant represents one facet of the intimidation exerted on the community in general, pressing people to conform to what was seen as one's community's accepted identity. The fear of being deemed disloyal was also conducive to keeping one's head down, as described by May Blood: "For many people it eventually became a matter of: just go to work, come home, keep your head down and don't go creating any problems for yourself out there" (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 5).

Besides, McMinn's account of Turnly's assassination shows that the conflict came close to her at that moment as she now believed that her husband had become exposed as a target too. A close examination of the oral performance indicates that her pace and phrasing become extremely allusive – there are a series of suspended endings and recurrent use of "you know". When violence, and murder, become a possibility, a specific type of fear – a sense of alertness – is induced, as when Mc Minn refers to Turnly's wife not being "aware that somebody, you know, was following them and so on", and when she says that they eventually "got a lock on the door, and a dog and, you know". The pace and the allusive tone show that McMinn and her husband were aware of possible security threats to their lives on an everyday basis, and in their own homes. This is an interesting example of the phenomenon of infiltration of a historical, political and social transformation – that their lives are now at risk – into the personal account. The kind of fear that invades the homely sphere constitutes an important affective disorder. Further analyses would be required to fully grasp the extent of the phenomenon – how intersubjective is it? – and to identify the various meanings of that specific kind of fear.

In addition, the allusive tone that surfaces through the oral quality of the document indicates that many things are left unsaid, notably about "people who knew", that is to say, people who knew of paramilitary activities and agendas. This reveals an interesting facet of the experience of the conflict, that of encounters with paramilitarism. Indeed, on some occasions, community activists such as Joe Camplisson acted as local facilitators. This began as part of the community relations programme devised by the NICRC and was later pursued by a number of local community groups (Etchart, *Community Development*; Etchart, *Path Dependency*). Joe Camplisson began to work with paramilitary leaders such as Andy Tyrie (UDA) from 1970 onwards. He explains: "We [Andy and I] had an understanding that I could only work with people who were not dealing with weapons, but those who were doing something on the social front. I felt that this trust being placed in me, coming from a Catholic background, was amazing" (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 23).

The relationship-building experience felt, as he says, "amazing", which is indicative of the importance given to this type of work. This also consisted in trying to develop an analytical discourse among paramilitary leaders. Ideally, this would lead them to acknowledge the failure of paramilitarism (23-26). Of course, the objectives of the community worker and the paramilitary leader were antagonistic: the former aimed to develop peaceful forms of activism, the latter to gain community support for violent actions through their involvement in the "social front". Despite the difficulties inherent to such unconventional work, it nonetheless developed in the 1970s (Etchart, *Les premières politiques de réconciliation*).[8] More generally, though, Camplisson's account of his encounter with Andy Tyrie also suggests that the experience of fear was extremely paradoxical for the nonviolent community workers.

The links between fear and agency

Although in her analysis of the affective experience of fear Bourke explains that this may reinforce subordination, she also insists that it may adversely "unravel" subordination and lead a person to act against it (Bourke, *Fear and Anxiety*: 125). This is extremely relevant in the case of the testimonies under scrutiny. For example, the terrible episode of the flight of May Blood's family gives way to a description of how she "almost" instantly got involved in a community project, the Springmartin Residents Association, in order to improve the living conditions in the neighbourhood:

> Almost immediately on moving into Springmartin, I got involved in voluntary community work. I got a group of women together plus one man who was included because he was good at writing letters. We began to say, this is what we want in our estate. We pay the same rent as everybody else and therefore we are entitled to the same things. (Blood, *NVTV Interview*, 22:00)

The street, we are told, was "a dump" as a result of the events of the previous days. Blood explains that the group was mainly made up of women, even though the social environment locally was rather hostile to women being active in the group. In her account, there are allusive references to local paramilitaries who intimidated them and even led them to disband the group. Blood adds that "women were taking risks": "all the men were drinking in the local pubs and the women were fighting – in the Association – it was not easy" (22:00 – 27:00). This describes the conservative expectation of "all the men" that their wives' role was in the private place of the home, not as an activist in an association.

Blood also refers to a form of "hesitancy to get involved by Protestant women who were married to paramilitaries" (28:30), which shows the extent to which paramilitarism had infiltrated the home and the personal.[9] The experience of fear and of activism are associated in Blood's account when she refers to the fact that she was free ("I was free", 29:00) despite the hostile environment as regards women's activism. Besides, the various episodes and developments of the 1968-1971 period, notably her family's flight in 1971, created in her a "desire" as she says, to become actively involved locally: "And I suppose from all this involvement the desire grew in me to help people" (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 4).

This, we argue, may take place when fear becomes "experiential", in line with what former member of the South African African National Congress and former Justice Albie Sachs described as "experiential truth". According to him, among other types of truths, experiential truth means "deriving from lived experience certain conclusions about life, about existence" (Sachs, *The South African Truth Commission*: 35). Regarding May Blood, the knowledge gathered from her experience of the conflict and from "all this involvement" led her to construct this notion of "desire" to help people. Somehow, fearful episodes reinforced her sense of capacity. Drawing from her experience as a trade unionist in the local mill, she knew that she could contribute to improving people's lives. Father Des Wilson also refers to this when he concludes that after many tragic moments he "learned tragically" (Wilson, *NVTV Interview*: 16:35).

This experiential truth also surfaces as the experience of a contradiction. For example, interviewees often describe a moment when they felt disconnected from their environment. May Blood says:

> When the whole Civil Rights thing fell apart and we went down the road of the Troubles, for a long time I felt confused, I felt lost, I didn't fit into this world around me. Even in later years that's the way I have often felt: that somehow or other I don't fit into all this. Not that I'm not British, not that I'm not a Protestant, for I'm a very loyal Protestant and my faith is very important to me, but all that was happening around me seemed to have little to do with my Britishness or my Protestantism. All of a sudden we were supposed to wave a flag to prove we were loyal? I don't believe you have to put a flag outside your window to prove you're loyal, I just don't believe that. (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership 1*: 6).

She describes that she felt a disjuncture between what she feels, her beliefs and the "world" around her. Interestingly, in the accounts, the experience of a contradiction often contributes to getting involved in community action and, more specifically, in *networking*. The testimonies are invariably interspersed

with accounts of getting in touch with someone, of ringing someone, of getting phone calls, and so on. There are many little signs indicating an intense networking activity. For example, Kate Kelly explains how she – and three other community workers – became involved with Women's Information Groups in the early 1980s:

> We all had contact in different ways and then gradually our discussion focused on – in those days women, first of all, they hadn't the good conditions, the good living conditions they have now, I mean they were beginning to have it, […] but women were emerging to provide support for children, mostly that was it, it was mothers and toddlers' groups, that is where that began. So we became aware of all of that, and each of us had different information, and similar information as well, about what was going on. So we gradually came to a point where we thought we should ask, without any kind of [pause] what's the word, like a kind of direction, well, the direction was to bring the people we knew, the women we knew, together. (Kelly, *NVTV Interview*: 32:00-33:30)

This extract sheds light on a series of very elaborate social skills such as being aware of the needs emerging on the ground, having detailed information on "what was going on", and having "contact in different ways". The approach is also fundamentally collective and consists in bringing people together, be they community workers or local people. Women's Information Groups were set up in the 1980s to help women make informed decisions on key issues such as health, family and finance. The rationale, as described by Donahoe in her book on women's contribution to community development (*Peacebuilding through Women's Community Development*), was to create links between women from various areas and to encourage them to share information on the issues that mattered to them.

Kelly describes the difficult context of the Hunger Strikes in the early 1980s, when tensions escalated. Kelly and the groups she worked with were organising an event in London and had to pick up women from their homes in various neighbourhoods. This was potentially hazardous. Yet, Kelly identifies that moment as important, as it "indicated very clearly how [pause] people want to go on, want to relate, they get value out of that and that's why it's so important to continue to examine how the relationships can be developed. I mean, people are dying to be in touch with each other really [laughter]!" (Kelly, *NVTV Interview*: 42:00 – 43:00).

This is an interesting comment that runs counter to the dichotomy that is often drawn between nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland. Kelly, instead, describes a yearning for contacts. This echoes Joe Camplisson's description of how his contacts with loyalist paramilitaries felt "amazing". Both

examples show that the type of community work that they practised during the Troubles relied heavily on networking skills, and that it felt like a passion for most interviewees.

In that sense, the sample of interviews shows that taking action may also be construed as an emotional pattern. On that level, Joe Camplisson's account is quite telling:

> One important incident occurred when I was working in the Greencastle area. I was driving along the bottom of Serpentine Road when I heard a bomb go off somewhere in the vicinity. Immediately I did a quick turnaround and came flying back up, shaking. The bomb had been in a pub across from where I held some of my meetings; indeed I had been on my way to one of these. And I was halfway up the Serpentine Road when I stopped and said to myself: "What am I doing", I wasn't afraid of danger, I was more terrified of what I would see ; I didn't know whether I would handle it. But I went back down again, and that fact of turning around and going in the direction of the danger took me through a fear barrier and was also a turning point in my work. (Farset, *Grassroots Leadership*: 23)

This extract is eloquent in many ways. On the one hand, the *historical* emotion of fear is complex. The interviewee is "shaking" first, he then describes a series of consequent affective experiences: the fear of dying, and the apprehension of having to cope with an atrocious scene. Eventually Camplisson transcends the "fear barrier". This is an elaborate reflection on his emotional experience during a bomb attack. The affective description also shows how the dreadful atmosphere of the moment infiltrates the personal account. On the other hand, though, Camplisson also makes a *contemporary* comment upon the necessity of getting involved in the sort of perilous and sensitive work that he undertook as a facilitator. He explains his more general commitment to working "in the direction of the danger", that is to say by adopting unconventional and sometimes risky approaches such as liaising work and the facilitated analysis of needs.

Concluding remarks

From a historical perspective, several aspects of the Troubles have surfaced among the interviewees. For example, some of them referred to the changing nature of community relations between 1968 and 1998 and the importance of specific events locally such as the impact of internment. The levels of strife and division changed during the Troubles, and were impacted by internal and

external power relations. The accounts also reveal complex patterns of subordination and domination in the communities.

Besides, through the analysis of the emotional experience, an additional layer of meaning was added and key affective disorders were identified. For example, interviewees described various situations of extreme danger during the conflict – such as shootings against civilians in 1971, and intimidation against attitudes seen as deviant in the community in the 1970s and 1980s. On such occasions, the fact that a personal or an affective recollection surfaces sheds light on the penetration of contextual developments into homely settings. A series of signs have been identified such as the reference to an emotional experience – fear for instance – but also less obvious signs pertaining to the oral nature of the sources – such as allusive pace and phrasing. These, we argue, are key indicators of various phenomena of infiltration and of affective disorders of historical significance, such as the destruction of one's – mixed – community in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the deep sense of loss attached. A major emotional disjuncture also concerned the transformation of a safe place, such as the home or the street, into a dangerous one, as in during the Ballymurphy Shootings, but also as a result of the paramilitary presence, coercion and violence.

As a case in point, the article also found that the emotional experience of interviewees contributed to their involvement in community work. They were risk-takers, and they often worked in dangerous situations. Yet, the fear translates into a "desire" to act, and as a passion for human interaction and collaboration. We also observed that fear and the experience of a *contradiction* were interrelated. In Kate Kelly's interview, when referring to the people whom she worked with in the 1980s, she states that they were "dying to get in touch with each other" (Kelly, *NVTV Interview*: 42:12). The use of the expression "dying to" inadvertently reveals the importance of contradictory experiences during the conflict, how people fathomed them and felt about them. This raises interesting questions as to the intersubjective meaning of such an experience: what emotions are associated with it? Further research is deemed necessary to better apprehend this and also the variety of meanings attached to the experience of fear. Eventually, this article has identified analytical tools that permit to take into account the sort of historical material that might be perceived as imperfect – such as personal recollections and oral sources – in the hope that people's experiences and affective disorders such as the ones of nonviolent community workers might eventually form an integral part of the history of the Troubles.

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[1] This approach questions the traditional dichotomy between memory and history and draws from the work of such specialists as Joanna Bourke on these questions (*Remembering War*).

[2] Paramilitary actions were exercised during the Troubles in Northern Ireland by various groups such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in nationalist areas, and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) in loyalist ones.

[3] They all continued to be actively involved after 1998, but the remit of this article is limited to the years of the Troubles.

[4] May Blood was later awarded an MBE and became the first woman from Northern Ireland to be given a life peerage in the British House of Lords. For more information, see *May Blood (1938-)*.

[5] Sadly, Joe Camplisson passed away in July 2021 while this article was under completion. Academics who had had the opportunity to work with him hailed his unique character and his exceptional experience as a practitioner and "problem solver" locally. See George Mitchell's *Appreciation* published online (*Joe Camplisson*).

[6] See also Marianne Elliott's work (*Hearthlands*) on the housing estate where she grew up in the 1950s, the White City housing estate in north Belfast.

[7] The later conviction of the murderers seems to indicate that it was another loyalist group, the UDA, who committed the murder. See Connla (*John Turnley Remembered*).

[8] It was also promoted later in the 1980s and early 1990s by people involved in the newly established community relations bodies such as the Community Relations Council (Fitzduff, *Beyond Violence*: 88-117), albeit much more discreetly.

[9] On loyalist women and paramilitarism, see Alison (*The Experience Of Women In The IRA And UVF*).

Emotions Out of Pages: *Si può stampare* by Silvia Forti Lombroso

By Mara Josi

Abstract: Silvia Forti Lombroso (Verona, 1889 – Cambridge, MA, 1979) was an Italian Jewish woman living in Italy during the Fascist regime and the Nazi occupation. Between October 1938 and March 1945, she wrote a diary, *Si può stampare*, published by Dalmatia in 100 copies in June 1945. In November of the same year, the American publishing house Roy Editors translated and published it with the title *No Time for Silence*, making it one of the first Italian documents of the Jewish persecution to appear in English. And yet, this text has been forgotten. *Si può stampare* is a diaristic chronicle of discrimination, persecution, and life in hiding. During the years of persecution, Jews were deprived of most of their belongings. The few objects that they managed to keep were, therefore, re-semanticised. Forti Lombroso perceived her diary as the only bearer of her memories and of her emotions, as the embodiment of her real self, and as the only means for its preservation when she was forced into hiding. This text is a testimonial object of and against the war. With publication, it became a physical mark of regained freedom. This article analyses the diary as an introspective prism displaying Forti Lombroso's psychological, moral, and physical changes before and during the war. At the same time, it rereads her words and her experience as representative of a generation of women who were silenced, segregated, and persecuted thus reflecting on the emotional impact of discrimination and persecution on Jewish women.

Keywords: *Silvia Forti Lombroso, diaristic writing, literature of hiding, Italian Holocaust literature, Italian racial laws, memory and emotions*

> "Alive" we have come to an end, by a grace that many have not had; and today we do not want and we try only to forget.[1] (Forti Lombroso, *Si può stampare*: 204)

Introduction

In the field of Holocaust Studies, the literary production of Italian Jewish survivors of the camps has been extensively examined. Yet the texts of those who evaded deportation have been ignored. They include manuscripts and diaries which report on everyday life in hiding. Among the vast unexplored corpus of published and unpublished material written by Jews in hiding, diaries represent a particularly interesting object of study which contributes to a fuller understanding of the Fascist regime, of the Second World War, and of

experiences surrounding the Holocaust.[2] Diaries therefore are to be analysed as material objects as well as literary texts and historical documents.[3]

This article provides the first analysis of one of the earliest diaries of this kind published in Italy, *Si può stampare* (1945) by Silvia Forti Lombroso, an Italian Jewish woman. During the years of discrimination and persecution, Jews were deprived of most of their belongings. The few objects that they managed to keep carried a new emotional weight. Forti Lombroso's diary was the only bearer of her daily life, memories, and emotions. It was the embodiment of her real identity, the only means for its preservation, when she was forced into hiding. The diary was an act of private and public resistance, an introspective prism displaying the psychological effects of racism, and a sociological record of the experiences of Jews at the time of discrimination and persecution in Italy between 1938 and 1945.

A tile of a mosaic

Originally published in July 1938, the "Race Manifesto" provided the public with a theoretical justification for the coming anti-Semitic campaign. This happened before any German interference and before the war started. The Italian racial laws, which were progressively promulgated between the end of 1938 and the end of 1943, re-established and enforced discrimination against the Jews. They effectively revoked the emancipation of Italian Jewry achieved with the Albertine Constitution of 1848 and represented a profound rupture in the modern history of Italy.

Due to the immediate effect of the racial laws, Italian Jews experienced an abrupt disruption in work and education. In November 1938, 379 Jewish elementary school and high school principals and teachers, 96 tenured professors and 133 university adjuncts lost their jobs. 1,500 university students and 6,500 elementary, junior, and high school pupils were forced to leave their school and their academic path. In June 1939, Jews were banned from the liberal professions. They could not be doctors, lawyers, architects, journalists, dentists, or engineers. Other prohibitions were included in the following months. Thus, before the German occupation of 1943, Italy's anti-Semitic campaign reduced the Italian Jewish population by a staggering one-fourth by conversion and emigration alone. Those Italian Jews who emigrated mostly went to France, the UK, the US, and South America.

On 25th July 1943, the Fascist Grand Council removed Mussolini from power. On 8th September, Marshall Badoglio, Mussolini's successor, proclaimed the armistice between Italy and the Allies. On the next day, he left Rome with the

king, Vittorio Emanuele III. As a result, on 10 September, the Germans occupied the capital. With several divisions already in Italy, they swept through the peninsula to invade most of the country in just a few days. From allies, they became occupiers. On 23rd September, the collaborationist Italian Social Republic (RSI) was proclaimed by Mussolini. At the time, there were 32,307 Jews in the RSI territories of north and centre Italy. These Jews were at risk of arrest by the Germans who carried out surprise round-ups, they were threatened by the RSI police, and mostly they were vulnerable to denunciation by Fascist informers.[4] Despite this severe persecution, in Italy 81% of the Jews avoided deportation.

From the end of 1943, most Jews left their homes and hid in bigger cities or in the countryside, thus blending with other evacuees after the bombing of the major Italian cities. Some, mostly from the north, managed to escape to Switzerland by walking through the Alps. Some, mostly from the centre, reached the South which was liberated in August. Some found refuge in ecclesiastical institutions. A few hundred young Italian Jews joined anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist movements in the ranks of the partisans. Every choice was individual and familial. It was determined by personal reasons and personal contingencies. There was no coordinated rescue plan at an administrative level among the Italian Jewish communities. People found their own strategies for survival, their own ways to safety, through the combined help of the Italian Jewish resistance organisation, the Delegation for the Assistance of Jewish Emigrants (DELASEM), the Catholic clergy, friends, acquaintances, and ordinary Italians.[5]

Silvia Forti Lombroso was among the Italian Jews who evaded deportation.[6] In 1938, she was living in Genoa with her husband, Ugo Lombroso, and her two children, Nora and Cesare. With the promulgation of the racial laws, Ugo, who was a Professor at the University of Genoa, was banned from the University. Nora and Cesare emigrated to the United States. In 1939, Ugo and Silvia moved to France. They committed themselves on both an educational and social level, a sign that they were expecting to live a new life in Paris. Ugo was appointed "Maître de recherche" at the École de Médicine. Silvia joined the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, whose European headquarters were in Paris until June 1940. Their plans were disrupted by the German occupation of the French capital. They left the city and returned to Italy. Following the German occupation of Italy, they went into hiding in little villages in Tuscany. In November 1943, they obtained false documents because the surname Lombroso was too recognisably Jewish. They became *signore* and *signora* Lombardi. With their new documents, they went into hiding in Florence where they remained

for almost ten months, until the liberation of the city on 1st September 1944. During those ten months, they witnessed the bloody struggle between groups of partisans and German occupiers. On 26th September, Silvia and Ugo went to Rome. They found refuge at the Cinecittà film studios, then used as a centre for displaced people. They remained in Rome until the end of the war.

During the years of discrimination and persecution, Silvia Forti Lombroso wrote a diary. The diary, entitled *Si può stampare. Pagine vissute. 1938-1945*, was published in June 1945 by the publishing house Dalmatia in 100 copies. In November of the same year, the American publishing house Roy Editors translated and published it with the title *No Time for Silence*, making it one of the first Italian documents of the Jewish persecution to appear in English. In 2019, the diary was reprinted by the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Centre (CDEC).[7] The manuscript is lost.[8] The published diary begins on 2nd October 1938 and ends on 16th January 1945.

From October 1938 onwards, the Fascist regime carried out a deliberate, systematic effacement of the Jewish population and any forms of their memory. Hence the value of every act of recollection.[9] Forti Lombroso's spontaneous, discontinuous, and unprocessed diary is a testimonial object, a historical artefact that transmits facts, stories, and experiences which have been ignored, erased, and casually neglected, dismissed, overlooked during the reconstruction of Italian society after the end of the war.[10] The diary is an act of transfer which provides an inter- and trans-generational dialogue about ordinary everyday life in the extraordinary circumstances of discrimination, persecution and the war in Italy. It is a point of memory, by which the experience of the past is passed down over the years. With publication, it had the potential to reach a wider readership and promote the understanding of historical events through sensorial and emotional descriptions. Forti Lombroso's diaristic writing, as will be discussed throughout this article, enables readers to occupy the space of the narrating I, to inhabit her daily life through a first-person narrative, detailed intimate descriptions of facts and events. The present tense voice conveys embodied and immediate experiences. By showing the past from an everyday life perspective, it helps produce shared memories, contributes to the discussion of the ways in which Italian society recollects its past, and therefore turns into a vehicle for envisioning sensorial memories of the period of discrimination and persecution and for critical reflection on present-day forms of racism.[11]

An object from the past for the future

Si può stampare is an act of both private and public resistance. The diaristic writing is intimate, anecdotal, and therapeutic and processed the events of Forti Lombroso's life. The diary itself includes never-sent letters to her children, reflections on her life, on her present, and on her past. It contains accounts of her thoughts, dreams, fears, and hopes. It functions as an act of resistance. She diligently copied and pasted articles, documented the phases of discrimination and persecution and she reported oxymoronic combinations of personal thoughts on identity, motherland, patriotism in light of Italian anti-Semitism.

The first Italian edition of *Si può stampare* is 230 pages long. It includes a preface written by the author on 25th July 1943, when the Fascist Grand Council removed Mussolini from power, and a brief note by the editor stating that the intention had been to print the diary shortly after the fall of Mussolini. The diary can be broadly divided into two parts, the part that was written before and the part that was written after 25th July. The former consists of 33 sections and was not composed to be published. The latter includes the remaining 12 sections and was intentionally written for later publication. In July 1943, Forti Lombroso believed discrimination and persecution of the Italian Jews were about to end, as she explicitly reported on the anniversary of Mussolini's fall:

Florence 25th July 1944

> I write this date at the top of this piece of paper, and in writing it my soul trembles. A year has passed, a year since then, since that *25th July* which we will never forget, and which seemed to be the beginning of resurrection, promise, reward, hope.[12] (*Si può stampare*: 169 emphasis in the original)

On the contrary, as the editor's note says, "subsequent events forced the author to flee and hide" (3).[13] With the German occupation of Italy, Forti Lombroso's life changed dramatically.

In the preface, Forti Lombroso states her commitment to publishing what she had written: "Not everyone can produce high and admirable works; however, in the tragic conjunctures of life, everyone is given the ability to do 'something'" (9).[14] She discusses the title chosen for the publication, and the meaning that such a simple statement, "it can be printed […] a simple statement" (6),[15] assumes after twenty years of the Fascist regime:

> Only three words. Yet today, for us, three words on fire. I would not like any others at the head of these pages, which were not written to be printed, but which today – strange, unreal, improbable thing – "can" be printed. They can and perhaps even should,

although […] what lives […] in these pages is only one face of the prism of a great tragedy that has lasted twenty years.[16] (7)

The anaphoric use of "three words" and the emphasis of the aside "for us" reveals her sense of belonging to the Italian Jewish community and her commitment to giving an account of what happened from 1938 until the end of the war. She was an Italian Jewish woman who wanted to make one of the first records of the Fascist regime, of the war, and the persecution in Italy, at a time when the tendency to hide or forget Italian guilt and complicity in this history was already beginning to emerge. At the same time, she also revealed her opinion as an Italian citizen when she said that her rights and freedom started to be undermined in 1922 when Mussolini marched on Rome.

With publication, Forti Lombroso's diary became the bequest of a personal possession which might sensitise non-Jewish readers of the lives of Jewish people in those days: "I hope that this little book, born out of pain, can be 'something'. Something that goes around the world and is read by those who have not been struck down, but who, seeing others fall, have kept silence, out of indifference or fear; – and by those who being stricken have surmounted their Calvary" (9).[17] Her diary became a means of re-humanisation of Jews after the long denigrating racial discrimination and persecution, a means of reconciliation between Italians. It is a lens through which shows Jewish suffering and misery, her words tools to provide an emotional understanding of Jews in relation to the complex and frightening world around them:

> *A woman who was suffering*, – like so many others – […] *to write, had only to look inside herself, and around herself*. She never found the reason for so much pain, for persecution so absurd; but she felt that, not only the reason, but also the very essence of this infinite pain was ignored by many: through carelessness, through incomprehension; not out of complicity. And so, these pages were born. Fragments of life, shades of suffering, restlessness, nostalgia, and the laughing surfacing of memories, and the mute and powerless rebellions, and the tragic breath of death, and the unconfessed longing of hopes.[18] (8, emphasis mine)

Forti Lombroso's affective documentation of events is at the core of the sociological record of Italian society and of the lives of Jewish people provided in *Si può stampare*. Through emotional and sensorial descriptions, Forti Lombroso provides readers with a rare depiction of discrimination and persecution. Her attentive eye concentrates on two major phases, the

promulgation of the racial laws and the beginning of the deportation of Jews from Italy. Passages will be analysed in the following sections.

A magnifying lens: the beginning of discrimination

The pages written between October and March 1939 are all dedicated to the consequences of racial discrimination in Italy. They are in ten sections. Forti Lombroso alternates the personal and emotional repercussions of discrimination, when she writes of her son, her niece, and her husband, with thoughts on and examples of the evolving segregation of Italian Jews from society. She records silent indifference, agonising discrimination by ordinary people, and single acts of generosity and compassion.

The first pages written on 2nd October are dedicated to her son Cesare, who had just left Genoa to join her sister in the United States.[19] They are the intimate, painful but therapeutic farewell of a mother:

> He, too, left. We are alone: dad and mum alone. We did not go to see him off on the boat; better save our strength. He went down the stairs, simple as that, just as usual: – I too went down to the end, to see him for a few more minutes, to see him get into the car and disappear at the corner of the street. Here: – everything was simple, composed, almost serene. We wanted to save him: – that's it, it's done; the price doesn't matter, nothing matters […]. I go up the stairs, a little uncertain, a little slow: – I don't feel anything, just a sudden tiredness.[20] (*Si può stampare*: 13)

Forti Lombroso's sense of loss is hidden in the paratactic style of the passage, in her broken sentences. The persistent use of full stops, commas, dashes, and colons reveals the emotional repercussion of Cesare's departure.

On 12th October 1938, Forti Lombroso reported on the effects of segregation on a young girl, her niece Lilli, banned from school because she was Jewish. Lilli is described lying on the bed, with dark circles under her eyes and cheeks wet with tears. In the private and secure space of the diary, Forti Lombroso recalled her sense of inadequacy in the attempt to answer Lilli's questions:

> First day of school; – As always, life begins again for a whole world, that of the young. For you, it does not, it does not start again, but suddenly and abruptly stops; from today you are excluded; no one must get to know you, approach you, love you, because contact and acquaintance would reveal too well *the slanders of propaganda*… I enter Lilli's room with a constricted soul; the tears of young people are the most difficult to dry, because young people want a logical and clear answer to their "why".[21] (19, emphasis mine)

Three days later, on 15ᵗʰ October, Forti Lombroso dedicated a couple of intense pages to another victim of the racial laws, her husband. He had been banned from the University of Genoa. His work due to be published now rejected.

> He approaches the table, opens a registered envelope. It is his last work to be published, a work which the editor of the newspaper sends him back; a few words of embarrassing apology, he can no longer publish it, he is sorry… he opens another one; it is the President of the Academy of Sciences who warns him that following orders received he must delete his name from the list of members […]. Again *a fearful sense of emptiness grips his soul*. It is as if they had brutally crushed all his reasons for living, it is as if everything around him had collapsed. He gets up, impatient. Everything around is the same as yesterday; everything is as usual, – everything has the same flavour as always: *yet everything has been lost, everything has changed, everything has been swept away*.[22] (23-24, emphasis mine)

She wrote of Ugo's dismay, which is hidden behind his mechanical gestures of a new, different routine, consequence of the exclusion from his laboratory, his research projects, and his classes. Forti Lombroso's fears and sense of bewilderment are once again perceptible within the syntax. She juxtaposed sentences about memories of her life before the promulgation of the racial laws, her present, and her precarious future. The life she wrote about was just superficially the same as the life she was used to.

On 13ᵗʰ November 1938, Forti Lombroso presented herself as an attentive observer: "It's interesting to look around. Nothing in life interests me like getting to know souls" (25).[23] She observed people, their behaviour, and saw the racial campaign as a dramatic stage play:

> There are "spectators" and there are "actors", or rather victims of this brand-new drama called "the racial campaign". The "spectators" are sometimes really curious; […] partly self-serving, partly superficial and for the love of a quiet life, they have only a vague idea of the suffering that is voluntarily inflicted on some of their neighbours; on the contrary, they prefer to ignore them, to have no contact with them. Too comfortable. On my own account, I don't allow them to do that. They must know all the evil that is done around them today: they must know all the tragedies, large and small, which take place in so many families; they must measure it, albeit incompletely, the infinite pain that overwhelms so many human creatures! We must speak, not be silent.[24] (25)

She represented Italian society from different angles:

> It is necessary to say it, the truth cannot be silenced. In the terrible times we are going through, the humblest people have been for us the most understanding, the most generous. […] Little things, little people who understood and felt the terrible injustice we were victims of; people who the propaganda had not touched, who ambition, fear, and greed had not corrupted, and who tried in all the most delicate ways to make us feel their pain, their sympathy. But the more one climbed the ladder, not of human values, but of social position, what misery![25] (32-33)

Forti Lombroso's is not a limited perspective. Her text portrays by turn widespread unawareness, blindness, and indifference as well as humanity, generosity, and compassion. She reflected on the effects and the influence on society of the processes of racial discrimination and segregation. She saw a direct relation: as higher as you go up the social ladder the more people have been corrupted by the racism of the Fascist regime. The "little people" represent hope and relief. With "it is necessary to say it, the truth cannot be silenced", she again stated her need of bearing witness to any form of intolerance and segregation as well as any gesture of benevolence. Her diary can thus be a reliable document to represent the multifaceted past.

A magnifying lens: the beginning of the persecution

From September 1943, when the Germans occupied Italy, Forti Lombroso dedicates passionate and touching pages to accounts of persecution. She annotates any piece of information she can get on the persecution of Jews in Italy, narrates stories of people close to her, and writes of her life in hiding.

On 21st September, Forti Lombroso briefly commented: "Today I heard that the houses of some Jews in Mantua have been burgled; insulting phrases have reappeared on the walls of the city […]. For us, the danger increases. I go to greet the parish priest of the town and I take him a letter to be delivered to the children in case of our death" (144-145).[26] The situation is getting more and more dramatic. On 10th October 1943, she reported other news: "News reached me, direct from Venice; the official persecution of Italian Jews by the Germans has begun" (145).[27] On 16th November 1943, when she was about to leave from Florence, she wrote of a truck "of women, children, the old, they were Jews, they were caught and arrested" (148).[28] Two days later, she was in Florence and continued to describe what surrounded her:

Most days, big, locked wagons stop in front of some house; shortly after, a lady, an elderly couple, sometimes an entire family go down led by S.S. […]. The people arrested are taken directly to prison; then nothing more is known about them. Every now and then a train leaves, loaded with victims, leaves for the north, and in the prisons there is new space for new people rounded-up.[29] (149)

The anaphoric use of the words "leave" and "new" stresses the dramatic succession of arrests and deportations to the north, the exemplification here of the unknown. This concise but dramatic overview of persecution in Italy is followed by a couple of pages dedicated to the stories of two nieces of Forti Lombroso. On both occasions, the writer feels their feelings and reports them on the page. One was captured:

Yesterday, I learned that in Como a niece of mine was taken by the S.S. They held her in a concentration camp for a few days, then took her away; to Germany? To Poland? It was not possible to receive news […]. I see her in the moment of desperate defence, of fearful waiting, and then, crushed by the horrible certainty, alone, abandoned, insulted; I feel that she is cold, that she is hungry, that her tears freeze in her terrified eyes; I feel that she invokes her mother, in a dark, hopeless torment. Those who know the horrible fate reserved for deported Jews say that we will never see her again, and that we can only hope that she is already dead.[30] (152-153)

The other managed to hide:

Another niece of mine […] had taken refuge in a convent with her two children […]. One night some good soul ran to warn that the S.S. would go and search the convent. New escape in the middle of the night, with the dangers of the curfew. This young and convalescent mother, with the two tight creatures trembling with cold and fear, remained hidden for hours behind a miraculously open door.[31] (153)

During the period of the German occupation, Forti Lombroso recorded any account of persecution she heard and knew of. At the same time, she started more evidently to disclose her own feelings, among which is manifest the sense of alienation and displacement which she felt when she went into hiding. At that point, the diary was the last refuge for her identity. And now we turn to the diary as a material object.

From the beginning of her diary, Forti Lombroso pays particular attention to objects. She says "who can deny soul to things?" (28).[32] The climax of these considerations is reached between November 1942 and December 1943. On 18th

November 1942, she was informed that her apartment in Genoa had been destroyed in a bombing raid. On that occasion, she reflects on what she thinks to be a tie between people and their belongings. Personal belongings appear to be talismans that prevent alienation:

> Things have no voice; they look like dead substance and they are not; when you return to them, your soul immediately relaxes, and little by little, even if you are troubled and tired, you feel a sense of peace; you feel almost protected by your belongings, there is a sense of continuity, you don't feel lost in the world, without roots.[33] (96)

According to Fort Lombroso, through objects people can bridge frontiers in spatial and in temporal terms. Part of their identity is preserved in their belongings. She writes:

> Things have soul, and in their inert substance they keep something of what we have enjoyed, and much of what we have suffered […]. When you die, something of you attaches to things, and you still live among the living. The separation is not complete: – you are no longer there, – but in that drawer, there are still the notebooks written by you, and on the desk your pen, your letters. You are not dead, you are only far away. [34] (95-96)

This profound sense of identification with her objects became even stronger when she was forced to go into hiding and leave all her belongings behind. When she obtained false documents and became *signora* Lombardi, she hid or destroyed everything that carried her real name, but she kept her diary: "I have to leave here already too many things that are dear and treasured to me. These pages will come with me" (146).[35] The diary remains the only object left to mirror her real self:

> Anything and everything that has our name on must be destroyed; any clue, even vague, of our true personality can be the end of us. The time has come to separate ourselves from everything that speaks of the past. Tonight, I crammed documents, letters, photographs into a metal box; they will be brought back to the villa and buried in a corner of the garden. From today, I become Signora Lombardi.[36] (149)

On 3rd December 1943, she confessed that her change of identity profoundly upset her. She expressed her estrangement from her new identity. Her thoughts on persecution coincide with a sense of loss and intimate struggle within her:

> Gradually, I get used to being signora Lombardi. It's a weird feeling. – I'm alive, yet I'm already dead. It is no longer me; – I no longer exist; – I have another name, I no longer own anything, no home, no children, no friends, I have no past, I have no more memories. I destroyed and buried those few that were saved from the fire and the bombs […]. It is me, and I must be someone else; a certain lady who I do not know, a certain lady who enters me subtly, little by little, with a personality of her own, who would like to destroy everything, who erases my name on every little thing that still belongs to me, the address book, the account book, the little pages of the diary.[37] (150-151)

Forti Lombroso commented on her transition from one self to the other through the description of the loss of her belongings, her "memories". And it is through this correlation between subjects and objects that she showed the passage from discrimination to persecution. With the promulgation of the racial laws, she was deprived of her present and of her future, but when with the German occupation of Italy she had to change her identity and abandon her belongings, she lost her past too. Everything has now been stripped away:

> I believed that they had already taken away everything of what they could take away from us: the happiness of work, which gave an intense rhythm to life: the old paternal home, and the good land that guarded the love of three generations and which would have been the home of our children. They had taken away from us all spiritual sweetness, and every material possibility of life: they had taken away that luminous and mysterious force that is the future. But they had left us a great treasure: our past: – and we clung to that in order not to sink to the bottom. It seemed they could not take this treasure from us; and now they have taken that too from us. *So, I remain rootless and branchless. And what am I without my past of love and pain? I am nothing, a poor thing thrown away and lost, a bit of flesh and bones around a terrified ghost.*[38] (151, emphasis mine)

Until the end of the war, the diary is the only object which connects her to her past, her memories, and her previous self. It is her act of resistance. It is what keeps her identity alive. It is the lens through which we read an under-investigated aspect of the Holocaust in Italy and appraise one of the many facets of a prism that represents the psychological consequences of the persecution.

An emotional bridge

Forti Lombroso's emotional understanding of herself and the world becomes readers' understanding. The affective and sensorial descriptions provided in the diary are the means through which readers are provided with a first-hand reading of the past. Such first-hand reading engenders a personal confrontation

of readers with past characters and a recollection of readers of past events. Alison Landsberg's theory of prosthetic memory and the reflections of Caroline Pirlet and Andreas Wirag on emotional theory, for example, represent a fruitful framework within which to analyse the influence that *Si può stampare* had and still has on readers.

In *Prosthetic Memory*, Landsberg studies the extent to which the mass media influence the way in which members of a community remember their past. She examines those memories that derive from a deep engagement with a mediated representation of events and that are perceived as lived by viewers. She argues that the mass media have the potential to instil a personal and communal sense of belonging, civic engagement, and political responsibility. Literary texts, too, can be re-read and re-interpreted in light of prosthetic memory. They influence both individual and collective memory. They can steer emotions, engage people, motivate them to act, and thus become a socio-cultural mode of action. They can lead to a new social engagement by changing readers' perceptions, adding to their knowledge, and influencing their everyday communication.

The concept of prosthetic memory can furthermore be usefully linked to theories that have developed in the last fifteen years in the areas of cognitive literary studies, especially those linked to theories of emotion.[39] Theories of emotion and cognitive studies more broadly help explain the formative influence narrative texts have on readers,[40] and therefore the mechanisms behind the process of prosthetic memory.

Following these indications, the emotional framework fostered in Forti Lombroso's text can help readers to process information. Forti Lombroso's affective dimension and intimate descriptions of discrimination and persecution help readers understand and remember the events they have read about. In general terms, although emotional evaluations of readers change according to the culture or society in which they live,[41] there exists a basic emotional repertoire that anyone, from any culture, is capable of experiencing. According to Caroline Pirlet and Andreas Wirag, "the universal aspects of emotion (as represented by the basic emotion approach) can, at least partially, account for why readers can agree on certain interpretations in the first place and why they are able to recuperate narrativity from texts beyond their own restricted historical period or culture" (*Towards a "Natural" Bond of Cognitive and Affective Narratology*: 49). This fact allows literary texts, and this case Forti Lombroso's diary, to bridge distances. Readers become involved not merely rationally but also emotionally so that they feel for characters and suffer with them.[42] Readers are brought into intimate contact with experiences which may fall well outside their own lives. They are asked to look through someone else's eyes and thus to

empathise with characters, fictional or not. The emotions within a text build an imaginative and empathetic link between past actors and present readers by making the stories of others accessible and therefore memorable. As Pirlet and Wirag stated, "by selecting and establishing a hierarchy among given pieces of information, emotions *ipso facto* shape readers' understanding of what the text is about" (38). Emotions, sense of empathy, and identification can thus influence the perception of the historical "data" re-elaborated, narrated, and discussed within a diaristic text, foster their recollection, and engender forms of prosthetic memory.

In *Si può stampare*, emotions are the indestructible core of the records of everyday life experiences. They are the intangible link that forms a bridge between Forti Lombroso's life and ours. Through her affective and sensorial writing, facets of macro- and micro-temporal structures, representations of Italian society and personal stories, become perceptible, therefore more understandable, and memorable. In this sense, *Si può stampare* represents a valuable document in which to learn about WW2, discrimination, and persecution in Italy. So far un-explored, it can be eventually turned into a lens through which read about our past.

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[1] "'Vivi' siamo arrivati alla fine, per una grazia che molti non hanno avuta; ed oggi non si desidera e non si cerca che di dimenticare". In 1945, *Si può stampare* was translated into English. However, the two editions do not coincide. Translations are mine unless stated differently.

[2] Every possible term for naming the genocide of Europe's Jews and other Nazi genocides brings with it problems and limitations. I have opted for the most common term in English and Israeli English-language publications: "Holocaust".

[3] My research has been greatly facilitated by the following works: Lejeune, *On Diary*; Freadman, *Holding On and Holding Out*; Ben-Amos, *The diary*; and Blanchot, *The Book to Come* particularly chapter 4.

[4] From the end of November 1943, a decree, by Guido Buffarini Guidi, the Interior Minister of the RSI, ordered the arrest and internment in provisional concentration camps of all Jews in Italy and the seizing of all their properties, thus marking the beginning of the RSI's anti-Jewish policy. The Italian police became responsible for locating, arresting, and interning local Jews. Bands of the Republican Fascist Party acted as auxiliary police forces in the major cities, taking the responsibility for tracking down Jews and handing them over to Italian police stations or to the German police. These militias relied on a network of informers who were promised money for every Jew they reported.

[5] My collection of historical data on this matter has been greatly facilitated by the following works: De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*; Picciotto, *Il libro della memoria*; Id., *Salvarsi*; Zimmerman, *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi rule*; and Picciotto & Lerner, *Italian Jews Who Survived the Shoah*.

[6] Silvia Forti was born in Verona in 1889 into a Jewish upper-middle-class family. She was the third of four sisters. In 1913, she met the Jewish antifascist Ugo Lombroso, the son of Cesare Lombroso, one of the most renowned physicians and anthropologists of XIX century Italy. Silvia and Ugo got married in the same year and went living in Turin, Ugo's hometown. They had two children, Nora, born in 1914, and Cesare, born in 1917. At the beginning of the First World War, Ugo was called to run a field hospital while Silvia stayed between Turin and Verona. By the end of the war, they moved to Sicily. Ugo was appointed a university chair first in Messina (1919-1923) and then in Palermo (1923-1935). In 1935, the family moved again. Ugo joined the University of Genoa. Biographical aspects have been found in Forti Lombroso, *Si può stampare* and in Id., *Case di sogno case di mattoni*.

[7] The 2019 edition of *Si può stampare* was published by the Venetian publisher Il prato.

[8] In May 2020, I contacted Silvia Forti Lombroso's grandchildren, Anna and Paul Lombroso, to see whether the Lombroso family still had Forti Lombroso's diary. Anna and Paul Lombroso said they did not. There is no archive available neither for the Italian or the American publishing house: Dalmatia and Roy Editors. At the moment, the manuscript of the diary is believed lost.

[9] According to Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the past can be traced in documents which have not traditionally been assumed to transmit historical data, providing different but also foundational insights into the past through collective representations, myths, and images. On this see for example: Burke, *The French Historical Revolution*; Herubel, *Historiography's Horizon and Imperative*; Megill, *Coherence and Incoherence in Historical Studies*.

[10] With regard to the sociocultural phases of the memory of the Holocaust in Italy see for example: Gordon, *Which Holocaust?*; Bertilotti, *Contrasti e trasformazioni della memoria delle sterminio in Italia*; Gordon, *The Holocaust in Italian Culture*.

[11] See for example: Hirsch & Spitzer, *Testimonial Objects*. On diary and the Holocaust see for example: Piketty, *Résistance et écriture intime*; Roseau, *The Diary as Witness to the Holocaust*; Rudin, "Because We Must Not Forget"; and Goldberg, *Trauma in First Person*. References to the diaries of the Jews who have been deported are beyond the scope of this article. However, it is worth mentioning at least two Jewish Italian women who left their testimony of deportation through affective and sensorial descriptions in their diaristic writings. They are Millu in *Tagebuch* and Valch Capozzi in *A 24029*.

[12] "Firenze, 25 luglio 1944. Scrivo questa data in cima a questo foglietto, e nello scriverla mi trema l'anima. Un anno è passato, un anno da allora, da quel 25 luglio che mai dimenticheremo, e che pareva dovesse essere l'inizio della resurrezione, la promessa, la ricompensa, la speranza."

[13] "Gli avvenimenti successivi obbligarono l'autore a fuggire ed a nascondersi."

[14] "Non tutti possono fare opere alte e ammirevoli; a tutti è però dato, nelle congiunture tragiche della vita, di poter fare 'qualche cosa'."

[15] "Si può stampare […] un'affermazione semplice."

[16] "Tre parole sole. Eppure oggi, per noi, tre parole fiammanti. Altre non ne vorrei a capo di queste pagine, che non sono state scritte per essere stampate, ma che oggi – cosa strana, irreale, inverosimile – 'possono' essere stampate. Possono e forse anche lo devono, benché […] quello che vive […] in queste pagine, non è che un solo lato del prisma di una grande tragedia che ha durato venti anni."

[17] "Io spero che questo piccolo libro, nato dal dolore, possa essere 'qualche cosa'. Qualche cosa che vada per il mondo, e venga letto da chi non è stato colpito, ma ha veduto intorno a sé colpire, ed ha taciuto, per indifferenza o per timore; – e da chi è stato colpito ed ha salito il suo calvario."

[18] "Una donna che soffriva, – come tante altre – […] per scrivere, non ha avuto che da guardare dentro di sé, e intorno a sé. Il perché di tanto dolore, di così assurda persecuzione, non l'ha mai trovato; ma le è parso che, non solo la ragione, ma anche l'essenza stessa di questo infinito dolore, fosse ignorata da molti: per leggerezza, per incomprensione; non per complicità. Così sono nate queste pagine. Frammenti di vita, sfumature di sofferenze, inquietudini, nostalgie, e il ridente affiorare dei ricordi, e le ribellioni mute e impotenti, e il tragico soffio della morte, e l'anelito inconfessato delle speranze."

[19] In October 1938, Nora and her husband Bruno Rossi were already in Chicago; Cesare joined them first and then moved to Boston.

[20] "Ecco partito anche lui. Siamo soli: soli il papa e la mamma. Non siamo andati al piroscafo; meglio risparmiare le forze. È sceso per le scale, così, semplicemente, come sempre: – sono scesa anch'io fino in fondo, per vederlo qualche minuto in più, per vederlo salire in macchina e sparire all'angolo della strada. Ecco: – tutto è stato semplice, composto, quasi sereno. Volevamo salvarlo: – ecco, è fatto; il prezzo non importa, niente importa […]. Risalgo le scale, un po' incerta, un po' lenta: – non sento niente, solo un'improvvisa stanchezza."

[21] "Primo giorno di scuola; – la vita che ricomincia come sempre per tutto un mondo, quello dei giovani. Per te no, non ricomincia, ma si interrompe d'un tratto brutalmente; da oggi sei una esclusa; nessuno deve conoscerti, avvicinarti, amarti, perché il contatto e la conoscenza rivelerebbero troppo bene la calunnia della propaganda… Entro nella stanza di Lilli con

l'anima stretta; le lacrime dei giovani sono le più difficili ad asciugare, perché i giovani vogliono una risposta logica e chiara ai loro 'perché'."

[22] "Si avvicina al tavolo, apre un plico raccomandato. È il suo ultimo lavoro già in corso di stampa, che il Direttore del giornale gli rimanda; poche parole di scusa imbarazzante, non può più pubblicarlo, è dolente… ne apre un altro; è il Presidente dell'Accademia delle Scienze che lo avverte che per ordini ricevuti cancella il suo nome dall'elenco dei soci […]. Di nuovo un pauroso senso di vuoto gli attanaglia l'anima. È come se brutalmente gli avessero stroncato ogni ragione per vivere, è come se tutto intorno a lui fosse crollato. Si alza impaziente. Tutto all'intorno è uguale a ieri; tutto è solito, – tutto ha il sapore di sempre: eppure tutto è perduto, tutto è mutato, tutto è travolto."

[23] "É interessante guardarsi attorno. Niente nella vita mi interessa come la conoscenza delle anime."

[24] "Ci sono gli 'spettatori' e ci sono gli 'attori', o meglio le vittime di questo nuovissimo dramma che si intitola 'campagna razziale'. Gli 'spettatori' sono a volte veramente curiosi; […] un po' per egoismo, un po' per superficialità e per amore del quieto vivere, non hanno che una vaga idea delle sofferenze che vengono volontariamente inflitte ad una parte del loro prossimo; preferiscono anzi ignorarle, sfiorarci sopra. Troppo comodo. Per mio conto, non permetto loro di farlo. Devono saperlo tutto il male che oggi si fa intorno a loro: devono conoscerle tutte le tragedie, grandi e piccole, che si svolgono in tante famiglie; devono misurarlo, sia pure incompletamente, l'infinito dolore che travolge tante creature umane! Bisogna parlare, non tacere."

[25] "È necessario dirlo, perché la verità non va taciuta. Nei terribili tempi che attraversiamo, la gente più umile è stata per noi la più comprensiva, la più generosa. […] Piccole cose, piccola gente, che però aveva capito, che però aveva sentito la terribile ingiustizia di cui eravamo vittime; gente che la propaganda non aveva toccata, che l'ambizione, che la paura, che l'avidità non avevan corrotta, e che cercava in tutti i modi più delicati di farci sentire la loro pena, la loro simpatia. Ma più saliva nella scala, non dei valori umani, ma della posizione sociale, che miseria!"

[26] "Oggi ho saputo di alcune case di ebrei di Mantova svaligiate; sono riapparse sui muri della città le frasi ingiuriose […]. Il pericolo per noi aumenta. Vado a salutare il parroco del paese per portargli una lettera da consegnare ai figliuoli nel caso di nostra morte."

[27] "Ho potuto ricevere notizie dirette da Venezia; la persecuzione ufficiale degli ebrei italiani da parte dei Tedeschi, è cominciata."

[28] "Carico di donne, bambini e uomini anziani, tutti ebrei, sorpresi ed arrestati."

[29] "Quasi tutti i giorni grandi carrozzoni chiusi si fermano davanti a qualche casa; poco dopo scende fra le S.S. una signora, una coppia anziana, qualche volta un'intera famiglia […]. Questi arrestati sono portati direttamente alle carceri; poi non se ne sa più nulla. Ogni tanto un treno parte, carico di vittime, parte per il nord, e nelle carceri si fa nuovo spazio per le nuove retate."

[30] "Ieri ho saputo che a Como una mia nipotina è stata presa dalle S.S. L'hanno trattenuta in un campo di concentramento pochi giorni, poi l'hanno portata via; in Germania? In Polonia? Non è stato possibile avere notizia […]. La vedo nell'attimo di disperata difesa, di attesa paurosa, e poi, stroncata dall'orribile certezza, sola, abbandonata, ingiuriata; sento che ha freddo, che ha fame, che le lacrime le si gelano negli occhi atterriti; sento che invoca la mamma, in uno strazio cupo, senza speranza. Dicono, quelli che conoscono l'orribile destino riserbato agli ebrei deportati, che non la rivedremo mai più, e che non c'è che da sperare che sia già morta."

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[31] "Un'altra mia nipotina […] si era rifugiata in un convento coi due bimbi […]. Una notte qualche anima buona è corsa ad avvertire che le S.S. sarebbero andate a perquisire il convento. Nuova fuga in piena notte, coi pericoli del coprifuoco. Questa mamma giovane e convalescente, con le due creature strette e tremanti di freddo e di paura è rimasta per ore nascosta dietro un portone miracolosamente aperto."

[32] "Chi può negare l'anima alle cose?"

[33] "Le cose non hanno voce; sembrano materia morta e non lo sono; quando ritorni a loro, subito l'anima si distende, e a poco a poco, anche se sei turbata e stanca, provi un senso di pace; ti senti da loro quasi protetta, hai il senso della continuità, non ti senti sperduta nel mondo, senza radice."

[34] "Le cose hanno un'anima, e serbano nella loro materia inerte qualcosa di quello che abbiamo goduto, e molto di quello che abbiamo sofferto […]. Quando muori, qualcosa di te resta attaccata alle cose, e tu vivi ancora fra i vivi. Il distacco non è completo: – tu non sei più, – ma là in quel cassetto, ci sono ancora i quaderni scritti da te, e sullo scrittoio la tua penna, le tue lettere. Tu non sei morto, sei soltanto lontano."

[35] "Già troppe cose che mi sono care e preziose devo lasciar qui. Questi fogli verranno con me."

[36] "Ogni e qualsiasi cosa che porta il nostro nome deve venir distrutta; ogni indizio, sia pur vago, della nostra vera personalità, può perderci. È venuto il momento di separarci da ogni cosa che parla del passato. Stanotte ho pigiato in una cassetta di metallo documenti, lettere, fotografie; verranno riportati in villa e sepolti in un angolo del giardino. Da oggi sono la signora Lombardi."

[37] "A poco mi abituo ad essere la signora Lombardi. È una sensazione strana. – Sono viva, eppure sono già morta. Non sono più io; – non esisto più; – ho un altro nome, non possiedo più nulla, non più casa, né figli, né amici, non ho più passato, non ho più memorie. Quelle poche che si erano salvate dal fuoco e dalle bombe, le ho distrutte e le ho sepolte […]. Sono io, e devo essere un'altra; una certa signora che non conosco, che entra in me subdola, a poco a poco, con una personalità sua, che vorrebbe distruggere tutto, che cancella il mio nome su ogni piccola cosa che ancora mi appartiene, il notes degli indirizzi, il libro dei conti, i foglietti del diario."

[38] "Credevo che già ci avessero tolto tutto quello che potevano toglierci: la felicità del lavoro, che dava un ritmo intenso alla vita: la vecchia casa paterna, e la terra buona che custodiva l'amore di tre generazioni, e la casa nostra, che sarebbe stata la casa dei nostri figli. Ci avevano tolto ogni dolcezza spirituale, ed ogni possibilità materiale di vita: ci avevamo tolto quella forza luminosa e misteriosa che è l'avvenire. Ma un gran tesoro ci avevano lasciato: il nostro passato: – ed a quello ci si aggrappava per non andare a fondo. Sembrava non potessero toglierlo, questo tesoro; ed ora invece ci hanno strappato anche quello. Resto così senza radici e senza rami. E cosa sono io, senza il mio passato di amore e di dolore? Un niente, una povera cosa sbattuta e sperduta, un po' di carne e d'ossa attorno a un fantasma atterrito."

[39] On cognitive literary studies see for example: Herman, *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*; Bernaerts, *Stories and Minds*; Zunshine, *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies*; and Burke & Troscianko, *Cognitive Literary Science*.

[40] On the theory of emotion see for example: Zillmann, *Mechanisms of Emotional Involvement with Drama*, *Poetics*; Hogan, *Simulation and the Structure of Emotional Memory Learning*; and Id., *What Literature Teaches Us about Emotion*.

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[41] Contexts determine emotional life. Emotionology is the umbrella term spanning the collective emotional standards of a given culture. See for example Stearns & Stearns, *Emotionology*.

[42] Through empathy, readers, individuals, and groups are able to see situations from the complex perspective of another, one who has been traditionally considered as other. Suffering and traumas can emotionally resonate providing an understanding of how others feel and why they might feel the things they do. On this see for example Fierke, *Whereof We Can Speak*; Hutchison & Bleiker, *Emotional reconciliation*; and Ahäll & Gregory *Emotions, Politics and War*.

Book Review: Langhamer, Claire, Lucy Noakes and Claudia Siebrecht (eds.). *Total War. An Emotional History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000

By Simona Tobia

When this book was printed in 2020, we had just published Issue n. 3 of CEIWJ on post-traumatic stress disorder, and at the same time had just decided that the following issue would be about emotions as a form of "close encounter" in war. Adding this book review to Issue n. 4, titled "Close Encounters in War and the Emotions" thus seemed like a natural choice.

Total War. An Emotional History features some of the most renowned scholars in the fields of the history of emotions and war and culture studies, but the value of the book goes well beyond the expertise of its authors. The eight studies in this edited collection place "the emotions of war centre stage" (Langhamer, Noakes & Siebrecht, *Total War*: 1) and investigate the intensity and impact of emotions in the total wars of the 20th century. By proposing to use "emotions" as an analytical tool, they also recognize the transformative power of these emotions and consider their linguistic, cultural and physiological dimensions. The volume's methodological thrust is to use the "expression of emotion" as an analytical category and to study the "emotional agency of historical actors" to then reach new conclusions on motivation and causation in the context of total war. The ambitious purpose of this collection is threefold: on the one hand, the editors offer a reflection on ways to study how twentieth-century conflicts trigger emotions and their expression, with a specific focus on the concept of "total war" understood as "the erasure of a distinction between military and civilian spheres" and as a context in which the roles of both civilians and combatants are seen as central (3). On the other hand, the book looks at ways in which emotional registers respond to cataclysmic events. The "emotional turn" and the ways it can further understandings of war and conflict through a rich set of frameworks, is also of crucial importance, particularly when considering how the "emotional" can become "political" in these contexts. The third aspect of the volume's aspiration is one that is particularly important for historians: the methodological question of sources. Historians have studied emotions by looking at cultural outputs, including diaries, letters, fiction, poetry and other art forms. The editors here clearly state that "it is life histories that offer the most obvious way into narrated feeling" (20), as all chapters use a variety of forms of life-history materials, including memoirs and sources from the Mass Observation Project as well as those

mentioned above. One notable omission in the problematization of sources is perhaps a reflection on the role of oral history as a form of life story, as methodologically different from other forms of storytelling, for example for the role of intersubjectivity and memory composure, which set this type of sources apart from written ones.

The relationship between emotion and power emerges as central in the contexts of total war, as emotions are shaped by political power, but they can also challenge the same powers. Emotions are also gendered and classed, as the volume powerfully demonstrates.

In the first chapter, historian Ute Frevert looks at emotional codes about honour and shame in the First World War, concluding that they are deeply gendered and never exclusively individual. As Joanna Bourke has observed (Bourke, *The Emotions in War*; Id., *Fear and Anxiety*), emotions are deeply intertwined between culture, language and body, in a process in which linguistic and social interactions constitute those same sensations. Emotions are featured very strongly in wartime communicative lexicons, including – in Frevert's work – notions of honour and shame, which were given new patriotic and political meanings. Male honour and national honour were seen as synonymous. However, both honour and shame had different meanings for women and men, for example, a shamed woman was a woman who had lost her honour.

Susan R. Grayzel authors the second chapter which looks at the emotions elicited by gas masks in France in the First World War. This object represented on the one hand the intention of the state to protect its citizens, and on the other hand it was the concrete manifestation of fear, anxiety and terror elicited by the possibility of the deployment of chemical weapons. In the interwar years, its symbolic power was exploited both in the contexts of planning and resistance. Grayzel concludes that the emotions linked to this specific object could not be easily controlled and that the gas mask shows the "fundamental interconnectedness" (Langhamer, Noakes & Siebrecht, *Total War*: 58) between objects and the emotions in total war.

Social and cultural historian Michael Roper looks at gender relations in the context of the caring provided to disabled soldiers by their daughters born after the conflict, in the same conflict as the two previous chapters. Roper concludes that accounts of care were gendered because they differed between male and female accounts: whereas men of the same generation tended to see care as a form of service to the nation, which carried ideas of pride and gratitude, women – daughters – saw this as a constraint on their aspirations. Care was at the centre of cross-generational relationships which triggered deep emotions:

"love was synonymous with obligation" (77). At the same time, however, women were also proud of assuming those responsibilities. For Roper, it was the failure of the state in providing care, coupled with the moral expectations thrust upon these daughters, that informed the pressures to conform to traditional gender roles.

Historian Claudia Siebrecht sees the tearful response of German women to the invasion of Poland in 1939 as a legacy of the emotional responses to the First World War. Siebrecht studies accounts of crying and tearful responses in both oral and written sources. This allows her to conclude that the outbreak of the Second World War represented a crucial watershed in women's biographies, as tears are seen as the manifestation of the emotional response to war, and as a legacy to the emotions linked to the previous conflict.

War historian Martin Francis examines, among other sources, the diary of Britain's Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Miles Lampson to study the juxtaposition of devastating public events such as total war with what he calls "banal domestic anxieties", to conclude that public claims about the British war effort could be challenged by private emotions. This research shows how even those who had the highest responsibilities in the conduct of the war struggled to manage their private emotional responses, including "wounded pride and petty jealousies". Francis insists on the importance of individual subjectivity for a more holistic understanding of the impact of total war.

Historian Lucy Noakes analyses some life writing documents to look at the emotional lives of men in mid-twentieth century Britain, and at the ways in which experiences of combat in the Second World War shape their sense of self. Noakes argues that these sources are "sites where men attempted to fashion a militarized masculinity" which often was communicated in a particularly emotional style. Noakes also explains that through these forms of life writing, these authors construct forms of hybrid masculinity, which is subject to constant renegotiation and expressed in a very emotional style.

Claire Langhamer focuses on the Mass Observation Archive to examine the emotional responses of participants in the project. More specifically, Langhamer looks at citizenship as an emotional practice and at how emotional responses can become forms of political engagement. She argues that ways of expressing emotions did not change significantly because of total war, however, the value attached to lived experience did. Another argument that emerges from this analysis is that a new form of citizenship – emotional citizenship – emerged from the war years.

The last chapter is also the only one that looks at a conflict other than the two world wars: the Greek Civil War. Here, historian Joy Damousi looks at family materials, including letters, photographs, interviews and even rumours, to create a historical archive of a specific experience: her uncle's death in the Greek Civil War. This event shows that war can have a longer emotional legacy, and grief can affect families long after wartime events, thus arguing how family histories can provide useful sources to study the complex interactions between emotions and war.

The value of this edited collection is therefore manifold. By focusing specificola on the history of emotions in total war, the volume goes beyond the emotions most widely associated with war, such as grief and fear, which nonetheless are not overlooked. More importantly, the book offers a valuable outlook of the methodological implications of the study of emotions in war and conflict. Personal sources such as letters, diaries, interviews, memoirs, and family history can allow the historian to focus on the subjective, and this repositions the role of the personal, the emotional, the subjective in the field of history, to allow for a more overarching understanding of events and "the movement between the emotional intimacy of the small scale and the emotional abstraction of the large scale."

War and culture studies and the history of war and conflict can certainly benefit from this interest in intimate experiences, emotions and feelings, and existing sources can be studied through the lens of the history of emotions. As Alistair Thomson has shown (Thomson, *Anzac Memories*; Id., *Indexing and Interpreting Emotion*), oral history is one field that has embraced intimacy, subjectivity and emotions for a few decades and it is certainly one that can contribute to the study of emotions in many ways.

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Dalila Colucci holds a PhD in Modern Philological and Linguistic Disciplines from the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa (2016) and a PhD in Romance Languages and Literatures from Harvard University (2018), where she has also been a Lauro De Bosis Postdoctoral Fellow (2019-2020). She is now a María Zambrano Fellow at the University of Seville, where is part of the research group *Interculturalidad. Lenguas y Literaturas Europeas*. Her interests and publications lie within modern and contemporary Italian literature and art, with a close focus on intermediality. At Harvard, she curated the exhibit *In Africa it is Another Story: Looking Back at Italian Colonialism* (2014), dedicated to the visual, political and literary imaginary of the Italian colonial adventure in Africa. She is currently working on a manuscript on the futurist tin book *L'Anguria lirica* as the material pivot for a revolutionary theory of poetic intermediality.

Lindsey Dodd is Reader in Modern European History at the University of Huddersfield, UK. Her interests are the theory and practice of oral history, children's lives in the past, memory, France during the Second World War, and the methodological dimensions of emotion, affect and feeling in historical study. Her first monograph *French Children Under the Allied Bombs, 1940-1945* was published in 2016. She is also co-editor of *Vichy France and Everyday Life* (2018). She has been on

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Joana Etchart is a Senior Lecturer in Irish and British Studies at the University of Pau. She formerly taught at the Sorbonne (2011-2017). She takes part in French societies promoting Irish Studies (SOFEIR and GIS EIRE) and British studies (SAES), and is also a member of the Oral History Network of Ireland (OHNI). She has specialised in the history of the Troubles from the late 1960s up until 1998 in Northern Ireland and, by extension, in the UK and in Ireland. Her research focuses on public policy initiatives in the field of reconciliation and community relations. She is currently writing a detailed history of the shifting interpretations of the policy of community relations in the 1969-1995 timeframe. She is also interested in assessing the community's response and adhesion to them.

Mara Josi is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at University College Dublin. She obtained her PhD at the University of Cambridge. Her areas of interest include Holocaust Studies, Cultural Memory Studies, Theory of Emotions, and Material Culture. Mara's current research project looks at first-hand archival resources and forgotten published material on the survival of Jewish in hiding. During her PhD, Mara worked on the largest single round-up and deportation of Jews from Italy during the German occupation of 1943-45, which took place in Rome on 16 October 1943. She investigated this event from the perspective of literary writings, combining the methods of cultural memory and cognitive literary studies to analyse the influence of literature on individual and collective memory. Mara published articles and chapters dedicated to the Holocaust, female diaristic writings during the Second World War, and the *Anni di piombo*.

Alessandra Rosati is completing a Master of Advanced Research in Comparative Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her thesis examines the problematics of *Bildung* in modernism, investigating how the genre of the *Bildungsroman* develops in European urban novels of the 1920s and early 1930s, with a particular focus on German and Italian Literature. Her research considers social theories of modernity, in particular of urbanism, exploring the gendering of

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Lise Zurné is a PhD candidate at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. Her project explores the representation of modern war history in historical re-enactments, including negotiation of sensitive pasts, decolonization, the role of women in the armed forces, and embodiment. She completed a Master in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology (VU Amsterdam), and one in Visual Anthropology (Leiden University), both cum laude. Before that, she investigated the politics of historical representation and re-enactment of decolonization in Indonesia, through the documentary *The Feel of History* (2017), which has been screened at various ethnographic film festivals. She is also a co-founder of Ethnovision, a collective of five visual anthropologists who investigate the use of visual methods in academic research through workshops. Lise co-chairs the Working Group Safety in the Field at the LOVA network of feminist anthropologists.