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Memory on the Periphery of War: The Life Writing and Uncertainty of Peripheral Witnesses in British Literature of World Wars I and II

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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by

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Dedication

Thank you to the members of my committee—Russell, Aranye, Glyn, and Dominique—for helping this project to take shape, for your guidance in research and writing, and for your support in every aspect of academic life not contained in these pages. Thanks also to Julie, Kay, and everyone involved in the Literature and the Mind Initiative for being a model of interdisciplinary thought; and to Bishnu, whose advising in the doctoral colloquium and beyond has made me a better scholar and teacher. Thank you to the English department staff who helped me to navigate the department and university—Mary Rae, Meg, and all the coordinators and advisors in the SASC—whose knowledge and support allowed me to balance research and teaching, and be better at both.

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Abstract

Memory on the Periphery of War: Life Writing and Uncertainty in British Literature of World War I and II

By

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This project addresses a corpus of narratives across twentieth century British literature that illustrate the troubling effects of World Wars I and II on the memories and self-understanding of "peripheral witnesses:" people who live through events of potential mass trauma, but feel that they occupy a complex position of marginalization and privilege that simultaneously connects them to the event and distances them from it. The speakers examined in this project—primarily drawn from works by Virginia Woolf, Christopher Isherwood, Kazuo Ishiguro—respond to this position by drawing on narrative features of life writing genres from the autobiography to the travelogue. These speakers simultaneously strive to record detailed recollections of a war that has passed, and to interrogate their own memories for mistakes or gaps from the physical or temporal distance of the narrative present. This self-interrogative narrative mode—borne out of a self-questioning mental state that is prompted by culture-specific definitions of what it means to "see" war, and by unrealistic expectations that historically significant memories will be accurate, vivid, and comprehensive in scope—lays bare the imperfect, created nature of memory. By attending to

the gaps in their memories, and how the narrators aim to prevent or draw attention to these faults, this project exposes another fracture in memory that global war can reveal and exacerbate far beyond the battlefield.

Memory on the Periphery of War contributes to the interdisciplinary field of memory studies, performing literary analysis in conversation with two methodologies: trauma studies from history and literary studies, and cognitive psychology. Examining texts by Virginia Woolf, Christopher Isherwood, and Kazuo Ishiguro that deploy and deconstruct conventions of life writing (with attention to contemporary approaches by Pat Barker and Ian McEwan, and unique approaches to life writing by parents of Isherwood and Ishiguro), this project recognizes a unique subgenre within war narratives and life writing. Taken together, these literary texts and theoretical frameworks invite us to recognize the role of creation, imagination, and self-questioning that are fundamental to memory's processes, and to understand how particular experiences (like seeing war from the edge) can cast these traits of memory as faults.

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Introduction

From 2014 to 2018—when this project began to take shape and when it drew to a close—museums, libraries, and archives across the United States commemorated the centennial of World War I. The New York Public Library used one of their exhibitions to address "the manner in which public relations, propaganda, and mass media in its many forms were used to control public opinion about the war" ("Over Here"). The Harry Ransom Center, J. Paul Getty Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art also juxtaposed wartime propaganda with letters, poem drafts, and sketches from those who were in the trenches. Each exhibition contrasted these two narratives of the Great War: either explicitly, through statements about the exhibit as a whole, or implicitly, through the physical layout of works displayed. In the Ransom Center, recruitment posters were paired with gruesome photographs to bring the sanitized ideals of war up against previously censored images of violence. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a U.S. Army propaganda poster depicting Germans as gorillas stood alongside George Grosz's satiric line drawing of German military doctors declaring walking skeletons fit for duty. These exhibits brought other perspectives of World War I into contrast as well: the war front and the home front through letters sent between them (including the perspectives of women and children), nations on opposing sides through visual arts, and even the mid-war and post-war years with works created as late as the 1920s that look back on the artist's experience on the battlefield. But other than the tragic misnomer "the war to end all wars," nothing is repeated so consistently across these exhibits as the contrast between government approved narratives and firsthand accounts of soldiers. This recurring framework suggests that, in the eyes of curators or patrons who visit these displays, the perspective of World War I soldiers was so muted and distorted in public

accounts that we were—and still are—in danger of missing or not grasping the experiences of soldiers during World War I.

The timing of these exhibitions adds other layers of significance. Although the United States only officially joined World War I on April 7, 1917, these commemorative displays of World War I were found across American libraries and museums beginning in 1914, well before the centennial of American involvement—a subtle reinforcement of the general over the particular, and the war's international context over local or even national contexts (with the exception of the New York Public Library exhibit, as they outline the timeline of US involvement alongside propaganda targeted at US citizens). The anniversary dates may also be read as tools to reinforce the legitimacy of these exhibitions, using commemoration as a ready explanation for our interest in revisiting the war. And as these exhibits are mounted one hundred years later, after the last surviving soldiers have died, we are reminded of another reason that firsthand accounts of World War I are in danger of going unheard.

In the face of this feeling that soldiers' perspectives have been silenced or distorted, and are in danger of being further lost as time passes, it is easy to see why post-war audiences would generally prioritize the words and images of soldiers who witnessed the atrocities of trench warfare, mustard gas, and sense of futility that marked the Great War. In the literary realm in particular, a number of the British war poets wrote about the atrocities of war in apostrophe, responding to someone else who had already spoken about war. Wilfred Owen replies to the propagandistic poet Jessie Pope in "Dulce et Decorum Est;" Siegfried Sassoon critiques the anonymous women who praise soldiers for participating in a war that they have not seen in "Glory of Women;" and he condemns the military and government officials who construct "this sepulchre of crime" in "On Passing New Menin Gate." As

Owen and Sassoon speak directly to these figures, the risk of writing on war as an "outsider" becomes more concrete. It is understandable that authors or artists with other perspectives of war would ask themselves what they had to contribute before sharing their experiences and artistic interpretations of the war, and thereby subjecting their work and themselves to critique.

Memory on the Periphery of War traces the self-conscious responses of authors who write in the wake of these critical poets, and may have felt in some way addressed by them, even if they were not propagandists, warmongers, or military officials. As the texts gathered in this project suggest, a number of British citizens felt or were told by others that they did not really "see" World War I or World War II, even though these conflicts had deeply affected them. They carried a mix of disadvantages and privileges associated with age, gender, sexuality, profession, class, and other aspects of their lives, positions that simultaneously render them vulnerable to the violence of war and afford them a level of agency to escape it. Their narratives are not marked by the gruesome atrocities and perception-bending flashbacks that have come to be associated with stories of war in Western literature of the twentieth century, but they hold in common a pattern of conventions in organization and narrative voice that speak to a unique psychological perspective during and after war. I refer to these narrators (and to an extent, the authors who create them) as "peripheral witnesses," to capture the conflicted feeling of having seen war or its effects in part, but doing so from the war's edge.

In using the label "peripheral witness" to describe the narrators examined in this project, I aim to describe a state of mind that is a product of the overwhelming and diffused scale of global war, but also a product of the culture that exists alongside it. The stories that

these speakers tell us, and the ways in which they tell them, reflect a range of anxieties about time and memory, anxieties that seem to spring from the sense that the speaker was outside of a traumatic event and yet felt its impact. This position is not linked to one particular group on the edge of war—the narrators who write from this position are marginalized based on gender, sexuality, age, or class—but many of them have a complex relationship with privilege as well, due to wealth, social influence, or careers that connect them to the wealthy and influential. Nor is this position isolated to a narrow period of history: the works examined here span the twentieth century of British literature, beginning with the 1920s when the wounds of World War I were still fresh, and concluding with the 1990s when old age began to claim the memories and the lives of many who survived World War II and the Holocaust. The peripheral witness' anxiety is inextricable from the social context, and in many ways a product of it, often most noticeable when they are in the presence of others who have suffered more dramatic or more socially recognized losses, or when they feel dismissed or condemned by others who seek "true" accounts of war. We see the immediate negotiation of their own pain, risk, and uncertainty when Eleanor Partiger feels compelled to interrogate the source of pain that she feels as her niece Peggy makes a bitter remark at the foot of a World War I memorial statue (Woolf *The Years* 336); when Christopher Isherwood admonishes himself for telling partygoers that his train ride out of Germany in 1935 was "an escape and dangerous" when in fact other passengers were taking greater risks by traveling with false papers (*Down There on a Visit* 61); and when Masuji Ono feels that multiple young family members echo each other in accusing once-respected men of his generation of exhibiting "the greatest cowardice of all" by neglecting to take responsibility for Japan's imperialist ambitions and losses in World War II (Ishiguro *Artist of the Floating World* 58).

Out of this mental state—feeling a duty to remember for themselves or on behalf of others, but also to interrogate what they know and whether they have a right to speak—a unique narrative structure is borne. This structure draws on the genres of the personal diary or record-keeping journal, constructed from the personal experiences of the author or character narrator and composed in a form inspired by periodical life writing. New chapters or passages are often labeled according to the year, month, or even time of day on which they were recorded; and when entries delve further into the past to recount mid-war or pre-war experiences, their opening lines dutifully denote the time and place during which the events described in that passage originally occurred. This mechanically regular marking of time as it passes comes into sharp contrast with the narrators' less orderly experiences of it, as their fastidious timekeeping clashes with the mind's unreliable tracking of time. It also invites readers to compare what is being described in a particular historical moment or place to other accounts of that time or place, in part to understand what the narrator's story will add to our knowledge of this moment, but also in part to understand what they did not see, what their memories leave out, how their pain, displacement, or loss feels muted or trivial compared to that experienced by others. The novels and novelized autobiographies written from the peripheral witness perspective consistently draw attention to their sites of possible factual imperfection and obscured view, and do so of the speaker's own volition. Of course, the history of twentieth century British literature is rife with challenges to narrative authority, meditations on the fluid and imperfect nature of memory, and explorations of trauma's deleterious effects on what people can recall. The peripheral witness writes within the context of these challenges, and with the added complication of a dual sense of marginalization and privilege. With these considerations running as an undercurrent through

their narratives, occasionally brought to the fore in meta-narrative comments, peripheral witnesses focus on the potential flaws in their own memories and stories as they relay them. In doing so, they offer us another perspective of global war, one that is marked just as much by what has not been seen or cannot be known as what the speaker has witnessed.

The texts examined here span the twentieth century, and each author's works span years and decades within it, even though they belong to three different generations. Virginia Woolf writes near the aftermath of World War I and sees World War II begin at the end of her life; Christopher Isherwood grows up in the shadow of World War I and watches his contemporaries serve in or report on World War II as an adult; and Kazuo Ishiguro is born a decade after World War II has ended, but senses its repercussions through the lives of his family who survived. They all also return to their memories of war decades after it has ended through their writing, often revisiting the same historical period multiple times over the course of their careers: Woolf from 1925 to 1940, Isherwood from 1939 to 1976, and Ishiguro from the comparatively small span of 1982 to 1989 (though many of his other novels directly or indirectly address World War II as well, most notably *When We Were Orphans*). As eclectic as this gathering of authors may seem, their works hold in common three traits. First, each narrator senses that either World War I or World War II is significant, even central to their lives, although they occasionally feel or argue that their relationship to the war is marginal. Second, they write in a journalistic log form, frequently recording the date and time when they write and the date and time when the events that they record occurred. Finally, even as they diligently write down what they see or what they remember, each narrator openly questions his or her own ability to compose a narrative that is accurate, orderly, or valuable, due to the feeling that they only saw war from its outskirts, or that others

would believe this to be true. By juxtaposing a strict temporal format with a narrator who seems reluctant to view himself or herself as a victim of war or a witness to it, these texts use first person narrative, journal structure, and self-interrogation to add to and complicate theories of trauma that address the tendency to see war as "unwitnessable." The focus of this project, then, is on how these perspectives, formal features, and narrative devices illustrate another way in which global war can interrupt the memories and stories of those who feel its effects.

By examining the narrative position of the peripheral witness, this project aims to contribute to efforts within the interdisciplinary field of memory studies to recognize a wider range of events that can disrupt one's memory, and forms that this disruption can take. Both World Wars I and II have long been associated with troubled memory and psychological trauma, from the contentious diagnosis of "shell shock" coined by Charles Myers and popularized by W.H.R. Rivers' work with officers in World War I (Morris 92, 96), to the dual senses that the atrocities of the Holocaust were unspeakable and yet still must be spoken "so as to warn against forgetting and oblivion" (Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* 19). This association between psychological trauma and firsthand experiences of war is, in part, a product of cultural forces that prioritize the interests of the military, which in turn prioritizes some sources of trauma over others, and does so along gendered lines. As David J. Morris notes, the highest-funded studies of psychological trauma typically have been conducted within the context of the soldier's experience in war; this means that the definitions that have been used and the symptoms that have been described often presume that the soldier's experience of war are prototypical examples of the cause and effects of trauma (64). But even this attention to the traumatic potential of war did not come easily. British World War I poets

worked to show military and government officials the lasting psychological effects of mechanized war and the maddening and disease-ridden confines of the trenches; and it was not until 1980 that the diagnosis for post-traumatic stress was officially added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) after vigorous campaigning by Vietnam veterans' interest groups (Morris 156). The quests for social and medical recognition of psychological trauma have thus followed similar patterns, intertwined with each other and with the legacy of war.

As psychological trauma has come to be associated with narratives of war, many scholars within history and literary studies have sought to recognize a wider variety of potentially traumatizing events, a wider range of people who may be impacted by events like war, and a wider range of ways in which war can disrupt memory. These shifts in perspective come in part as theories of gender and sexuality have worked with trauma theory, and as the number of surviving witnesses dwindles with each passing year but their "powerful yet fragile" legacy lives on (to borrow a phrase from Daniel Schacter). Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" is emblematic of both of these threads that work to widen what "counts" as a narrative of war. In *The Generation of Postmemory*, published after two decades of considering the concept through literature, testimony, and visual art, Hirsch defines this experience of memory as "the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before—to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply so as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (5). These post-memories are not simply information that is handed down from one generation to the next, but also created through shared narratives and

actions of a family or culture. Though she states that the postmemory generation does not strictly take on the memories of others (indicated in part by the scare quotes around "remember" in the passage quoted above), Hirsch argues that stories of people or events, even environments like neighborhoods, can loom large in the minds of children who never experienced them; and she describes how affective reactions can be passed from one generation to the next without conscious effort. Hirsch acknowledges narrative and storytelling play a central role in creating memories and keeping them alive, and that these in turn can play a central role in perpetuating or healing trauma.

While Hirsch's *Generation of Postmemory* focuses on the legacy of the Holocaust, she advocates for studying the effects of other traumatic events, arguing that "the Holocaust can no longer serve simply as a conceptual limit as in the discussion of historical trauma, memory, and forgetting" (19). But it is partly within a cultural framework that has viewed particular events and perspectives of them (the trenches of World War I, the bomb sites and concentration camps in World War II) as central to history and to the atrocities of war, and thus in need of protection and preservation from the very real forces that have attempted and still attempt to silence them, that peripheral witnesses define themselves and their perspective, and decide whether they have a right or a duty to write about the war. For this reason, it is useful in this project to take World Wars I and II as the central subject: to study narrators who feel that their own experience lies outside or on the edge of these potentially traumatic historical moments (or who believe others will see them this way), but who feel compelled to narrate their own experience and to speak to the experiences of others, even if these cannot be fully known.

While the link between memory and narrative is clear in literary and historical studies—since stories are crafted to represent or question individual and cultural memories—scholars in the cognitive sciences also see creativity and narrative construction as central mechanisms of memory. Cognitive psychologists suggest that all memory is a product of creation and re-creation, used to maintain a sense of self that can take in new information and adjust over time, rather than a passive recording of our lives and surroundings. Psychologist Daniel Schacter summarizes the findings of his field to argue that remembering is always an act of assembly; each memory that seems like a discrete recollection is actually crafted out of different types of information (from semantic memory of "conceptual and factual knowledge" to procedural memory of "skills" and "habits" to episodic memory of particular moments), and out of information from different parts of our lives (from childhood to present, and from a period to a specific event) (*Searching for Memory* 16-17). The assembled and ever-shifting nature of memory inevitably implies that subjectivity shapes memory as well. Schacter is wary of mechanical metaphors for memory's processes, even those that treat the brain as a machine as advanced as "an information processing device—a computer that stores, retains, and retrieves information;" according to Schacter, this metaphor, like all metaphors that compare the mind to a machine, "leaves no room for the subjective experience of remembering incidents and episodes from our past," for acknowledging how this episode "is part of your personal history related to events that came before and have occurred since" (16). In Schacter's framework, memories are seen as creations that are shaped by the moment within which they are assembled, and they are subject to change over time. This definition has already resonated across disciplines, in studies of literature that work to co-create knowledge of the mind with findings from the cognitive sciences. As

Evelyne Ender puts it in her study of the convergence of literary and scientific studies in the realm of autobiography, "remembrance is an act of imagination" (5), one that is used to "[provide] the foundations of human individuality" (3). Enders' study is foundational to interdisciplinary collaboration between literary studies and cognitive psychology, particularly as these relate to the creation of selfhood (whether through autobiography or other forms of self definition). While Ender examines the role of remembrance in selfhood, analyzing memory's general processes as they are portrayed in the life writings of Proust and Woolf as well as diseases of memory like dementia and the dramatic flashbacks trauma, *Memory on the Periphery of War* aims to focus this lens on the limit case of war, an event that seems to throw everyone that it touches into self-questioning, including those who are on its edge.

In addition to its attention to the subjective and creative role of the rememberer in memory's processes, cognitive psychology also attends to the influence of the social context in which we remember. They compare memories of situations ranging from the remarkable to the everyday, finding patterns in their form and suggesting their psychological or social origins. In the realm of remarkably clear memories, Schacter introduces the concept of "flashbulb memory," exceptionally vivid recollections of historically significant moments that draw their strength from processes of perception and rehearsal (as opposed to the origins of the more famous "flashback" associated with psychological trauma). The self-conscious narration and diaristic structure of texts written from the peripheral witness perspective can illustrate these mental processes as they unfold, and introduce memories that seem to exist somewhere in the middle. On the other hand, Gillian Cohen and Martin Conway study the processes and performance of memory outside of the artificial environment of the laboratory, and in doing so expose the deleterious effects of the psychology laboratories that had been

considered fairly neutral. They conclude that previous studies have exaggerated the unreliability of memory by subjecting it to forms and degrees of scrutiny that would not normally occur. As peripheral witness narrators pore over their own memories, revisiting them to offer corrections and new interpretations, or highlighting what they cannot remember or never knew, it is easy to imagine how their writing desk could resemble the cognitive scientist's laboratory, and how their rehearsal of these memories publicly and privately could lend a "flashbulb" quality and yet feel uniquely resonant to the speakers due to their unique position on the edge of war.

Here it is important to introduce two caveats. First, I do not aim to prove that the narratives studied here are symptomatic of psychological trauma, though they resonate with some accounts of trauma and very well may speak to and reflect that experience. Nor do I aim to equate the experiences or effects of war for those who witness war firsthand and on its edge. Just as Hirsch distinguishes the mental state of "the generation of postmemory" from that of survivors by pointing to postmemory's use of "imaginative investment" in the stories they inherit from family members, I will ague that one source of memory disruption in peripheral witnesses may stem from the self-interrogation that they bring to their memories and their stories. The characters or even authors examined here may well have experienced psychological trauma, but this trauma is at once masked and exacerbated by their self-critique. I contend that this self-critique, which is borne as much out of the cultural context and narrative traditions of war and trauma within British literature as it is out of the war itself, is a major source of the detailed yet disrupted state of the narratives studied here. By attending to the narrative form that these texts hold in common, we not only see the psychological effects of living on the edge of war, but we also see its sources.

Second, I do not aim to frame the stories of peripheral witnesses simply as examples of psychological phenomena theorized by the sciences. Rather, I argue that the narratives of peripheral witnesses present opportunities for researchers across fields within memory studies to examine disrupted memory within particular social and historical contexts. By representing moments of remembering or perception in the context of a story set within a specific historical moment, social context, and self, peripheral witness narratives invite memory researchers to consider how these disrupted forms of memory can come about and change over time, and the range of experiences that can prompt them. I will argue that this has two consequences. First, it exposes another fault in memory that global war can reveal and exacerbate beyond the battlefield, as narrators probe their memories for faults only to find many that are always present but often go unnoticed. And second, in doing so, it suggests a site of connection between experiences of war, though it does not collapse difference.

Because the narrative position and style of the peripheral witness is found in texts across the twentieth century from authors with diverse positions of privilege and/or marginalization in relation to war, and because their narrative responses to these draw on the style and sometimes the content of life writing, it is useful to begin with a brief overview of each author's relationship to World Wars I and II. In tracing each author's biographical experience with war, I aim to understand which relationships to war they might represent through their works, and to trace which ones they draw on at different points in their career.

Woolf lived through all of World War I and the first months of World War II, so it may be difficult to separate her outlook on global warfare into the influence of one or the other. Nevertheless, there do seem to be some differences between her novels that directly

discuss World War I, and her nonfictional texts that anticipate World War II during what Steve Ellis calls the "long 1939." While both events likely influenced Woolf's perspective of war, she was threatened more directly by World War II than World War I, even though she lived through much less of the conflict. Her decision to separate *The Years* and *Three Guineas* into two projects—one a sweeping novel that covers fifty years and three generations in a family, the other an epistolary response that considers a single question about preventing war—seems to belie a shift in Woolf's relationship to war. Her shift to the less-fictional epistolary genre, like her shift in the focus of "A Sketch of the Past" from the abstract analysis of memory's form to the more detail-driven work of recovering her childhood and the Victorian culture her family seemed to represent, suggests a shift in mindset accompanying the approach of a war that threatened Woolf and her family based on multiple aspects of their personal identity: religion, sexuality, and profession. And as identity-based threats were leveled at Woolf and those around her, it would seem that it became increasingly urgent for Woolf to preserve the past and respond to the future.

For most British civilians, both World War I and II felt more present than other wars in recent memory. This can be traced in part to the wider range of ranks from which soldiers were recruited, as Britain was "the only European power relying still on a small professional army and volunteer military training" in 1914, as opposed to the "universal male conscription" policy already in place in other countries (Proctor 17). But this presence is also due in part to changing technology, particularly the introduction of aerial bombing. While Woolf would have been familiar with the looming threat of aerial bombardment at home during World War I, she was directly affected by the second war's air raids. Two of the Woolf family's homes in London—at 52 Tavistock Square and 37 Mecklenburgh Square—

were bombed in 1940, the year in which Woolf's essay "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" was published by *New Republic* (Clarke). Like many British civilians, then, Woolf experienced World War II partly as the arrival of forms of attack that had been looming over England since World War I.

The Woolfs had many reasons to fear a German invasion that seemed to, in Virginia's words from "A Sketch of the Past," "come closer" daily in 1940. Two years before Britain entered World War II, the fight against fascism had already claimed Virginia's nephew, Julian Bell, who died in the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Beyond the physical threat of aerial bombardment—a threat or experience held in kind by most people living in parts of Britain—Virginia and Leonard would have been personally targeted in the event of a German invasion due to their religious, political, and professional affiliations. They were enemies of the Nazi Party on the basis of Leonard's Jewish identity (and Virginia's by marriage)[1], and on the basis of their class and profession: in their work running the Hogarth Press, they printed English editions of the works of Sigmund Freud and other intellectuals at odds with the world view of the Third Reich. Furthermore, their personal support of refugees like Freud made them direct enemies of Germany. Karen Levenback cites a "[Gestapo arrest list for England]," written in 1940 and discovered after the war, that names both Virginia and Leonard as subject to arrest (157). Though the list was only discovered after the war had ended, the Woolfs may have deduced that they would appear on such lists on the basis of anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual Nazi policies and rhetoric, and their own fame which would

[1] Many biographers and critics have also noted Woolf's anti-Semitic comments, reaching mixed conclusions about her social position and her own attitudes toward marginalized communities based on these. In *Outsiders Together: Virginia and Leonard Woolf*, Natania Rosenfeld suggests that "Woolf is unique in her centrality and her marginality, as an intellectual aristocrat deeply affected" by her era and position, and by her marriage to Leonard Woolf (15).

make it difficult to go undetected. Woolf's involvement in intellectual culture and her porous religious identity put her at risk during World War II—even as her distance from the battlefields and her cultural influence afforded her the opportunity to write and publish works that acted against Nazi ideals.

Woolf had a somewhat more conventional civilian experience during World War I, though it was not without its own potential sources of trauma. Unlike the most revered post-war civilians and ideal victims of war, she did not have a son or husband in the military. However, the Woolf family did experience loss during the Great War: two of Leonard's brothers, Cecil and Philip Woolf, died in 1917 at the front in the same conflict. This distinction between the grief of mothers and that of other family member may seem callous and overly simplistic, but it is one that at the very least was culturally reinforced, as we will see in the analysis of Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Additionally, even though bombing of British soil was limited during World War I, the nation was never entirely isolated from the sensory experiences of war. Susan Grayzel notes that although "the Blitz" in World War II is remembered as the hallmark of bombing on British soil, it was actually the smaller-scale bombing during the Great War that "shattered" the sense of separation between the "home front" and "war front," and led Britain to devote much of the 1930s to developing, advertising, and dispersing domestic protections from war, including gas masks and bomb shelters (*At Home and Under Fire* 2-3). Tom Lawson argues that as "the guns of the Western Front could be heard in 'deep England,'" World War I "had […] demonstrated the proximity" of continental Europe to England (92) In her study of Woolf's early diaries and fictions, Barbara Lounsberry finds that the sounds of gunfire and air raids echoing across the ocean, fluctuating prices and availability of food and goods, and even the

horrifying monotony of a drawn-out trench-based war, are present in Woolf's diary that she kept at the time: "The very regularity of encounter (and ordinary people's forced accommodation to it) gives the war its particular horror in [Woolf's Asheham] diary" (186). The sounds of war intruded so frequently on Woolf's life that normally benign sounds were automatically felt as threatening: in 1915, her diary records the reaction of Londoners after what was most likely a burst tire, anticipating the famous scene of a collective civilian "shell shock" in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Lounsberry 170). Of course, sensations that trigger post-traumatic stress reactions are often not so easily recognized, and could seem benign to an outside observer (Morris 115); and the automatic, tense reaction she describes sounds closer to that of the London crowd in *Mrs. Dalloway* than of Septimus. She was also familiar with the sight of German prisoners of war who had been set to work in Britain; in one of the last entries of her Asheham diary, she writes, "To post at Southease. Always meet Germans coming back. When alone, I smile at the tall German" (qtd. in Lounsberry, 187). The person-to-person nature of this encounter would have rendered the enemy, and therefore the war, less abstract for Woolf. Even after the war's end, Woolf felt its presence—or, rather, was preoccupied by the ease with which many seemed to ignore it. Reina van der Wiel notes that Woolf's diary in June 19, 1920 states, "'Our generation is daily scourged by the bloody war'"; and more generally, van der Wiel also notes that "Woolf was greatly concerned about the general impatience to forget the war as soon as it was over" (84).

Woolf's experiences of World War I on the "home front" were trying and potentially traumatic, but they were held in common by many British civilians—and by soldiers, in the anticipation of bombing, the loss of loved ones, and the encounters with prisoners of war. Woolf felt most at odds with British war culture as it came to an apparent general consensus

to "move on;" but her own experiences of the conflict as it was waged were quite close to that of others. Her experience of World War I and the collective remembering and forgetting of the war was like a lens through which she would perceive World War II, and her own relationship to war. Indeed, World War I is often described as a moment that ruptured personal and group boundaries; as van der Wiel argues, "Almost every family in England had lost a relative due to the war […] so the personal had turned into the public" (91). By comparison, though, much of Woolf's fate—and the fate of her family, friends, livelihood, and work—was more directly threatened, and depended on more nuanced aspects of her identity, in World War II. This shift from feeling war's threats as an English woman, to feeling them to new degrees and in new modes based on political, professional, and religious affiliations, seems to have prompted more memoir-style, non-fictional writing meant for publication in her final years. As the horrors of World War I—from the threat aerial warfare posed to what had seemed to some like an advantageous isolation of the British Isles, to the massive loss of young life—were exacerbated by the drawn-out anticipation of war, and persecution by the Third Reich, Woolf's body of war writing exposed transitions in thinking of British writers from the account of multiple perspectives to the work of identifying and laying bare one's individual relationship to the war as both safety and identity constantly shift.

In moving to the works of Christopher Isherwood, we move to a younger generation of authors and survivors of war. None of the three Isherwood novels examined in this project address World War I directly (though I will draw on a brief autobiographical sketch of the playground mourning practices of 1915 as portrayed in *Kathleen and Frank*), so the relationships that these works hold to World War I are even more implicit than those of

Woolf's *Three Guineas* and "A Sketch of the Past." Isherwood is in a curious position to World War II, having lived in Germany as the National Socialist Party rose from fringe group to powerful political voice; so his account of this war is split between observations about the culture that gave rise to it, and the experience of witnessing the subsequent war from a distance.

Isherwood's memory of World War I is undoubtedly shaped by the loss of his father, but also to a large extent by others' reactions to his loss. Though World War I and Isherwood's personal losses are not mentioned often in Isherwood's writing on Germany, we can see his experience of wartime mourning culture as a child through his eyes as an adult, in the afterword to *Kathleen and Frank*, and in a fragment of a story called "Last Time" that seems to have been the basis for this afterword, housed at the Huntington Library. "Last Time" is told from the perspective of a boy who has learned that his father died in the war. Isherwood's unnamed narrator writes that, as the war became deadlier in 1915, "most of us had lost some relative or other." If he is writing from an autobiographical perspective, he still does not name his father as one of those lost relatives, or even himself as the young narrator. In the unpublished draft, the tone with which Isherwood describes the young boys' behavior is sharply cynical, with an embedded critique of the treatment of the dead: "We fairly gloated over [the loss of relatives]. The cult of the Dead became fashionable" ("Last Time"). This differs slightly from his description of his own position in *Kathleen and Frank*, where he describes himself as one of only a few in his class who experienced this loss, but levels a biting critique at himself: "At St. Edmund's there were only two or three others who shared this distinction […] at first [Christopher] was vain of it; it made you, or your mourning-armband, slightly sacred" (501). In "Last Time," Isherwood's narrator describes the

experience of another classmate, who recounts the experience of learning his father has died "to a select group;" the classmate's audience asks, "'How did you feel? [...] Did you blub much?" This social demonstration of loss extends to physical codes: "Black armlets were worn with dismal pride: the owner had certain privileges. He mustn't be ragged. One day, in a scuffle, a boy's armlet was torn […] We felt that we had committed some horrible blasphemy and went away ashamed" ("Last Time").[2]

This unpublished story and its counterpart in *Kathleen and Frank* reveal the over-determined position of mourners in war, laden already with expectations of behavior from adults and fellow children alike. At the same time, it harshly critiques those expectations with an eye to what Jahan Ramazani terms the "economic problem of mourning": that is, the danger of telling a story about the dead that seems like a justification for that death, or worse, a mode of profiting from that loss. (7). (Ramazani traces this dynamic through British poetry, but from Isherwood's story, it seems clear that this concern extends from poetry to prose narratives.) Isherwood here speculates that children growing up during World War I, at the encouragement of elders, viewed fighting and dying in the war as the ultimate—perhaps the only—mode of attaining respect during war. Furthermore, his story shows that the family retained a shadow of that honor, as long as they adjusted certain seemingly arbitrary aspects of their appearance or their participation in social life.

While Isherwood did live through World War I and lose his father to it, he did not see the conflict, and was in much less danger of doing so as a young British citizen. Still, he

[2] In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years*, but not in sections examined in this project, Woolf also draws attention to the artificiality of mourning practices: Delia Partiger sees the gesture of pedestrians removing hats at the sight of a hearse as meaningless (*The Years* 84), while Peter Walsh ironically sees the ambulance carrying Septimus, and the people pulling over to let him pass, as "One of the triumphs of civilization" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 151).

grew up in the shadow of this war, and his identity and masculinity were seen as bound up with his father's life and death as an officer. Even though Isherwood lived during World War I, and thus does not fall under Hirsch's definition of "the generation of postmemory," he shares their experience of history's weight coupled with a generational separation that makes it feel difficult to explain or claim. And of course, the short story's title "Last Time" suggests that Isherwood recognized common lines between World Wars I and II.

Isherwood's experience of World War II is much more thoroughly documented, in the novelized autobiographies studied in this project and elsewhere. At various times, Isherwood interpreted his own relocation to Germany differently: as a misguided attempt to prove himself to an older relative and to see the world in the first part of *Down There on a Visit*; a pilgrimage to meet an intellectual hero in *Lions and Shadows* (which he reveals to be an untruthful explanation in *Christopher and his Kind*); and a rejection of the World War I narrative of Britain and Germany as sworn enemies in *Kathleen and Frank* (12). In *Christopher and His Kind*, however, Isherwood presents his primary motivation for initially moving to Berlin as the city's queer scene: he says that, "To Christopher, Berlin meant Boys" (2). He moved back and forth between Britain and Berlin, finally departing for good in 1933 with his German-born boyfriend Heinz. Thereafter, he moved between England, Greece, Portugal, the Canaries, and the Chinese/Japanese border during an investigation for a book with W.H. Auden, until he finally settled in New York and California; Heinz accompanied him until his passport was seized. Throughout this travel, and in his wartime work helping to settle German-speaking refugees in the United States, he was forced to watch the developments of the war from afar, knowing little about the fate of Heinz who had been forced to return to work in a labor camp and then join the German army. His and Auden's

decision to move to the United States at the outbreak of war was met with sharp criticism; and his identity as a pacifist would make it even easier to read him as a traitor to a conflict still today seen as "the good war."

Unlike Woolf and Isherwood, Kazuo Ishiguro did not live during either World War I or II; but his decision to write from the perspective of men and women of their generation speaks to a resonance between their relationships to global war and his own. From the beginning of his career as a novelist, and indeed the beginning of his childhood, Ishiguro's identity was defined by his nationality, and his parents' experience of World War II; at the same time, he occasionally frames his "outsider" position growing up in post-war British society as a source of his curiosity about the generation and culture that he would portray in *The Remains of the Day*.

In his Nobel Lecture, Ishiguro describes his childhood experiences of living in 1960s Britain in light of World War II. He praises his neighbors for their friendly behavior, but he also describes a disquieting type of familiarity that borders on scrutiny, in which strangers hailed in the street by his name and other children recognized him before they had met. Ishiguro reads these adults' behavior within the context of World War II:

> When I look back to this period, and remember it was less than twenty years from the end of a world war in which the Japanese had been their bitter enemies, I'm amazed by the openness and instinctive generosity with which our family was accepted by this ordinary English community. The affection, respect and curiosity I retain to this day for that generation of Britons who came through the Second World War, and built a remarkable new welfare state in its aftermath, derive significantly from my personal experiences from those years. (14)

As Ishiguro contrasts this welcoming attitude with the animosity of "bitter enemies" he imagines they would have held for Japan and its people only a matter of years before, he is aware of how dramatically relationships between individuals and nations can change over the course of a few years, a phenomenon that his characters like Masuji Ono and Stevens will explore when they too write from the perspective of war's aftermath. He also discusses the legacy of World War II by recounting discussions during a series of meetings at Auschwitz in 1999, including tours of the now-derelict concentration camps and informal discussions with Holocaust survivors. Describing the tour, he recalls, "I felt I'd come close, geographically at least, to the heart of the dark force under whose shadow my generation had grown up" (27). The qualifier "geographically at least" speaks to Ishiguro's acute awareness of distance, especially when it comes to claims of what is witnessed. But as he goes on to describe a debate among members of the International Auschwitz Committee between preserving the remains of the concentration camps or letting them "rot away to nothing," the questions that he poses also demonstrate his sense of responsibility to the past:

> I was forty-four years old. Until then I'd considered the Second World War, its horrors and its triumphs, as belonging to my parents' generation. But now it occurred to me that before too long, many who had witnessed those huge events at first hand would not be alive. And what then? Did the burden of remembering fall to my generation? We hadn't experienced the war years, but we'd at least been brought up by parents whose lives had been indelibly shaped by them. Did I, now, as a public teller of stories, have a duty I'd hitherto been unaware of? A duty to pass on, as best I could, these memories and lessons from our parents' generation to the one after our own? (29)

Ishiguro here narrows from the responsibility of one generation to the next, to his own responsibility as a "public storyteller;" this phrase puts into relief the relatively private genre of the journal that shapes his novels, which seem to be addressed to someone within the author's profession. Though Ishiguro complicates his questions about the duty to remember or to forget by dwelling on whether communities or nations can remember, or whether they ought to forget, he does not answer the question in this speech.

But while Ishiguro poses these questions of the duty of a generation or an author, he does not mention his family's connection to World War II. While his father lived through World War II in an international settlement in Shanghai as his own father "was an industrialist charged with establishing Toyota in China" ("Photo-Album: Memory of Shanghai"), his mother witnessed and survived the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Though this is rarely mentioned in the materials at the Ransom Center, one detailed story suggests that his "parents' talk of old friends, relatives, episodes from their lives in Japan" included grim details about the horrors of these attacks and their fallout, whether during Ishiguro's childhood or as he grew older (*The Nobel Lecture* 14). (This story, titled "Flight from Nagasaki," will be analyzed at the end of the third chapter, where I examine archival family materials from the Ishiguro Papers at the Harry Ransom Center).

Finally, there is another layer to Ishiguro's historical knowledge: his own memories of Japan, constructed from multiple sources and personal to himself. Ishiguro describes his "need for preservation" that had subconsciously led him to "[construct] in my mind a richly detailed place called 'Japan'" out of the comics and magazines sent by family members from Japan, the stories from his parents, and even his "own store of memories—surprisingly vast and clear," ranging from the layout of his childhood home to a "fierce" local dog (*The Nobel*

Lecture 13-15). Ishiguro's ownership of his memories as his own, and awareness that they might not resonate with others', resonates with his narrators' sense that others have misunderstood their nation (as seen in Etsuko's critique of her British husband's writing on Japan in *A Pale View of Hills*) or have misremembered or attempted to forget moments from the past that seem incongruous with the present (in Masuji's self-flagellating defense of his political and artistic leanings in imperial Japan in *An Artist of the Floating World*, and in Stevens' denial of his connection to Lord Darlington in *The Remains of the Day*).

In an interview with Sean Matthews, Ishiguro hints at ambivalence about the historical settings of his novels. He explains that the questions a novel would deal with would come first, and then the setting would be chosen to fit this after; for example, while writing *The Remains of the Day*, he decided that "The 1930s is associated with questions about democracy, so it's better to do it there than in the 1970s" (118). But he describes being left with "the nagging feeling that I use history and explore deep and sometimes tragic experiences that real people have had as a kind of backdrop or thematic dressing" (118). At the same time, his notes alongside an unfinished project based on his mother's experiences of war expresses suspicion about writing directly on a historical experience: "We have got to get the theme; say something pretty large, not just…the bomb's a bad thing…but to put it into a large context" ("Unpublished: Flight from Nagasaki"). Each historically situated novel that Ishiguro wrote would likely prompt a similar line of questioning: how to keep from simplifying the setting or the message, while still facilitating connections from that moment to others.

The novelists examined in this project observe war from the perspective of three generations, and across years or even decades within their own careers. They also observe it

from a multitude of positions: comparatively far from the battlefield, too old or too young to fight, privileged by their financial circumstances, persecuted for their sexuality, political affiliations, or race, haunted by their own memories of times of war and the legacies of the wars waged during their childhoods or before they were born. As their novels suggest nodes of common experience between soldiers and civilians, parents and children, activists and artists, they gesture to bridges across these timespans and positions; but their interrogative mode will always bring differences, disputes, and modes of isolation to the fore as well.

I begin my examination of the peripheral witness with an analysis of Woolf's works in two parts. The first part focuses on two of Woolf's novels—*Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *The Years* (1937)—which feature women who are treated as "minor" characters, either in terms of the novel's structure or in terms of the social context it represents. These minor characters include Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft, who are only mentioned once in *Mrs. Dalloway* in the midst of its sweeping introduction to post-war London in the opening pages; and the service worker Mrs. Crosby in *The Years*, who appears in the background throughout the novel but takes center stage in the brief chapter "1918." I also analyze a more narratively central character in *The Years*, Eleanor Partiger, focusing on her perspective of an air raid in "1917" and her encounter with a memorial in "Present Day." Eleanor feels herself to be marginal in these moments, focusing on the suffering of others. Although these novels are not written in the first person form, Woolf's prominent use of dates and times in organizing both texts lends both novels an element of documentarian regularity. I argue that these grieving mothers in *Mrs. Dalloway* challenge expectations of the relationship between motherhood and memory of war, and the women in *The Years* illustrate an affective experience of significant moments or memorials that juxtaposes pain and alienation.

In the second half of this chapter, I turn to Woolf's less-fictional texts, the incomplete project "A Sketch of the Past" (1985) and the opening pages of *Three Guineas* (1938). These texts introduce the first person, self-questioning perspective taken up by Isherwood and Ishiguro. But while these authors use this perspective to critique their motivations in writing (or the motivations of their characters), in *Three Guineas* Woolf deploys this narrative move to question the logic behind her marginalization from discussions of war as a woman. In "A Sketch of the Past," where a memoir project is slowly interrupted by the approach of World War II, we can see a shift in Woolf's form that suggests that this threat led her to remember her childhood with a different sense of urgency. In both cases, we can see the effect of an approaching war on Woolf's sense of self, and the process of reassessing her position and motives when she writes.

In the second chapter, I study three of Christopher Isherwood's works that bring subtly different approaches to narrating his memories from Weimar Republic Berlin to mid-World War II California: *Goodbye to Berlin* from *The Berlin Stories* (1939), *Down There on a Visit* (1959), and *Christopher and His Kind* (1976). My analysis focuses in particular on meta-narrative moments that break down connections between the author Isherwood and character Christopher ("I am a camera," "that Christopher is dead," "Christopher's declared reason for burning his Berlin diary was unconvincing"), and on the memories that Isherwood feels are most concrete or must be interrogated most forcefully. Isherwood's playful yet self-interrogative deployment of the journal genre in these moments traces the struggles that Isherwood faced when he felt compelled to speak to his memories of a nation and a queer scene that he left behind when the Nazis rose to power.

The third chapter and the coda introduce a perspective of World War II that arguably intersects with Hirsch's designation of postmemory authors. Kazuo Ishiguro's first three novels—*A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1988)—display the resonance between people born after war and those who were on its edge. Ishiguro's novels are entirely fictional, but they take on the form of autobiographies for people who feel that they are in positions of power, guilt, and helplessness: a Japanese mother who moves to England after World War II, a Japanese propaganda artist who has conflicting feelings about his artistic and political support of the imperialist government after the war has ended, and an English butler who spent his career serving a gentleman who used his diplomatic influence to pave the way for relations between England and Nazi Germany. The haunted and recursive form that can be traced across Isherwood's career is condensed here into a single novel, as Ishiguro's narrators revisit key moments of their lives and reveal (or admit) new information each time. The strict temporal structure of two novels reinforces the irregular terrain of memory that does not always comply, especially when scrutinized.

In the coda, I turn to two novels that break with traditions of the peripheral witness. Both novels weave a meta-fictional thread into their stories, and feature protagonists who largely narrate from their childhood; but both protagonists either have, or are assumed by others to have, a closer relationship to war (though it never goes unchallenged here either). In Pat Barker's *The Man Who Wasn't There* (1988), many people assume that Colin Harper's father died ten years before in World War II, but he suspects that his mother took this story from a war film that she had recently seen. In Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), Briony Tallis works as a nurse in wartime, treating men who were evacuated from Europe with

gruesome and often fatal wounds, but she recognizes that the men who returned from battle draw a sharp distinction between her view from the hospital and their own. As Colin and Briony reflect on their identities and their relationships, which are determined in large part by their connection to war (or lack thereof), they compose stories that allow them to gain a sense of distance and control from their lives, but also to trace the ethics of the stories they tell themselves and others. By studying this variation on the peripheral witness genre—narrated from the perspective of children and faced with the burden of being expected to speak about the war though they feel their connection to it is tenuous—we see a position on the edge of war that is especially resonant as World Wars I and II continue to recede into the past.

During my study of these works that range from novels to novelized autobiographies, my archival research uncovered unpublished representing the perspectives of two authors' parents, from the papers of Christopher Isherwood and Kazuo Ishiguro. Christopher Isherwood's mother, Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood, assembled volumes of transcribed letters, photographs, and other ephemera from her husband Frank during his last deployment as an officer during World War I. Interspersed in the margins of this book are minimal but significant comments from her own perspective that suggests she subverted some expectations of war widows as vessels of memory for the nation. In Ishiguro's case, most writing by his parents that relates to his work or the war focuses on cultural details for his novels set in Japan and Shanghai (proper names for places or people, the type of traffic found in different neighborhoods of Shanghai, and so on). However, there is one unpublished and unfinished project on the days after the bombing of Nagasaki, written by Ishiguro through the perspective of a young girl but drawing on the memories of his own mother and aunt. The unfinished project's narrative perspective and the notes alongside it suggest that peripherality

could have been present in his mother's stories, or equally likely, a device used by Ishiguro to revisit the site of the attacks from his own perspective. These unpublished archival works illustrate the stories and narrative forms to which both Isherwood and Ishiguro would have been exposed, and which may have influenced their decision to draw on these personal genres—and expanded their idea of the forms they could take and the things they could accomplish.

Ultimately, this project brings together nonfiction-inspired novels across twentieth century British literature to uncover a series of narrative conventions that seem to constitute a sub-genre of their own. It brings together these novelists to acknowledge a precarious perspective of global war, told by speakers who may have felt both addressed by the biting critiques of Owen and Sassoon, and hailed by the likes of the war exhibit curators to compare and remember the war. But beyond contributing to studies of the legacy of war and genre within British literature, *Memory on the Periphery of War* also presents another framework for understanding the relationship between writing and remembering that is more complex than the former simply representing the latter. Writing with self-scrutiny brings rarely acknowledged but arguably ubiquitous flaws in the mechanisms of memory to the fore, even if these natural processes seem like faults. At the same time, this self scrutiny serves as a reminder of the potentially silencing pressures to which memory can be subjected, from tests of verifiable truth that warp recollection in the laboratory to expectations of war narratives that have the potential to silence those outside it in the writer's room.

Chapter 1: Making and Mining Women's Memories Across Wars in Virginia Woolf's Novels and Life Writing

In "A Sketch of the Past," Virginia bookends a memory of her half-sister Stella with a reflection on the act of remembering her, concluding her long reflection with the following observation:

> The past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. […] But to feel the present sliding over the depths of the past, peace is necessary. (98)

As is common in Woolf's writing about memory here, there is knowledge to be gained both from the claims she makes about memory and from her rendering of that act of remembrance in narrative form—and I will analyze both in throughout this project.[3] But the final sentence of this passage raises significant questions about how the present influences our view of the past, especially in less placid circumstances. What is meant by "peace," and how does memory function when that peace is impossible? How could a non-peaceful present—especially in the midst of war, or feeling its approach or its reverberations after—not only shape our view of the past and ourselves, but also shape how memory functions or is used? And if we shift the scale of memory from personal loss seen here to the distributed disruption of a world war (if such a distinction can be made), what place do the memories of women like Woolf hold? Virginia makes many claims about memory in this short work alone, but this declaration should still give us pause—especially because Woolf penned it when global peace seemed threatened, and because she remains a canonical novelist of war, memory, and other un-peaceful moments in 20th century Britain.

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[3] The passage above is prefaced by this statement: "I was thinking about Stella as we crossed the Channel a month ago. I have not given her a thought since." Even in this claim about the necessity of a calm present for a full memory of the past, the recent present of cross-channel transit shapes the simile that Virginia uses to explain her remembrance. The two bodies of water (English Channel, deep river) show that even a placid present moment shapes the way we think of the past, and shapes how we see the process of remembering.

In this chapter, with two pairs of works by Virginia Woolf, I begin my examination of the effect of World Wars I and II on the memory and identity of those who are seen, by themselves or by others, as distant from the war—as observers with a view either undisturbed by the shells of the battlefield or too remote to be of value (or both). I will introduce and explore the ambiguous concept of "peripherality" in war as it applies to Woolf and a set of older women characters, begin to tackle the question of how war is perceived and remembered by those on its "margins" temporally and socially, and explore what literature modeled on the journal form can reveal about memory and the related phenomenon of identity. Woolf's multi-genre corpus, and her interest in her own and others' social positions during war, make her texts fruitful ground to open up major questions of this project: Why do authors turn to fictional texts that mimic or build off of the form of non-fictional genres, especially when they are affected by but do not "see" war? Why are self-conscious, self-questioning narrators and characters foregrounded in these historically charged texts? And what does this self-conscious narrative form reveal or throw into question about mechanisms of memory and self-perception—the narrative acts that allow us to understand ourselves and our relationships with others?

These questions that relate to the style and position of the narrator (or "focalizing consciousness," to borrow Karen Levenback's term from *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*) in turn invite us to consider larger questions about how war affects memory and identity. As time passes, relations to war change, or people subject their and others' memory to increased scrutiny, can memories that were already formed—or memory mechanisms in general—shift in their structure as from "normal" or culturally meaningful to traumatized? Are there links between the form and function of memory for those who experience the trauma of the

battlefield, and those who seem to feel war's effects from afar? And what happens when those "peripheral" witnesses encounter memorials or celebrations that aim to unite people under a common memory of war?

In order to trace war's effect on memory as it is expressed through narrative, it is useful to begin with an author whose work spans genres and represents multiple social positions to war; this will open my investigation with a broad view of the possible narrative and social approaches to war before moving to the narrators of my later novelists who occupy a narrower range of peripheral positions. I will study Woolf's writing in two sections that roughly correspond with generic categories, but also correspond to distinct historical moments and social positions: first, two journal-influenced fictional texts that directly address World War I and its immediate aftermath (*Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years*); and then, two more overtly autobiographical texts that explicitly cast an eye toward the impending Second World War ("A Sketch of the Past" and the opening pages of *Three Guineas*). I do not separate these two sets of texts simply to preserve generic distinctions; in fact, my analysis will demonstrate that the two novels examined here adopt formal elements of non-fictional writing even though they do not fit the category of "novelized autobiography." I will suggest that, by tracing the effect of time and traumatic experiences on identity, these novels serve as opportunities for self-questioning and self-definition (on the part of characters, author, and reader) that the autobiography genre more explicitly provides. Moreover, by preserving the time-marking style of the diary genre, the novels (like the autobiographical essays) force readers to consider the relationship between the personal and the national or collective. It is also worth noting that two of the texts I have separated here—*The Years* and *Three Guineas*—were originally conceived as one joint project (Hummel, "From the

Common Reader to the Uncommon Critic," qtd. in Levenback, 116). This suggests that Woolf ultimately saw a distinction between the two texts, but that they are deeply connected in topic, purpose, and form. Much like the spectrum of effects of trauma I will propose in my analysis, then, Woolf's public writing exists on a spectrum of fiction and non-fiction, of diary and traditional narrative form. Rather than preserving distinctions between two cohesive genres, then, I consider them separately to trace which elements of the fictional and non-fictional genres seemed most fitting to Woolf for two slightly different experiences of war: living in the aftermath of a conflict that challenged Woolf as part of a nation, and then in the face of an impending conflict that would single out and marginalize Woolf herself.

This question of distinctions between World Wars I and II, then, leads to the question of what "war experience" and "marginality" mean in the case of Virginia Woolf and her writing. I leave this category broadly defined throughout the project—not automatically assigning this label to any particular identity category or claiming an exact causal relationship with psychological trauma—in order to emphasize that this narrative and mental state is deeply connected to each individual's feeling of her own social position, or her response to the "marginal" position assigned to her by others. Just as not all individuals exposed to the same event will suffer identical psychological effects, not all people on the outskirts of war will experience that war or their relationship to it in the same way—though it must be noted that some people are automatically at greater risk for experiencing war "up close" or from a distance by virtue of nationality, economic resources, and other factors. While culturally produced or enforced identity categories may indeed pay a large part in how one experiences and remembers war (more so in the case of peripherality than psychological

trauma), whether or not someone will fit these categories, or will respond to war in this introspectively critical way, also depends on the individual.

In terms of Woolf's own biography and British history—as my opening section of the chapter will illustrate—Virginia Woolf's marginality is not easy to define either. She was somewhat closer to World Wars I and II than were Isherwood and Ishiguro (Isherwood separated from both wars by physical distance, and Ishiguro separated primarily by temporal distance). Moreover, her non-fictional writing suggests less hesitance in addressing the war than these later authors' narrating characters express; she is aware of the obstacles that she faces to being included among the war's narrative witnesses, but she rejects these more overtly. Nevertheless, Woolf was (and still is) catalogued as something of an outsider of the wars that she addressed, and at times cultivates this sense of marginality in her writing. (In the beginning of my first major section, "War from Another Time," I will address social conceptions about the role of mothers during and after World War I—a category Woolf does not belong to, but explores in her work.)

In terms of literary history and culture, on the other hand, Woolf's position as a central author in the canon of war narratives is no longer a source of debate (though it was in the first decades after her death)[4]. Her work, including the seminal texts I will study in this chapter, has been explored in the context of war many times; it is especially studied for its portrayal of minds and communities after war. To examine her work through the lens of war narratives, then, is not new.

[4] Mark Hussey summarizes a shift in critical attention to Woolf's work decades after her death: "One of the most welcome and significant effects of the scholarship on Virginia Woolf since the early 1970s has been to correct the 'official version' promulgated in her own country of Woolf as an exquisite stylist whose interest in what has traditionally been allowed as 'politics' was negligible" (2).

As I examine these well-known works, then, my focus will remain on the failings of memory's narrative—not the dramatic, time-bending, troublesome visions of long-dead companions that Septimus suffers, for example, but the more everyday disruptions and discontinuities of memory and perception that speak to a more subtle but still crucial effect of war on the narratives we use to create and maintain individual and group identities. I also explore how life writing contains and even addresses fruitful gaps in the author's memory. Woolf used these two genres not simply to record life in the face of war (nor simply to escape it), but to examine the mechanisms of her own memory, the memories of others, and the memory of a nation.

In a more basic sense, I also aim to uncover the literary tradition that the other authors examined in this project inherit and to which they respond. More than serving as a pre-example though, or simply a canonical author whose form later novelists would either perfect or imperfectly imitate, I will frame the work of this set of writers as a history or collective memory of British literature. Studying Woolf as an "inter-World War" author alongside these "post-World War" authors also allows this project to address the effect of temporal position and proximity to war. While Isherwood revisits the beginning of World War II across a series of decades, and Ishiguro explores memory's mechanisms through World War II in three of his novels (separated from each other by years and from the war by decades), with Woolf we see a series of more immediate reactions to war.

Along with my analysis of Woolf's narrating subjects and characters (especially older women "outside" of war), I will also introduce the primary theoretical perspectives of memory, narrative, and trauma that my project uses and to which it will respond. There are three basic categories of theory that will assist me in this examination: cognitive psychology,

narrative theory of trauma from historians and literary scholars, and historical accounts of World Wars I and II as they were experienced domestically in Britain.

One of my major guiding theoretical perspectives is that of cognitive science, especially the study of memory in cognitive psychology. Scholars from both literary studies and cognitive science have noted the fruitful similarities that exist between the study of memory in the two disciplines: Daniel Schacter ties literary and visual works of art to his overview of memory in *Searching for Memory*, and Evelyne Ender draws on the work of Schacter, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, and others in *Architexts of Memory: Literature, Science, and Autobiography*. I will build from their assertion that memory is an inherently creative process that shares characteristics with storytelling, in order to explore the particular effects of feeling that you have an important story to tell about an event you have not seen. My other primary resource for understanding psychological perspectives of narrative and imperfect memory is an anthology of cognitive psychologists' work on *Memory in the Real World*, which not only studies memory in situations in which it is typically used (to understand our own lives, testify, remember together with others, etc.), but also critiques the unnatural settings in which scientists have studied memory in the past. This is particularly useful as my narrators and guiding characters seem to feel the effects of scrutiny—so I will keep their studies in mind to decide how writing or remembering from outside may function as a space of the "real world" or as a laboratory. Overall my project is more of a study of artistic and creative responses to war than a diagnosis of its effects on the author or the characters that Woolf portrays.

My second theoretical perspective—trauma studies—is interdisciplinary in nature, but the scholars I turn to here are united by an interest in narratives that productively disrupt.

Dominick LaCapra's concepts of "absence" vs. "loss" and "empathic unsettlement" are crucial to my understanding of the texts at hand, especially the identities of the characters I examine. I also turn to Leigh Gilmore's *The Limits of Autobiography* for feminist critique of the life narrative genre. This conversation allows me to bridge the occasionally broad research of memory studies with the particular concerns that narrative theorists have uncovered about the act of writing actual or fictionalized memories, and the politics of forging connections with others based on these memories.

Finally, in this chapter, I frame my analysis in the context of historical and biographical studies of Woolf and of the domestic experience of World Wars I and II. The historical background, particularly Susan Grayzel's study of women and domestic spaces at war, allows me to create a more nuanced reading of the experience and expectations of civilians during and after World Wars I and II. Grayzel finds that women—particularly mothers—were often placed at the center of post-war remembrance, a position that Woolf portrays as emptied of agency and yet bristling with contradictions that challenge this categorization. Moreover, the historical and biographical information gleaned from Karen Levenback's seminal study of *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, as well as Barbara Lounsberry's *Becoming Virginia Woolf*, let me explore potential motivations for Woolf's shifts in narrative style without solely seeing these works as reflections of her own mental state in the shadow of war. Finally, while I maintain focus on Woolf's perspective of the war, I also occasionally reference other seminal literary war narratives—including Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* and Siegfried Sassoon's "Glory of Women"—in order to contrast Woolf's portrayal of key experiences of war with other canonical representations. This textual comparison is particularly important for understanding how Woolf positioned

women's perspectives of war in relation to soldier authors whose own voices had been marginalized (oftentimes forcibly so) when they wrote critically of the war, or who had not lived to see their work published. All of the works my project addresses are both highly introspective and highly intersubjective, showing the influence of pressures and perspectives from others on one's own view of life and self in war; this makes references to prominent literary voices crucial to trace the peculiar psychological state of being a peripheral witness.

War From Another Time: Remembering World War I For and Through Women in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years*

As Woolf's novels combine multiperspectivism with an orderly organizational form that marks the passing of time, they explore the variety of ways in which someone can be on the periphery of a potentially traumatic event and yet not completely removed from it: temporally, physically, socially, as well as mentally and emotionally. This chronologically focused form also helps us consider how someone's position on the outskirts of war can affect their view of time (especially their memory) and of themselves, giving a clearer understanding of how memories of war are created and used by those on its edge.

The overt chronology of these novels—noting the time and date of each passage or chapter—links Woolf's style that of Isherwood and Ishiguro's novels (as we shall see in chapters 2 and 3 when each author's works are analyzed), but her works are missing one crucial element of their diary-inspired form: a single character narrator. Woolf's novels are famous for multiperspectivism, and for the free indirect discourse that occasionally blurs the boundaries between the minds of multiple characters and the voice of an unnamed narrator. However, in the midst of these multiple narrative perspectives, some "governing

consciousnesses" still arise whose self-examination makes their minds more open to readers: Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, of course, but also Eleanor Partiger in *The Years* (on whom I will primarily focus in this chapter). Thus, with a few characters, we see narrative explorations of subjectivity that are comparable to the diary form in their depth of detail and inclusion of self-conscious editing of one's identity. Additionally, even though the wandering narrative consciousness may lead us away from the primary narrative framework explored in this project, these wanderings give us brief glances at a wider variety of war's effects; so I will also examine some of the minds that the narrative may not truly enter (Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and—with a greater depth of narrative and mental detail—Crosby in *The Years*).

The novels examined here—*Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years*—share an important trait beyond their inclusion of older women. They also share an important form of peripherality: temporal. The temporal periphery of war might include experiences of war before and/or after its occurrence, or on the day that it begins or ends. As these novels are structured to highlight the passage and effect of "orderly" time (setting the stage for later journal-style narratives of Isherwood and Ishiguro), this form of peripherality is a fitting place to open analysis of war's periphery in Woolf's works of fiction. *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Years* both dwell on war at length, and explore the minds of veterans alongside those of civilians; however, their narrative present (clearly demarcated and consistently brought to our attention by the "leaden circles" in *Mrs. Dalloway* and by the chapter titles in *The Years*) only briefly overlaps with wartime, and in the case of *Mrs. Dalloway* does not overlap with it at all.

This temporal peripherality has multiple consequences for our view of war. First, it presents soldiers (now veterans) and civilians alongside each other; rather than describing the

battlefield and the "home front" separately, this pre- and post-war narrative time setting places everyone, for the most part, outside of war in narrative time (although it does not equate their positions). And second, in exploring the effects of war on peacetime, and showing the memories and experiences of war reverberating across this temporal divide, this setting questions the containment of war to a particular historical moment and allows a clearer view of how war is remembered (not only what is remembered, but also the process through which it is recalled).

Alongside this temporal remove from war, which marks many (though not all) key scenes of war in these novels, a second factor that unites the perspectives examined here is social peripherality: not only as dictated by class, but even more by gender and age. My reading primarily focuses on older women who remember and create memories of war: Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft in a brief scene at the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Mrs. Crosby and Eleanor Partiger in *The Years*. This was a category of civilian used by propaganda and occasionally poetry to represent the country ("motherland") and "innocent" family members on whose behalf World War I was being fought, and a group by and through whom war should be remembered just after the conflict had ended. And while these women were somewhat more exposed to the war than previous generations of British civilians due to the work and rhetoric of the "home front" and the air raids introduced to the country domestically, this propaganda argued that they retained an innocence that must be protected. This chapter explores the extent to which such "removed" civilians could find their perception and memory affected by war, the nature of this effect, and what it reveals about memory's interrupted and interrupting nature—a nature that at once separates the women

explored in these chapters from their immediate social surroundings, and opens the possibility of a bridge from one "interrupted" post-war consciousness to the next.

We see both temporal and social peripherality at work in the opening pages of *Mrs. Dalloway*, in the description of characters who are themselves peripheral to the novel's primary plot threads: Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough. Like many characters who only appear once in the novel, without a strong plot-based or emotional connection to the text's primary characters, these women are on the edge of the novel's narrative arc as much as they are on the edge of World War I. Although this scene arrives quite early in the novel, when first-time readers may still be getting their bearings and deciding which characters will recur, they will have been introduced to the possibility of such peripheral characters, even if they cannot initially categorize them as such, when briefly viewing Clarissa the world through the mind of Scrope Purvis. Scrope's thoughts upon seeing Clarissa outside her home seem engineered to give us an "outside" view of Clarissa as she is introduced, and to explore the extent to which one "knows one's neighbors" in 20th century London;" but whether the implied answer is that one does not truly know one's neighbors, or as Annalee Edmonson argues, that one knows one's neighbors quite intimately, Scrope as a character is nevertheless on the novel's edge—this is the first and last scene in which he is present. The roving narrative thus asks us to recognize the complexity of social life in London, and to briefly participate in the difficult act of judging who matters.

Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft are even more removed from the tightly braided narrative than Scrope Purvis. We do not see any major characters through their minds, or even enter their minds entirely; we are only told their external words and actions. Nevertheless, the narrative introduces the Great War through these women, as they remember

their recent reactions to the deaths of young men in their family—or, perhaps, as their reactions are remembered by Clarissa, or by the disembodied mind of the city at large (the "governing consciousness" of this scene is not quite clear). As soon as we learn that the narrative is set not long after war's end, we are presented with these figures and with war's tendency to bleed beyond its temporal boundaries:

> The war was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor house must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven—over. (5)

These women and their experiences are made even more peripheral by their introduction not simply as individuals, but as specimens that represent a type: as "someone like ____." They and their suffering are presented as markers of a category or role someone might take: someone for whom war is not over, or whose presence reminds others of war—or most likely both at once. In fact, this introduction and shallow view of their minds makes it possible that these two women could be fictions of the narrating voice, archetypes added to the novel's opening scene to sign-post one form of experiencing war, or to symbolically represent the general feeling of London after the war. If they are archetypes, though, they are not the type of figures that contemporary, 21st-century readers might expect to carry war with them beyond 1918: rather than shell-shocked veterans, these are older, middle- to upper-class women, seemingly ignorant of war, especially the horrors of the trenches, machine guns, and mustard gas that today serve as shorthand for the traumatic experience of World War I. On the other hand, as grieving mothers, they belong to a group that Susan Grayzel notes was

commonly used to symbolize the grief and sacrifice of post-war Britain (*Women and the First World War* 112). To contemporary readers who were aware of this social position and its use, then, the narrative peripherality of these women draws attention to this common, even socially prompted role; and the narrative's impulse to cast them (or the war that lives through them) aside into the past, suggests their symbolic grief may be growing troublesome for a nation looking to move on.

Of course, as Karen Levenback has noted, veterans were themselves largely ignored after the war, especially those who had sustained physical or mental injuries. She cites the paltry distribution of pensions and withholding of these "from those not seen to have *visible* wounds," and complete lack of statistics on veterans who died after their aid had ceased (59), as well as descriptions of veterans separated from celebrations of the armistice, as evidence of veterans' social isolation as they returned from combat (30). By contrast, grieving widows and mothers were placed at the forefront of memorial unveilings. For example, at the "internment for the unknown warrior, organizers decided to grant seats to widows and mothers of all classes (and preferably women who occupied both positions)" (Cabinet Memorial services Committee meeting, 19 October 1920, qtd. in Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* 112). This separation suggests that, in the context of British memorial culture, these older women grieving for lost young men served as more traditional, more palatable reminders of war than the veterans themselves. Susan Grayzel theorizes that this classifying of mourners benefited the national agencies that defined them much more than it benefited the mourners themselves. She explains that when mourning women were portrayed as "allegorical female figures [who] were meant to embody 'pity,' […] women became synonymous with civilians, whose duty was now to remember the dead" (113). Their grief

was not only presumed to be the most deep, but was also seen as a symbol of the civilian population at large, familial and caring. During the war, mothers were also used in propaganda that encouraged young men to enlist, as in the example of a recruitment poster that depict two generations of women and a young boy and the slogan "Women of Britain say—'Go!'" (Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, 124). They were thus portrayed as having a vested interest in the outcome of war, if not direct experience of it or complex reactions to it.

Taking these factors together—the treatment of World War I veterans years and even decades after war, and the rhetorical treatment of mothers and women at this time—it may not have surprised an audience of early-20th century readers that war is introduced through their perspective. After all, the novel is commonly prized for its exploration of the mind of veteran Septimus Smith, suggesting that this is the perspective that was in sorest need of representation. Even Siegfried Sassoon's satirical "Glory of Women," which derides women for supporting the war materially and socially, concludes with a scene of a "German mother […] knitting socks to send to [her] son" that casts her as the soon-to-be bearer of the forgotten soldier son's memory (though perhaps not its graphic detail). It is worth noting that the mother is at once less powerful and arguably less aware of the horrors of war than the other women described—and yet she is the implicit eventual carrier of the memory of war's destruction. This juxtaposition between mother and son exposes the disparity of their experiences, and yet its subtle shift in tone suggests that even the most jaded of anti-war veterans may have seen mothers as innocent carriers of the memory of war. With these strong yet conflicting views from the state and the literary world, women—particularly mothers—were thus both expected to remember the war, and expected not to have true knowledge of it,

so that their innocence could be protected and the soldier's chivalric masculinity could remain intact. Their ambiguous position as carriers of memory of their lost sons, but outsiders to the full horrors of war, rendered them peripheral symbols of Britain's motivations for and remembrance of war even before we are granted access to their minds.

Turning back to *Mrs. Dalloway*'s opening pages, we see a more complex or enigmatic vision of these women than the one offered, or at times demanded, by public memorials and poetic accounts. While Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft appear to belong to such a "type," both removed from war by their gender and (to an extent) by class, it is difficult to extrapolate their experience onto upper-middle-class British women at large, because their externally visible reactions are actually quite dissimilar. While Mrs. Foxcroft's declared concern seems to lie with the family estate, Lady Bexborough's opening of the bazaar could be read either as a similarly callous reaction, a brave "stiff upper lip," or a symptom of trauma's delayed effects that prevent the individual from consciously processing the traumatic moment when it occurs. Our expectation of war's remembrance as contemporary readers may be subverted twice, then: once when the novel asserts that older women carry not only grief but also the war itself into the present (its anxieties, loss, and simultaneous reinforcement and upheaval of gender and family dynamics), and again when it reveals the variety of ways in which these similar figures can carry war past its conclusion.

This description of two women as exceptions to the end of war introduces the effect of the novel's temporal organization on our view of culturally- or nationally-significant events. Rather than successfully maintaining focus on the present moment by casting off the past in a parenthetical aside, this narrative form shows the extent to which the past cannot be separated from the present, especially in the context of war—even for those who are on its

outskirts in 1920s London. Of course, the novel's opening page has already acquainted us with the time-traveling nature of perception, as Clarissa is brought (and brings the reader) to her childhood with "the squeak of a hinge;" however, Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft illustrate a slower transition between the past and present. The moments we see of their lives likely do not happen in the narrative present—Mrs. Foxcroft is said to have been lamenting the loss of "that nice boy" the night before, and Lady Bexborough must have received the news of her son's death years ago—and yet their experiences (or the rumored sight of their experiences) are thrown into the middle of a sentence expressing relief that "it was over." For them and through them, the war remains present, just behind or below the surface of post-war life.

This passage also illustrates the difficulty of separating cultural memory and experience of mass traumatic events from personal experience: that is, between separating what Dominick LaCapra labels as "absence" and "loss" in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. LaCapra makes this distinction in light of historical and literary-critical conflations of the experience of 20th century traumas (particularly the Holocaust) with the experience of living in a time when these atrocities occur, especially through "witnessing" them through media coverage. As we can see in this opening scene of *Mrs. Dalloway*, though, this distinction becomes difficult to maintain when we begin to consider the trauma of losing a family member or loved one to war. In fact, receiving news of the death of a loved one has been added to the current list of experiences that can cause Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, so long as this "actual or threatened death" was "violent or accidental" ("Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder"). While it is important not to collapse these categories together (not in order to foreclose the possibility of empathy, but to recognize the effort that it requires on the part of

the would-be empathizer), it becomes difficult to separate these categories of experience when dealing with a war that resulted in so many casualties that hardly anyone's social or familial network was left untouched. The narrative's introduction of war ("The war was over, except for someone like […]") shows the influence of the experience of a few on our summary of a historical event; it implies that the experiences of individuals can not only remind us of war, but also keep it from being finished. Moreover, the fact that both moments take place in public spaces (the Embassy and a bazaar), even retold as if they were rumors ("they said"), reminds us of the public's presence.

This examination of disorderly historical time aligns not only with trauma theory at large, but also with feminist examinations of history and memory. In "The Double Helix," Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.R. Higonnet call for a "feminist re-vision of time in wartime," to "move beyond the exceptional marked event," in a re-framing of war experience and war narratives that corresponds with contemporary formulations of potential causes of PTSD. In the context of the life-writing genre, Leigh Gilmore's *Limits of Autobiography* further challenges our definition of autobiographical writing to include stories that are de-centered. As our introduction to Foxcroft and Bexborough is centered around two concrete events in their lives—either the reception of news of death or the (more drawn-out) experience of dealing with the re-structuring of inheritance—there remains a link between the narrative form of their war experience and that of the moment of extreme impact (emotional or physical) that has traditionally been assumed to cause trauma in war. However, in the narrative's implication that this fixed moment continues to play out for them, and to extend the war years after it has ended, we see common ground between the grief of mothers

who have lost sons (and are expected by society to demonstrate this grief in particular ways) and soldiers for whom the war does not seem to be over, either.

It is crucial to note that in her novel that is most explicit in its view of war's effects (through the iconic Septimus Smith), Woolf introduces the aftermath and temporal instability of war through these characters who are on the edge of both the war and the novel. While the novel's narrative voice explores the minds of Septimus and Rezia at length, showing us the depth and range of effects that war can cause on the mind and relationships, these older women removed from intense war zones acquaint us with the range of people for whom the war is not over, and through whom the war lives on for Britain at large. While this fleeting, seemingly shallow view of the peripheral witness' mind—relegated to a brief, qualifying aside—could be interpreted as a further marginalization and manipulation of women in this position, it can also be interpreted as a thwarting of expectations: we will not be told how such characters should be viewed, nor will we be given a view of their minds that could give us a sense of easy empathy.[5]

This example may be the furthest from the narrative diary form examined in this project, but its overt yet imperfect organization based on discrete moments in time links it to the regular temporal marking of the journal form. *Mrs. Dalloway* is a novel that dips from the ancient past to the distant future, and yet it takes the present moment as its primary experience or concept of focus. Even Septimus is much more focused on the beauty and

[5] In "Tonal Cues and Uncertain Values: Affect and Ethics in *Mrs. Dalloway*," Molly Hite analyzes a similar phenomenon through the novel's primary characters, Septimus Smith and Clarissa Dalloway, and especially Clarissa's reaction to Septimus' suicide. Hite reaches a similar conclusion—that the ethical uncertainty of this passage forces readers to return to it and to re-evaluate their moral beliefs. With Foxcroft and Bexborough, this effect is achieved through a starker lack of narrative, and to different ends (examining our sense of who should mourn and how they should do it).

threats of the present moment and the near future than on the past—if his experience in the war is presumed to cause this fearful attention to the present (when "the world has raised its whip"), his gaze is still fixed on the future. In this light, the novel's marginal characters not only serve as our first link to the historical fact of World War I, but also reveal more about expectations of individual and cultural memory, and the effect of memory on our individual and national senses of time.

In *The Years*, published over a decade after *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1937, Woolf comes closest to the temporal marking style that the journal-novels of Isherwood and Ishiguro will employ, and that she will use or refer to in her life-writing texts. Each chapter is titled after the year in which its events takes place; and, adding to the temporal specificity and constriction, each chapter takes place during a single day. This style introduces the expectations of accuracy and complete scope that come with journal-like organization, and regularly thwarts these expectations with a narrative that occasionally contradicts, re-writes, or forgets what has come before—not only by shifting from one character's mind to the next, but also by dwelling on uncertainties and contradictions by revisiting one character's mind years or even mere moments later. Even though *The Years* technically covers the entirety of World War I as it spans the 1880s to the 1930s (or "Present Day"), and chapters frequently open with country-to-country movements that gesture at the idea (if not possibility) of finding international connections within one moment, we primarily see war, once again, from the temporal and spatial margins. In fact, the chapters that mark the beginning and ending of war ("1914" and 1918") give hardly any attention to the Great War: "1914" never openly comments on the conflict, and "1918" only shows the celebrations of war's end coming to

the working-class, middle-aged Crosby in snatches as she tiredly goes about her errands in the crowded city.

I will begin my examination of *The Years* with Crosby's perspective in chapter "1918," and follow it with a joint analysis of Eleanor Partiger's perspectives in "1917" and "Present Day." In this sweeping novel that enters the minds of a returning soldier and those who have lost immediate family members, I turn my attention to these women because of their common positions on the margin of the war—and in the case of Crosby, again, on the margin of the narrative (as she appears in only one chapter, and brings a markedly different narrative style to it). More than sharing distance from the central characters of the novel, though, Crosby and Mrs. Foxcroft and Bexborough also share a relationship to commemoration and/or concrete, life-changing moments: in one case, the declaration of the armistice, and in the other, the news of a young man's death. Both of these moments, and their presentation in the narrative, would be more accurately labeled as moments of perception in the novel's narrative present rather than memories; however, since they are immediately treated as events that must be commemorated (by people around the women as much as by the women themselves), they show the process of creating socially sanctioned memories of war in action, in moments reminiscent of the "flashbulb memory" phenomenon examined in the cognitive sciences. In this first section, then, I will continue examining the reception of an event that feels necessary to remember well; and moving to Eleanor Partiger's perspective, I will analyze the difficult process of recalling these memories, and the unstable role of memorials in forging connections between those who remember war from different social vantage points.

Like "Time Passes" in *To The Lighthouse*—another famously brief and bracketed view of World War I from Woolf—"1918" seems set apart from the rest of the novel. The penultimate chapter before the mammoth "Present Day" section that occupies one third of the novel, "1918" disrupts the formal flow of *The Years*: at 5 pages long, this chapter is by far the shortest. This is also the only chapter that does not enter the perspective of any members of the Partiger family, instead focusing on the working-class woman Mrs. Crosby.[6] Both the chapter "1918," and the year 1918 then, are simultaneously significant and yet minor (at least as portrayed in the novel). While the novel does not entirely ignore the war, this chapter seems to deliberately draw attention to the limited significance of historical markers like the Armistice. Foregrounding this date, which is clear fodder for individual remembrance of a historical moment, takes the concept of the "flashbulb memory," the ability (or perhaps impulse) to remember "where you were" on an important historical day, to its extreme conclusion. This chapter's narrative voice is focused much more on the everyday sensations and concerns of a working woman than on a reaction to the news of war's end that emphasizes what it "means" in the narrative of history: in light of the past or looking toward the future. The tension between our expectations of a story about the Armistice (an occasion of collective joy tinged with somber remembrance), and its almost lonely execution, highlight the editing that often shapes the memories individual witnesses may retain and the stories they tell about important historical events.

[6] Here we see another correlation between "1918" and "Time Passes" in *To The Lighthouse* as we are guided through the abandoned vacation house of the Ramsay family by Mrs. McNab. The stricter focus of "1918" on the war and on specific historical moments (as opposed to family deaths in "Time Passes") makes *The Years* richer for analysis in this project.

Crosby, our "governing consciousness" in this chapter, does not seem invested in the Great War or in its end. Instead, she is fixated on her distaste for the new family she serves, a family that she believes to be much lower class than the Partigers whom she served in earlier chapters of the novel and whose members usually lead the narrative. She experiences the celebratory firing, and the people around her in the city, as nuisances that are not quite distinct from the usual crush and distant gunfire of wartime London:

> The roar of traffic in the High Street sounded louder and louder. Crosby stopped and rested her bag on the railing before she went on to battle with the crowd of shoppers in the High Street. She would have to shove and push, be jostled this way and that; and her feet pained her. […] Her legs pained her. Suddenly the long-drawn note of a siren floated out its melancholy wail of sound; then there was a dull explosion.
>
> "Them guns again," Crosby muttered, looking up at the pale-grey sky with peevish irritation. The rooks, scared by the gun-fire, rose and wheeled round the tree-tops. A man on a ladder who was painting the windows of one of the houses paused with his brush in his hand and looked round. A woman who was walking along carrying a loaf of bread that stuck half out of its paper wrapping stopped too. They both waited as if for something to happen. A topple of smoke drifted over and flopped down from the chimneys. The guns boomed again. The man on the ladder said something to the woman on the pavement. She nodded her head. Then he dipped his brush in the pot and went on painting. The woman walked on. […] The guns went on booming and the sirens wailed. The war was over—so somebody told her as she took

her place at the counter of the grocer's shop. The guns went on booming and the sirens wailed. (304-5)

This scene of memorializing celebrations coming in snatches through the perspective of a woman on the novel's narrative and social periphery; as Crosby experiences the celebration as a mild irritation or source of confusion, she disrupts the idea of a united "we"—whether it be a nation or a city—that experiences historically significant occasions together, as a moment of connection among strangers and friends. It is also one of many instances where memorializing events and objects (here, celebratory gun firing) fail to unite a group of people, but may prompt readers to rethink the idea of the "group" in the face of such events, and to rethink the efficacy of public celebrations or memorials in ushering collective mourning or other psychological processes. It is reminiscent of the scene Woolf recorded in her diary which notes that veterans were gathered on the edge of the crowd, their backs turned to a celebration (Levenback 30); it is also reminiscent of another famously interrupted depiction of the armistice in *Parade's End* by Ford Madox Ford, when Valentine Wannop struggles to hear news of her lover Christopher Tietjens over the din of a celebration. But unlike the anonymous veterans (who one might assume would have a vested interest in commemorations of war) and Valentine (who was first separated from Christopher by the war), Crosby's personal connection to the war is not immediately clear. While Crosby experiences the announcements and festivities alongside two other figures in the street, she does not seem to be aware of the new significance of the gunfire until later. To her at this moment, the guns seem to signify the continuation, not the cessation of war; they briefly extend the war by its marking its ending. It is less dramatic than the reminder "of the dead; of the flag; of Empire" that comes to Londoners who hear a car backfiring in *Mrs. Dalloway*,

but it hints that cues like the sound of gunfire cannot be entirely reclaimed by the post-war present.

Turning attention to the people around Crosby, the scene is even barer. As we, like Crosby, only see the actions and not the words exchanged by the man and woman on the street, we cannot be entirely certain what they have said either; we are also told that they paused in their action "as if" waiting for something to happen, leaving us with a suggested (but not confirmed) connection between Crosby's perception of the events and their own. Just as the conditional, uncertain phrase "someone like Mrs. Foxcroft" suggests or creates distance between the characters reacting to the war and the narrative perspective, the use of "as if" implies distance between these anonymous figures and Mrs. Crosby (or the narrative perspective, if it is not exactly focalized through Crosby's point of view); we cannot be certain that they are aware that war has ended, or even that they are commenting on the announcement of the armistice or the spectacle that Crosby passively notices.

This scene also begins with Crosby's reluctance to enter the crowds of High Street; she hardly feels the excitement or sense of connection that Clarissa does in *Mrs. Dalloway*, so due to her view of the crowd, it is unlikely from the start that we will hear any (perceived or actual) group connection from her. Crosby's weariness seeps into the style of the passage, where simple observations of pain are repeated ("Her feet pained her. […] Her legs pained her"), and actions continue almost mechanically ("The man […] went on painting. The woman walked on. […]), and even the noises of the war seem tired in their repetition ("The guns went on booming and the sirens wailed" is repeated). Despite the celebratory firing and the crowds in the street, there is a delay between Crosby's perception of the celebration and her understanding of it (or discussion of it with someone else later, in line at the grocer's).

While this focus on pain in Crosby's body, and her apparent lack of understanding, can be read as a cynical use of the working-class mind as a "blank slate" through which to perceive the armistice, the emphasis on the body can also provide another site of connection between the soldier in pain and the civilian laboring on the "home front," or even between Crosby and the reader. Her reaction to the guns as signs of war, rather than symbols, also connects her to the soldier's perspective. In multiple ways, then, Crosby is on the edge of war, and may indeed prefer to be there, as she is reluctant to join the crowds; through her, we are reminded of how many people are on the outskirts of not only war, but also civilian experiences and commemorations of it. It is not clear, then, that we can locate one collective experience or narrative of the British wartime experience, or manufacture one that truly unites a nation; her muted interest and lack of attention to the significance of the armistice makes her a less than ideal example of a witness to the end of war. So, once again, we see war through the experience of a woman on the edge of the conflict and the story; and through the absence of a complete narrative, our expectations of peripheral views of war are thwarted or complicated. Because we are not immersed in the process of reconciling the present with the past in this chapter, and in the brief memories of Foxcroft and Bexborough, here we are invited to consider the relationship between collective and individual memories of historical occasions by comparing what we hear in these moments from what we expect, or what the crowds around these characters seem to experience.

While Crosby gives us a disrupted view of war's end, we primarily learn about World War I through another civilian character: Eleanor Partiger. Eleanor belongs to the Partiger family that makes up the central social structure of the novel, but as she never marries and remains childless, she watches nephews and nieces suffer the consequences of war rather

than seeing any of her own children off to war. She is thus somewhat adjacent to the category of the grieving mother but does not quite fit (nor does she feel she quite belongs in it, as we will see in one of the final chapter's scenes). The novel gives her more narrative space to not only make sense of the war as it occurs (during a dinner party in the midst of an air raid, for example), but also follows her as she recalls the beginning of Britain's involvement in the war—and, more importantly, as she traces the effect and experience of recalling significant memories in the face of the passing of time.

As Eleanor reflects on the war and the sensations it evokes in her, she perceives time in a temporally muddled way that shares—but does not replicate—traits of "disrupted" memory found in many narratives of shell-shocked soldiers. These traits include abrupt "flashback"-like re-experiences of a moment, dissolution of lines between past and present, and re-evaluation of her identity; and all of these experiences and repercussions of memory are rooted in a disrupted experience of time. Rather than only illustrating the civilian's ignorance of war, this temporal confusion shows the extent to which global war muddles the perception of those on its periphery and those at its center—not in equivalent ways, but in linked ways. This parallel (if muted or refracted) experience seems rooted in the tendency of important events like war, and even of ubiquitous events like the passage of time, to define and disrupt one's identity. While scientific studies and everyday experience suggest that time is never quite perceived "correctly," even in everyday experiences when we frequently misestimate duration of events (Wright and Loftus 97-98), Eleanor's experience suggests one of the central arguments of this project: that those who feel compelled to scrutinize their memory or perception of time more rigorously can, by pursuing perfect or perfectly understood understanding of wartime, echo or compound the negative effects that war may

have on memory; and, in doing so, these narrators can draw attention to gaps that are inherent (if not consciously present) in most forms of memory. In short, this self-awareness of a peripheral witness' own faulty memory or limited perspective can either mimic or exacerbate a troubled or traumatized perception of life around war.

Eleanor Partiger, who is arguably the primary protagonist of this multi-perspectival novel (appearing as a primary focalizing consciousness in a number of chapters), is separated by her nationality, gender, and age from the front lines of war (much like Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough); however, she becomes quite preoccupied with its effects: on herself, on those around her, and on their relationships. In moments when Eleanor reflects on the war and the family members it has touched—nephews and nieces, refugee or ex-pat in-laws—she experiences war-related memories of the past with an intensity that recalls two mental phenomena: flashbacks and flashbulb memories. This second memory category, described by Daniel Schacter in *Searching for Memory*, denotes the experience of remembering "where you were" when a moment of national significance took place. These memories are believed to appear with a vivacity that makes the remembering subject certain of its accuracy. There is an important difference, however, between "flashbacks" that are symptomatic of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the vivacity of "flashbulb memories," and the distinction is deeply connected to the difference between perceiving a traumatic event from its center and perceiving it at a spatial and social distance. While flashbacks are intrusive memories of a traumatic event that could not be processed which can leave the rememberer disoriented when trying to distinguish the past from the present (Morris 60-61), flashbulb memories are both formed and recalled in social situations about a specific moment, when people are sharing their experiences of a culturally significant event (usually one that was experienced

partially or from a distance, with the aid of media or word-of-mouth discussion). Again, Dominick LaCapra's warning to distinguish "loss" and "absence" comes to mind: one category of vivid memory takes victims by surprise when it is formed and when it recurs, while the other is created and rehearsed in a social context. Despite these differences in the origin of the two types of vivid memory, we should note their related roots (potentially traumatizing event) and similar effects (disruption of time, especially of its chronological organization).

In the chapter "1917," where World War I is belatedly introduced to *The Years* through memories and through the present moment, Eleanor experiences two recollections that slightly blur the distinction between the flashback and the flashbulb memory. As she attends an intimate dinner party in the midst of an air raid in London, she also thinks back to the beginning of the Great War, and to the childhood of her nephew North who has left London that night to serve as an officer in the military:

> I'm sorry [North] is gone, Eleanor thought. A picture came before her eyes—the picture of a nice cricketing boy smoking a cigar on a terrace. I'm sorry…. Then another picture formed. She was sitting on the terrace; but now the sun was setting; a maid came out and said, "The soldiers are guarding the line with fixed bayonets!" That was how she had heard of the war—three years ago. (285)

In this pair of memories, described as two pictures that "come" or "are formed" "before [Eleanor's] eyes," there is a merging of the flashback based on individual memory and the socially constructed flashbulb memory, in symptom if not in source. Although Eleanor recalls these moments in her mind alone, without speaking of them to anyone present, she is prompted to recall them in a social context: at a dinner party that is soon after interrupted by

an air raid, at which Sara complains about "that damned fool" North who told her he was leaving for "the front" when he paid a brief visit to her earlier that night. They are also memories of a social interaction; the maid tells Eleanor that the war has begun, so she does not witness it or encounter it alone. In light of this announcement about North's involvement in the war, Eleanor begins to rehearse both memories of North as a boy and of the announcement of war, juxtaposing the personal and the global or political without yet merging them.[7]

Because vivacity is one of the hallmark characteristics that define both flashbacks and flashbulb memories, and yet it may set them apart from each other, it is important to consider this aspect of Eleanor's dual memories. Here, Eleanor's recollection of the past is primarily (if not completely) visual; even the second memory, where a maid approaches and tells her the war has begun, has a sparse narrative that renders it closer to a static vision than a story. Both pictures form with no conscious effort on Eleanor's part ("came before her eyes,"), as if they exist outside of her mind; and the personal, emotional, and historical significance of these memories, though clear in the context of the air raid and the dinner party's deliberately lighthearted conversation about war, is implied rather than stated. When the second picture "form[s]," there is more room for construction, although the passive tense once again places the effort or creation outside of Eleanor's mind. These memories are also connected through their shared location: in her second memory, Eleanor is once again on "the same terrace," seeming not to have moved in between North's childhood and the announcement of war. Her

[7] Of course, the presence of the German bombs unites North and the dinner party attendees, to an extent, as potential victims of this war. In mid-war London, the separation between distant and present witnesses is much more tenuous than it is for many of Isherwood and Ishiguro's narrators who lived in regions of Britain and the world that did not see open, aerial combat (though they still lived in fear of it).

static position from one memory to the next furthers the impression that Eleanor is experiencing these moments and memories as a passive spectator.

This passivity as a character in and creator of one's memory resonates equally with two other types of passivity: that of the traumatized witness who is thrown into a time-bending flashback or moment of anticipation by a seemingly innocuous stimulus, and the passivity or powerlessness felt by those on the outside of war, who neither see the conflict nor have clear control over its course. While not equating the positions of the traumatized and the alienated, or the experience of loss and absence, this pair of memories suggests there are similar feelings of helplessness and estrangement from time that can affect both soldiers and civilians who feel connected to war. So as war exacerbates the uncertainties of memory and feelings of helplessness (to different degrees based on identity categories but also individual reaction), it also opens space for what Dominick LaCapra terms "empathic unsettlement"—a degree of understanding between a traumatized individual and a non-traumatized subject, which does not erase their difference (78). What LaCapra indicates with this term is perhaps closer to the link between a traumatized individual and a historian, author, or further removed figure; if Eleanor and North (or perhaps Septimus) do share a degree of temporal disruption in the face of war, they may simultaneously have greater ground for empathy and greater awareness of the troubling or "unsettling" distinctions that divide them.

While Eleanor's vivid memories, narratively flat but visually detailed, seem untouched by time or by storytelling, if we view them as flashbulb memories, they are still linked to narrative, fictionalization, and distortion. As Antonio Damasio explains about memory's processes, "images are not stored as facsimile pictures of things," although we do

feel as if there are some we can re-experience (qtd. in Ender, 97-98). In the context of the flashbulb memory as defined by Schacter, these moments have been rehearsed mentally and verbally in social situations, remembering "where you were" when a culturally significant, oftentimes tragic event (such as the beginning of war) occurred.

Eleanor's ability to place the second memory as occurring "three years ago" makes this seem like a flashbulb memory; its vivacity is predicated on the recollection of a familially and culturally-significant period of time. However, since a dash separates the phrase "three years ago" from the material of the memory, inserting a sustained pause between the recollection and the placement of its occurrence in time, it also retains the "out of time" sensation of the flashback that transports one to the past without warning or premeditation. While the construction of the novel (which titles its chapters to remind us that it spans swaths of time) encourages readers to see how memories and relationships shift from one year to the next, and "three years ago" does not seem to be a great leap in the context of a novel that spans fifty years, this recollection is rather unique. It does not revisit a moment that the narrative showed us in the "1914" chapter, so we first encounter the moment and World War I belatedly, through memory; and it has a simultaneous flatness and vivacity that make it seem more fixed.

We also see a smaller-scale example of time's use as a surprisingly unstable tool of narrative structure. The dash that precedes the note about this memory's place in time ("three years ago") complicates, rather than resolves, the status of this as a flashback or flashbulb memory; it removes this temporal identification from the description of the "picture," making time's passage seem like an afterthought, as if the memory is indelibly preserved just outside of Eleanor's mind. On the other hand, this separation could be read as an emphasis of time's

importance, a rhetorical underlining of the significance of 1914 and the beginning of the war. Time's passing is central, but its meaning is ambiguous.

It is worth noting that the memory of war's opening predates North's involvement in the British army. In fact, while North must have enlisted much earlier, he does not seem to have been deployed until this chapter's narrative present of 1917. This begs the question, then, of whether a well-rehearsed flashbulb memory can become personally significant or traumatizing later to warrant the label of "flashback:" can the announcement of war become an intrusive, jarring memory long after its occurrence, once its effects have become personal? Can memory mutate from one form to another, seeming innocuous at first but growing closer to disruptive or traumatic over time? And given that war's declaration is only in the hands of a few (despite the efforts of propaganda to make the other country's actions feel like a visceral, personal affront),[8] is there a flashback-worthy link between these moments of significant decisions being made on one's behalf and other moments of passivity or powerlessness that the peripheral witness confronts?

The nature of these memories in Eleanor's mind suggests that these culturally shared moments can, in fact, grow personally significant enough to shape one's memory in the style of the flashback; it also suggests that memories of mass traumatic events can be difficult to place as moments of "absence" or "loss," even within one individual's life. When war touches so many families and spans so many years, what begins as a socially constructed "absence" can become a personally felt "loss." This does not discount the distinction between these categories (and indeed may not do the categories justice, as the label of "absence"

[8] This was certainly the case in World War I, as Marina MacKay points out: in fact, she finds that the anti-German propaganda of the first World War was so extreme, that British citizens had a hard time believing that the atrocities committed in the Holocaust were anything more than the product of another propaganda campaign (*Modernism and World War II*).

might not be an accurate label for those whose family members were at risk of being sent to war). Instead, it demonstrates the porosity of these categories, and explains some of the feeling of precariousness that peripheral witnesses to war might have felt.

On the other hand, while this passage highlights the usefulness of temporal marking in the novel—orienting this memory in relationship to the war's development, connecting the beginning of the war to North's youth and his career as a soldier—its punctuation simultaneously makes the marking of time seem like an afterthought, a note about time and history tacked onto the end of a memory where it may not naturally belong or that would only arrive upon deliberate recollection. And, as each chapter is titled after a year (even though each one covers no more than a single day in narrative time), this note of "three years ago" simultaneously reminds the reader of the novel's attempt at temporal, journal-style precision and questions the possibility of maintaining a chronologically ordered narrative.

As the novel reaches its final chapter, "Present Day," we continue to follow Eleanor's perspective of the Great War—this time, in the 1930s. While this chapter is by far the novel's longest, and introduces North back to London and the narrative after years spent abroad in the war and in Africa, its wandering consciousness primarily examines the war and its legacy through Eleanor's perspective, especially her encounter with a war memorial. While the narrative has been preoccupied with the idea of mourning and memorializing before, here we encounter a war monument in much more detail.[9] This one—a statue—is meant to commemorate the nurses who worked with soldiers during the war. When Eleanor and Peggy are stopped "dead under a statue," they have sharply different reactions to this monument

[9] The first and especially noteworthy critique of memorial culture occurs in "1880" when Delia reflects on Victorian funereal practices that strike her as hollow, exaggerated reactions to her mother's long-awaited death.

that, like the backfiring car or note that "the war was over" in *Mrs. Dalloway*, is ostensibly meant to unite British citizens. While the narrative, focalized through Eleanor's mind, describes the statue as having a "cadaverous pallor," Peggy breaks the silence to remark that the statue "'Always reminded [her] of an advertisement of sanitary towels'" (336). Even though the statue reminds both women of the body and its processes of life and death—although for Peggy it evokes the sanitized, inoffensive pictures deemed fit for print—Eleanor has an immediate, negative visceral reaction to Peggy's remark: "A knife seemed to slice [Eleanor's] skin, leaving a ripple of unpleasant sensation; but what was solid in her body it did not touch, she realized after a moment" (336). This paradoxical distinction between Eleanor's skin and "what was solid in her body" maps peripherality onto the body; it accounts for the effect that war can have on those who are on its edge, especially the need to frequently assess one's own position in relation to the pain of war. If the skin and the body are distinguishable entities, either in the eyes of Eleanor the subject or in the eyes of society, then each painful moment is accompanied by an assessment like Eleanor's.

This scene also illustrates the variety of positions that can be considered "peripheral" after war. When Eleanor realizes the motivation for Peggy's comment ("That she had said because of Charles, [Eleanor] thought, feeling the bitterness in her tone—her brother, a nice dull boy who had been killed" [336]), her thought process demonstrates the calculations that we make when determining the source and type of grief experienced by others. Here, Eleanor seems to conclude that Peggy's apparent skepticism of the statue comes from her closer position to the war and its casualties: not as a distant aunt, but as a sister. Eleanor's pain is more difficult to trace than Peggy's, however, and its origins are more complex than she may realize. Like Peggy, Eleanor's family members fought and sometimes died in the war;

Eleanor's initial lack of thought about Charles, and her labeling of him as "the nice dull boy," suggests that her connection to the nephew is indeed more tenuous.

It is possible that Peggy's remark pains Eleanor not only because she is a citizen of the country whose war the statue memorializes (one of the women on whose behalf such wars were meant to be fought, according to propaganda), but also because she feels the pain that prompts and resonates in Peggy's words. Indeed, Eleanor thinks, "That [Peggy] had said because of Charles…feeling the bitterness in her tone" (336); but while Eleanor seems to write off the possibility that the slicing sensation is a feeling that truly belongs to her, she may be too quick to do so. There is also a third option that includes the individual and political but does not unite them: Eleanor's shock and pain comes from, or is exacerbated by, the juxtaposition of these sources of pain: the patriotic twinge of pain a citizen may experience in seeing "their" war commemorated, and the sharpness of Peggy's pain that carries through her words to spread her feelings, provoke social anxiety, or both. Even this seemingly simple "surface pain," then, has multiple potential sources that can affect each other, stifling one feeling in favor of another or exacerbating the pain. And this complexity speaks to the complex position of civilians to the war, even after it has concluded and ostensibly been won.

Eleanor's uncertain pain, and the process through which she explores it, corresponds to theories of civilian response to mass trauma or atrocity. First, as Eleanor judges the origin of her pain, distancing it from herself, she illustrates Dominick LaCapra's idea of "empathic unsettlement"—as noted earlier, a concept that describes one's response to the trauma of others that does not (or attempts not to) appropriate that trauma. While LaCapra notes that this is an experience that can affect writing in ways that cannot be reduced to rules of

method, we may see one potential manifestation here: Eleanor feels pain, but it is not quite clear whether this is the pain *of* Peggy (Eleanor taking on Peggy's pain), pain *from* Peggy (the pain of being near Peggy), or something else. In describing Eleanor's sensations, as well as her immediate desire to trace their origin, Woolf's style requires the reader to trace the source of Eleanor's pain themselves (where did *we* assume the pain came from?) and its relationship to her niece who is close physically and emotionally, yet difficult to truly understand.

When compared to Peggy's perspective (which the narrative does not seem to penetrate), we may also consider J. Hillis Miller's "Miller's law"—that is, the theory that narratives further from the traumatic event will give a more traditional story, while those closer to the trauma will use more experimental, less satisfying methods of expression (223). Peggy's reaction to the war memorial is incongruous, dissatisfying, and even disruptive to Eleanor; it does not entirely foreclose understanding between them, but there is a rupture caused by Peggy's statement that means this understanding will require effort. It is a subtle disruption of Eleanor's untraceable, muted grief. In the process of reconciling these two reactions, we see the struggle of peripheral witnesses to account for their experiences along with those of others. And as they play out this struggle in front of the government-sponsored war memorial, they illustrate the productive trouble that conversation about memorials can unearth by exposing and provoking its messy, shifting, interpersonal reverberations.

The four women examined in this study of Woolf's war novels subtly push back against narratives created by propaganda, poets, and other public discourses that attempt to mediate the relationship between women and war to the benefit of individuals or of the culture (though not necessarily to the benefit of the women). Their memories, their

mourning, and their views of the beginning and endings of the Great War differ from those expected by politicians, by their culture, and perhaps by themselves (as in the case of Eleanor's shock at her own reaction to the statue and Peggy's response to it). As they act against and react to this culturally constructed narrative of the innocent yet burdened vessel of national memory and loss, they also invite us to examine the narratives, snapshots, and sensations that their memories construct in place of these expectations. In doing so, we find that their memories or perceptions of World War I are often no less incomplete than the simplified picture of the "home front," but they deliberately draw attention to this "incompletion." By foregrounding this, they offer us a view of the wide range of people who might feel their memories are faulty after war and yet that they must be re-told, and the range of reasons that war can have this effect.

This narrative form that defies social and narrative conventions thus positions the unreliable narrator or incomplete narration as a narrative memorial. It destroys the fantasy of the uninterrupted or common collective memory (if we take this to be the goal of previous memorials); but it makes possible the juxtaposition of post-war experiences with a similar origin, and it posits uncertainty as a new common meeting ground of diverging experiences of the Great War.

War from Another Self: Nonfiction Genres and Remembering Oneself in the Approach of World War II

Woolf did not simply echo traits of personal, non-fictional genres in her novels—she was also a prolific writer of non-fiction. Her diaries that span 26 years and five volumes, political essays (like *Three Guineas*, essays formatted as a letter about the links between

patriarchy and war) and memoirs that Woolf meant to share publicly (like "A Sketch of the Past," a study of memory's construction that evolves as World War II approaches) have all received extensive critical attention. Like the "autobiographical novels" of Christopher Isherwood, which drew on the form and content of his diaries without simply replicating them, these non-fictional texts reworked thoughts and moments addressed in Woolf's diaries and others she had not yet recorded, and consider them in the context of the narrative present: the end of the interwar period and the approach of World War II.

As Woolf's late-career nonfictional texts grapple with the looming global conflict, they present perspectives of those on the temporal and spatial edge of, but still affected by, war to a public audience while retaining key traits of the personal diary or journal log genre. They feature a single, self-interrogating first-person narrator, and they are organized in chapters and sections based on the date or the circumstances of their composition. These traits of the diary genre allow Woolf not only to illustrate, but also to interrogate, the effects of trying to record the present moment accurately and of trying to recall one's life and place within it in times of war, when identity and sense of self are both potentially threatened. In both texts, however, the task of neatly recording memory and the present moment slips from "Virginia's"[10] grasp, often as a result of the ways in which war challenges her conception of time and of herself. Woolf's narrative experiments with memory and identity do not grant her certainty or control over her place in relation to a global conflict; but this does not appear to be the ultimate goal of Woolf's narratives or act of narration. Instead, these experimental first-person narratives grant us a clearer view of the effects of war on the memories and

[10] A note on name use: I will refer to the speaker in "A Sketch of the Past" as Virginia, the speaker in *Three Guineas* as "the speaker" (to preserve that narrator's ambiguous identity), and Woolf by her last name to describe the author and relevant biographical material from diaries.

identities of those on its outskirts—a designation based as much on cultural and gendered expectations as it is on the physical circumstances of war.

Many critics have mined Woolf's novels through the lens of her diaries and memoirs, aiming to trace linkages between her personal life and the lives of her characters.[11] Such criticism examines Woolf's fictional works as a form of expressing and processing the contents of particular memories or relationships, or the diary as a means of drafting and working toward literature and public texts[12]. In at least one of Woolf's non-fictional texts, however ("A Sketch of the Past"), Woolf makes plain that one of her goals in writing non-fictional texts is not only to remember or re-work her past, but also to understand the process of memory itself: how a memory can change depending on the moment in which it is recalled, how memories are assigned emotions to evoke, and how memory and identity shape each other. Another goal that her texts work toward, by being written and forgotten in fits and starts across months and years, is to trace the changing relationships we have to memory across time, especially around global conflict. There are certainly changes in the content of memories across time in Woolf's work, but there are also shifts in their focus and their use—and all of these shifts arise from changes in the remembering individual's perspective.

"A Sketch of the Past," written as the threat of World War II drew nearer but ranging from events of the day to the earliest memories of her childhood and youth, may be viewed

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[11] Lounsberry quotes Woolf's diary entry in which she calls the text a "compost heap," indicating that Woolf herself viewed her diary and her life as a source for her writing (though Lounsberry's investigation goes beyond this, also attending to historical knowledge that can be gained, and Woolf's view and influence of the genre as an avid diary-reader) (5).

[12] Lynn Z. Bloom argues, "for a professional writer there are no private writings […] they attend to such matters through design and habit" ("Private Diaries as Public Documents" 25). Of course, this does not mean that diaries like Woolf's *only* serve this purpose; nor does it mean that writing in this genre is free of experimentation with techniques that would alienate many readers.

as a comparative study of how personal memory works and is used during times of peace and times of crisis. And *Three Guineas*, written during war's approach too but addressing the future with an eye on Britain's political and cultural history, may be viewed as a summary and analysis of "collective memory" that a nation or group might draw on to wage war, or practice together to avoid it—not as a unified group, but as individuals with varying positions and powers to intervene. Thus, a full analysis of Woolf's literary relationship to memory should take into account her study of remembering, forgetting, and their mechanisms, as well as the effect of global conflicts on personal memory and identity.[13] As I examine "A Sketch of the Past" and *Three Guineas* in this section of the chapter, I will trace the processes and gaps of memory in "Virginia" and "the speaker," and her commentary or reflection on these gaps, alongside theories of memory formation and recollection, and theories of "non-fictional" genres and the self. Taken together, these creative non-fictions will allow us to consider how impending war might affect those who seem likely to remain far from the battleground—though still threatened by the identity-driven persecution of enemy Germany—and what these effects can tell us about the nature and breadth of the psychological effects of war.

In both texts, the narrating voice is often overtly aware of her position to war; and Woolf blends traits of fiction and non-fiction, personal and public writing to explore this peripheral position to war. As she presents the material and mental circumstances of writing about war as a woman and British civilian, she evades the generic categorization of her work

[13] Evelyn Ender's *Architexts of Memory* takes the opening passages of "A Sketch of the Past" as an example of non-cognitive, affective memory, and the process of constructing memories of one's childhood ("Painting the Past"). My analysis of this work will focus on memory when war is impending, and how its mechanisms presented in that situation compare to her more "scientific" examination of memory in the relative peace of early 1939.

(as fiction or non-fiction, as war narrative or memoir, political essay or epistolary narrative) even as she directly comments on time and genre conventions. In challenging readers to parse the personal and allegorical aspects of *Three Guineas*, she draws attention to the extent to which her perspective would likely be questioned. And in tracing—not erasing—the gaps that both World War II and Roger Fry's biography create in the story of her own youth in "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf contributes her own future/present-oriented, interrupted memoir to the series of backward-looking, seemingly complete biographies and autobiographies that are often associated with war.

While Woolf's fictional and non-fictional texts both contributed to the models of peripheral war writing that Isherwood and Ishiguro later take up, the texts I examine here differ in their conclusions about the individual's place in war from this position. There is less overt focus on the author or speaker's potential or perceived culpability for the war in Woolf's texts than there is in those of Isherwood and Ishiguro; so in some ways these non-fictional (or less-fictional) pieces give us a simpler picture of the outsider in war. Moreover, Woolf is less of a "peripheral" observer of war than Isherwood or Ishiguro's narrators: she lived through both World War I and part of World War II in London, and did so as a woman who could not serve in combat, thus potentially avoiding some of the guilt that able-bodied men far from war zones might feel (or might be forced to feel by those around them).[14] Even without this sense of guilt, though, Woolf's non-fictional texts still dwell on challenges writers face, and the influence they may exercise, as they approach war from a position that

[14] Susan Grayzel terms World War I the "first modern, total war," since it gave rise to the phrase and the labor of the "home front" and shattered a sense of isolation between continental Europe and the British Isles by introducing air raids (*Women and the First World War* 3). However, she notes that, globally speaking, Great Britain suffered fewer civilian casualties than the average belligerent country (*At Home and Under Fire* 320).

is generally understood to be safer than that of soldiers, prisoners of war, refugees, or citizens of countries where war is waged on the ground. While Woolf's narrator ironically argues that women have very little understanding of—let alone influence over—war as marginalized figures in patriarchal British society, in *Three Guineas*, "A Sketch of the Past" gives us a clearer picture of the psychological causes and effects of this paralysis in the face of war.

"A Sketch of the Past" and the Precarity of Time's Platforms

"A Sketch of the Past" was written on the brink of World War II: its opening passage is written on April 18, 1939 and its final passage is written November 17, 1940. Its composition thus may have been motivated in part by the rise of Nazi Germany and the sense of historical and personal uncertainty that accompanied it. This is not a connection that the narrator (referred to in my project as "Virginia" and in the text in the first person) proposes; she initially frames the project as a general study of memory in her introductory comments, making no mention of war or its effects. By the second half of the text, however, she finds that the now-underway World War II simultaneously spurs and interrupts her continued work on this and other projects. These two motivations—exploring personal memory to understand potentially universal mechanisms, and remembering her youth in decades past in the context of a threatened present—are not exactly at odds. In fact, the autobiographical-leaning form of her writing in "A Sketch of the Past" allows Woolf to show memory's mechanisms and war-related concerns of the present moment as inextricably related and cross-influential phenomena. By examining the shifting form of the "sketch" across time, we see that war may affect the form, clarity, and use of personal memories of those on its outskirts: specifically, by prompting the rememberer to add more narrative (than simply visual) detail, and by

framing some of these personal memories in terms of nation and culture along with their individual or familial significance.

This text's placement within *Moments of Being*, an anthology of autobiographical texts of varying lengths and periods of Woolf's work assembled and published decades after her death, invites contemporary readers to examine memory's mutability in a wider scope—to compare it to other recollections of the same period, other descriptions of the process of remembering, and other accounts of the same period of her life.[15] One could then view "A Sketch of the Past" as a sequel of sorts: similar to Isherwood's novels that revisit the pre-war and interwar years with varying perspectives each time, these two memoir-essays let critics analyze their relationships to each other as much as they allow us to analyze the past and the present. These memoirs of childhood vary in their content, and also in their attention to the mechanisms of memory. This key difference in focus is likely motivated by a difference in audience. "Reminiscences" was addressed to Julian Bell, Virginia's young nephew; and this audience matched a recuperative goal of introducing the character and major life events of family members that Julian would never meet. Woolf's focus in "Reminiscences," then, is on remembering in order to revive lost people for someone else (a goal that is familiar in the context of nonfiction accounts of war). In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf has moved toward meta-narrative study—rather than solely recording the substance of her memories, this second project is equally interested in portraying how memory works, and evaluating how and why she uses memories from her childhood and youth crucial to identity formation (before another world war leads to massive, and potentially personal, loss). Toward the end

[15] As Jeanne Schulkind notes in her "Editor's Note" to "A Sketch of the Past," this text "covers some of the same ground as the preceding memoir ["Reminiscences," written in 1907 before her first novel] but from such a different angle of vision that there is not, in a significant sense, any repetition" (61).

of the narrative, this text also seems to become a comfort to Woolf herself, both by allowing her to revisit her past in part for herself and to keep up the act of writing; as the present platform shrinks, her references to the present take on the form of dispatches from a war zone. Of course, "A Sketch of the Past" is incomplete (Schulkind notes that "it would have been considerably revised and extended" before publication [62]); so it is possible that Woolf would have revised to lend consistency to this narrative framework, and eliminated these distinct phases of the text. Schulkind also notes, however, that the text we see today had already undergone substantial revision (61), so the text we read today is at least at least an intermediate draft, and was crafted with a public audience in mind. Additionally, seemingly uneven structures were common in Woolf's writing by this time (as evidenced by the widely-varying sizes of the chapters of *The Years*), so it is possible that this dual structure would have remained; and, since Woolf only kept sporadic diaries rather than daily ones, this form would have fit her personal process. I will examine "A Sketch of the Past" and its exploration of memory's processes by focusing on its meta-narrative comments, which can be divided into two forms that each explore facets of a relationship between memory and impending wars: the first of these asks seemingly-universal questions about memory (how do we create, use, and relate to our memories? And how does memory compare to perception of the present?), and the second charts the act of remembering in practice as the "platform of the present" constricts (what changes about the focus or detail level of "unrelated" memories as war approaches?).

From the beginning of this autobiographical piece, Woolf's structure and meta-narrative commentary bring attention to the present moment in which she is remembering the

past, and highlight the distance between this present and the past she is attempting to recall.[16] The opening line of the text explains, "Two days ago—Sunday 16th April 1939 to be precise—Nessa said that if I did not start writing my memoirs I should soon be too old" (64). Like Woolf's personal diary, Virginia's text is not updated daily, or even regularly; it is written in fits and starts that leave long gaps in between, and the marking of dates draws attention to this.[17] It is not until May 2, ten pages into the text, that Virginia decides that recording the present date of composition is central to this retrospective genre:

> 2nd May…I write the date, because I think that I have discovered a possible form for these notes. That is, to make them include the present—at least enough of the present to serve as platform to stand upon. It would be interesting to make the two people, I now, I then, come out in contrast. And further, this past is much affected by the present moment. What I write today I should not write in a year's time. (75)

Virginia does not see this marking of dates as a recuperative move that will reconcile past and present in a singular, coherent self; she wants these two versions of herself to "come out in contrast," to throw off any false sense of complete continuity in her identity.[18] She even goes so far as to refer to her past and present selves as "the two people," but she does not presume that this past Virginia will never be understood. Likewise, the image of a "platform"

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[16] Again, as Schulkind notes, this draft (completed four months before Woolf's death) was not published during Woolf's lifetime (64). However, this meta-narrative feature is included, explained, and generally maintained in such a way that it seems crucial to the text's final form.

[17] Barbara Lounsberry notes that Woolf was usually a "periodic diarist" rather than a daily one (and occasionally left long gaps between one entry or one diary and the next); she also took great pains to designate the proper date for each entry adding typed labels to mark the date and the day of the week in her 1915 diary (172 and 165).

[18] This separation of selves can also be seen in Isherwood's work. In *Down There on a Visit*, he distances himself from "that Christopher" of the past (without disowning him); and goes further in *Christopher and his Kind*.

of just "enough of the present" implies that we will not see a complete picture of the narrative present either. And the platform, reminiscent of that of a train station, feels similarly precarious and incomplete: it owes its existence to other times, and seems bare of sensation, ready to be vacated. And while the present is not entirely barren, neutral, or unchanging ground, its size and utilitarian description do hint that her map of memory will reject the common contrast between the "misty" past and the clear present. Virginia recognizes that the present moment can influence her recollection of the past too, so these moments in time (and different selves) are inseparable and yet not connected in a neat, linear narrative.

The narrative's structure, visiting one scene of the past after the other and attending to the present day and (implicitly) Virginia's present self, echoes Evelyne Ender's map of the act of remembering, which she bases on her study of Daniel Schacter's work in cognitive science alongside the writing of Marcel Proust. Remembering one's childhood, Ender explains, is similar to going back to a laboratory that holds photographic negatives taken as a child, and processing them "years later, when the images are retrieved because certain features of the landscape prompted the photographer to go back to his lab" (117).[19] In Schacter's model of memory, and in Ender's extrapolation of it onto autobiographical writing, remembering is a creative act that involves assembly ("processing") and, therefore, is akin to the act of writing. Moreover, memory draws on perceptions that are recorded in the style of modernist and post-modernist fiction, drawing on a disorderly "stream of consciousness," jumping from an innocuous detail of the present to a crucial scene in one's

[19] Ender continues, "there is no more than an affinity or interdependence between the first negative and the full picture. Meanwhile, only the fully developed photograph, with its touches of color and specific composition will bring the picture of life." The development process would draw on both the wants and needs of the present moment, and other memories.

past, making use of sources that are not clearly juxtaposed in a chronological charting of one's life: an innocuous or important detail of the present moment prompts revisiting of another moment. When each memory is formed and when it is recalled, both processes draw on the past (or rather, plural "pasts": the moment one is trying to remember and other, related memories that influenced perception and storage) and on the present (the context in which and reason that the remembering subject is recalling the past). Virginia's approach to chronology, and her intention of contrasting selves, both suggest that narrating memory as an orderly account will only obscure the process of remembering further; in labeling "the two people," she seems to wish to deconstruct the narrative that her memory writes for her and with it the cohesive sense of self that it promises. She aims to not only trace the dynamic nature of the self over time ("I now, I then"), but also experiment with the process of seeing those two selves through memory and narration. This complex self-refracting allows Virginia (and readers) to see or at least sense the process of photographic development in the messy laboratory of the mind.

The precarity of the photographic negative and its development process grows clearer as we compare it to another description of memory in the opening pages. In this moment, Virginia compares memory to an "avenue lying behind; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions" that make up the past, and into which she imagines we may be able to "live our lives through from the start," through the aid of machine or possibly emotion (67). This vision of memory as a complete, cohesive, linear (if perhaps winding) narrative is questioned and undermined by Virginia herself as soon as it is introduced, as she observes the mechanisms and faults of her own ability to recall and perceive. While Virginia posits that each memory leaves a trace, she also acknowledges that the past can feel more vivid than the present because "my

memory supplies what I had forgotten, so that it seems as if it were happening independently, though I am really making it happen" (67). Memory, then, involves some narrative construction for Virginia, as it does for contemporary psychologists like Schacter; so the remembering self either embellishes, or partially constructs, the "ribbon of scenes" as she retraces it. Ender summarizes this view of memory, and its connections to the arts when she explains, "remembrance is an act of imagination" (5) an "aesthetic, as well as a cognitive and emotional, performance" (12). Virginia also implicitly acknowledges the need to create memories by comparing her recollection of the past to her perception the calm present; as she walks through a garden, she notices that her mind is really closer to the scene of her first memory that she was trying to recall than it is to the lively garden in front of her. Furthermore, Virginia declares, "a great part of every day is not lived consciously. One walks, eats, sees things, deals with what has to be done" (70). With such incomplete perception of the present, we cannot expect for the avenue of memory to reflect all aspects of the past "truthfully," unless via accessing unconscious perceptions, or rebuilding a moment of the past based on similar experiences. The relative impoverishment of the present will become even clearer in the second half of the text, as war approaches and the theories and experiments she conducted before are put into much more urgent practice; but even before war is declared, in the midst of the anticipatory "long 1939,"[20] Woolf has begun to catalogue the relationship between the present and her memory of the past.

Due to the number of possibly conflicting theories of memory that are presented even in this passage of "A Sketch of the Past," it may be difficult to extract a cohesive theory of

[20] Of course, Hitler's presence was felt across Europe long before war was declared; Isherwood attributes his flight from Germany in 1933 to the rise of the Nazi Party, and Steve Ellis' examination of the "long 1939" shows that there was a particular sense of crisis across Britain and Europe at the time Woolf began composing her memoir.

memory's processes from this text. What Virginia seems consistently aware of, though, is the difficulty of achieving a "true" view of one's memory, and the creation that remembering requires. And while "A Sketch of the Past" addresses these overarching theoretical questions of memory's work less and less directly as the text progresses, her opening invites us to examine her own process of remembrance—and of balance between past and present—as she continues the process of revisiting, narrating, and interpreting memories at different periods of personal and social significance.

This dual structure allows the text to illustrate a fundamental question of this project: if traumatic accounts of war are marked by irregularities of memory,[21] but memory is a fundamentally irregular object and process,[22] what can examination of a civilian's recollections of the past reveal about the effects of war on the minds of those who seem to be beyond its reach? Do the troubled memories of individuals closer to war (as portrayed through literature, poetry, or conversation) make peripheral witnesses notice already-present irregularities in their process and products of remembering, or does war's threat to their identities or the lives of those around them create a disruption in memory that is related (though not identical) to the memories of traumatized witnesses of war?

My sense, based on this study of Woolf's fiction and non-fiction alongside each other and alongside the work of later authors, is that there is a spectrum of imperfect memory that reaches back to "normal" processes and products of remembrance; and moreover, the act of studying this spectrum lays bare the faults inherent in our memory and perception processes.

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[21] See large absences of memory and narrative in *Parade's End*, the apparition of Evans in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and the use of tense in "Dulce et Decorum Est" for canonical representation of this irregular relationship between past and present brought on by war.

[22] See descriptions by Schacter and Ender of memory as an incomplete photograph recalled and filled in differently depending on "who" is recalling it.

When victims of a traumatic event are troubled by their memory (for example, by flashbacks or gaps) and they share this experience with us, we may scrutinize our own memories and process of remembering, especially if our identity is already threatened by the same event—in this case, by a world war. This tendency to focus on and scrutinize "abnormal memory" is echoed in the cognitive sciences' study of autobiographical memory as well: Helen H. Williams, Gillian Cohen, and Martin Conway note that "Until [the 1970s], the approach [of memory studies] was almost exclusively psychoanalytic or clinical in orientation and diagnostic or therapeutic in aim" (22). If this focus on abnormal forms of memory—formed or used in "unusual" or "extreme" circumstances—becomes the sole endeavor of either cognitive science or literary studies of memory, and "normal" memory is left unstudied and assumed to be reliable, it can be easy to reinforce or exaggerate distinctions between abnormal and normal memory processes.

If trauma is, as it is often labeled, a "normal reaction to an abnormal situation," we ought to consider which aspects of "normal" thought processes might be shared by traumatized individuals and those who are connected to that trauma. Whether we consider links to the war via a family member or a nation in danger, identity- or profession-based threats like the one Woolf faced, or other circumstances that set one apart there are many ways that war's trauma seems to reverberate beyond the battleground. We can examine this idea as Virginia transitions from discussing memory's mechanisms toward a more deliberately recuperative act of recollection in the second half of "A Sketch of the Past," as her relationship to the impending war shifts.

While "A Sketch of the Past" begins by grappling with questions of memory's reliability and reflection of self in the shadow of approaching World War II without making

mention of the war at all, any implicit war-related motivations for this examination become explicit in the second half of the text, once WWII is officially declared. Here, the narrative openly but briefly addresses the war as it unfolds; and the use of dates and the "present platform" shift markedly. Woolf includes short meta-narrative and time-marking asides that, taken as a whole, show how war can seem to make memory difficult to reconstruct and narrative fundamentally incomplete, and yet simultaneously render the endeavor of remembering one's life and establishing one's identity through narrative more important to pursue. This tension over "unreliability" of narrative, I will argue, opens a possible bridge between the writing and the cognitive experiences of direct and peripheral witnesses of war.

Virginia hints that both war-related and professional concerns have prompted her to her return to the memoir project after a year's gap in the narrative—a gap that is, again, impossible to ignore because of the dates inscribed at the beginning of each entry, and is made even more noticeable from her extended commentary on her absence. When she writes again on June 8, 1940, after finding "this sheaf of notes" in a waste-paper bin after over a year of neglect and work on Roger Fry's biography, Virginia wonders,

> Shall I ever finish these notes—let alone make a book from them? The battle is at its crisis; every night the Germans fly over England; it comes closer to this house daily. If we are beaten then—however we solve that problem, and one solution is apparently suicide (so it was decided three nights ago in London among us)—book writing becomes doubtful. But I wish to go on, not to settle down in that dismal puddle. (100)

It is possible that Woolf refers in "these notes" to the series of unending proofs that she was correcting on her biography of Roger Fry; however, she could be referring to this very memoir project that she just recovered from the same pile of discarded papers. In either case,

this quasi-public diary text is the one she turns to when "book writing becomes doubtful." This begs the question of what a memoir (especially an until-recently abandoned, incomplete text like this one) offers the author that a fictional novel or biography of someone else does not. While Virginia opens this entry by questioning her ability to shape her writing into a cohesive narrative, feeling that a loss to Germany would make "book writing doubtful,"[23] the narrative inconsistency of "A Sketch of the Past," which skips from present fears to decades past, and has seen months-long gaps between drafts, may be the very thing that allows or motivates her to pick up this memoir project again.[24] The text's scattered form and absence of overarching narrative allow her to write and explore scenes of her family and herself, the present and her past, the German planes and the death of her mother, with the aid of contextualizing dates but without a strictly linear narrative structure in the contents of each passage. In fact, this incomplete picture of past and present may represent war's effect from a vulnerable distance more fully than a temporally consistent and narratively coherent text could, as it not only shows the paradoxical incongruity and inseparability of mid-war and

[23] It is worth noting that Virginia here is considering the difficulty of writing after Britain's defeat; however, she does not comment directly on the experience of writing in this intermediary time as the war begins. Subsequent dispatch-style passages indicate that it was already intruding and yet prodding her to write on. (Also see Paul K. Saint-Amour's *Tense Future* for analysis of the central role anticipation played in war experience in the 20th century.)

[24] Long before World War II, the form of Woolf's writing seemed to be influenced by her diary-keeping and the diary genre. H. Porter Abbot argues in "Old Virginia and the Night Writer" that, while writing *Night and Day*, "the movement of her diary entries, which she was growing increasingly to value, fueled her subversion of the traditional narrative structure of the novel […] creat[ing] and affirmative valuation of the same corrosion of linear narrative trajectory that had caused Conrad (or at least Marlow) so much anguish" (247). This technique, then, is one that Woolf has discovered before, and may re-use here in the context of war. (Also see Lounsberry for commentary on Woolf's involvement with the diary genre as a writer *and* a reader.)

pre-war life, but also (to an extent) makes the reader experience and come to terms with this assembly.

As the "platform of time" shrinks alongside the war, occasionally the meta-narrative notes that mark the platform echo one experience of soldiers engaged in warfare for extended periods: namely, a seemingly-paradoxical monotony.[25] Virginia first addresses this feeling of tense boredom in July 1940, beginning with the terse note "Invasion still impends. My book [*Roger Fry*] is out; and jaded and distracted I return to this free page" (115). Then, a month later, this state of mind and time becomes clearer: "Yesterday (18th August 1940) five German raiders passed so close over Monks House that they brushed the tree at the gate. But being alive today, and having a waste of hour on my hands—for I am writing fiction; and cannot write after twelve—I will go on with this loose story" (124). Her darkly humorous remark about "being alive today," the monotony of marking time in parentheses, the proximity of these German planes—skimming the tops of trees at Monks House, remaining threateningly on the outskirts of their home—and having a "waste of hour" after the more strenuous work of constructing a novel (likely *Between the Acts*) echoes the intertwined boredom and lack of agency of the soldier in a lull during the war: the threat is ever-present, even visible just outside one's home, but is deferred. Virginia is sure that she has a "waste of hour," but beyond that, nothing seems guaranteed. If the present moment of memory retrieval affects the memories that we recall, then, we might ask what a present bereft of sensory

[25] Monotony, whether through lack of movement or through sensory deprivation in the trenches, has been cited as a prevalent experience of World War I. See Bernd Hüppauf's analysis of Frank Hurley's prize-winning composite war photography—splicing together multiple negatives from World War I to create a satisfyingly "war-like" scene for civilians: ("Experiences of Modern Warfare and the Crisis of Representation"). For analysis of this phenomenon in Woolf's World War I diaries, see Lounsberry: "The very regularity of encounter […] gives the war its particular horror" (186).

experience does to our memory. In the case of this text, and its context of war, the numbing present seems to both lend Virginia's memories more narrative detail (if not sensorial, as it would be difficult to surpass the level of visual detail of the first memory in the garden at the start of the text), and to bring out the national or historical relevance of her personal memories. This second goal is clear by her frequent framing of memories throughout the rest of the text as windows into the past culture of the Victorian era that lived on after its historical death through her older father and stepbrothers.

This use of the journal form creates a day-to-day view of wartime that illustrates the non-narrative or anti-narrative nature of war; the journal's regularity (or intermittency) and self-reflexivity make it a genre that is especially suited to examining the effect of war on stories of self, and of a nation, as the conflict is taking place. While Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway* has gone through "the whole show" on the front of World War I by the time we meet him in London, implying a narrative excitement and cohesion that leave the present seeming bereft or threatening (or both),[26] Virginia narrates from the opening years of World War II on what might be considered the physical edge of war—exposed to the Blitz but, as Susan Grayzel notes, in a country with comparatively fewer civilian deaths than other countries (*At Home and Under Fire* 320). Because she narrates from day to day, there is room to record the uncertainty and boredom that are inherent in many prolonged experiences of anxiety, but often glossed over or forgotten when they are put into a story, and are exacerbated by the lack of agency that the soldier and the marked target of an enemy state

[26] This is not to say that a "full" experience of war follows a clear narrative structure, complete with climax and conclusion; in fact, overwhelming experiences, according to trauma theory, interrupt the conclusion of a "chapter" of one's life.

may experience. Both soldiers or veterans and civilians may then experience the limits of narrative, and experience them especially strongly when identity is also disrupted.

In other passages that address Virginia's wartime present, these links become even more brief and utilitarian. "I continue (22nd September 1940) on this wet day—we think of weather now as it affects invasions, as it affects raids, not as weather that we like or dislike personally—I continue, for I am at a twist in [*Between the Acts*], to fill another page [in 'A Sketch of the Past']" (126). Here, Virginia notes a dual sense of attachment to and detachment from the present moment: she has internalized the utilitarian view of the environment that dictates the actions (and likely some of the emotions) of soldiers and civilians living in warring countries, but she feels a simultaneous detachment from the aesthetic appreciation or emotional reaction she may have had, in different circumstances, to this weather. Her phrasing hints that she *should* see it aesthetically, but finds that her reaction to the weather doesn't seem to belong to her: she not only shares perception of the present with everyone else around her ("*we* think of weather […]"), but she also hints that the lack of personal choice over whether to view the weather as positive or negative also indicates a lack of personal investment or vivacity of experience (it is simply a wet day). Like those around her, Virginia feels she has lost control over her reactions to her environment and over the circumstances that dictate her reactions; she likely would have shared pleasure in a sunny day with those around her, but there is a difference in this collective emotion (or lack thereof) that hinges on vulnerability at the hands of another state. The brevity of this meta-narrative passage also marks a shift in her view of how the present affects memory, as she does not draw any direct parallels between this mid-war present and the decades that she revisits, or between her personal present circumstances and acts of remembering. At this point in the

narrative, Virginia seems to use the past as a tool for escaping the present, rather than for making sense of it. Even as she does this, though, she gives us raw material to study the nature and use of past memories in present moments of war.

The penultimate section of "A Sketch of the Past" constricts the platform of the present even more, relegating it to brief, parenthetical statements: "I recover then today (October 11th 1940) a mild Autumn day (London battered last night) from these rapid notes only one actual picture of Thoby" (136)[27]. There are two types of description of the past here: one general incorporated into the grammar of the sentence ("today," "a mild Autumn day"), and one particular nested in parentheses ("(October 11th 1940)", "(London battered last night)"). The parenthetical notes that remind us of the historical context of the narrative present, in a style that echoes that of the section "Time Passes" in *To The Lighthouse*. In that central chapter, Karen Levenback argues, the parenthetical statements that inform readers of the deaths (and publications) that occur mimic the terse communication of wartime telegraphs that are written with little context and no emotion, with a factual vagueness and regularity of choice in phrasing that attempts to mask (but ultimately draw attention to) their desire to keep much of the war secret (103). From a psychoanalytic perspective, these parentheses have also been read as attempts at containment; Reina van der Wiel reads these offset statements as "the splitting of subjectivity in the face of trauma," and the emotionless tone in those bracketed passages as "the unprocessed nature of the traumatic experience"

[27] Woolf's younger brother, whose death from typhoid partly inspired *Jacob's Room*. Woolf goes on to chastise herself for "shirk[ing] the task, not so very hard to a professional […] of wafting [Thoby] from the boat to [her] bed sitting room at Hyde Park Gate"—that is, from scenes of his youth to those near his death—and concludes that "It is because I want to go on thinking about St Ives" (136). Recalling this pleasant memory of Thoby allows Woolf to not only escape the wartime present, but also to delay the revisiting of painful moments of her past.

(92).[28] Each of the parenthetical statements in this entry of "A Sketch of the Past" could be read in a similar way: they at once keep the narrative present and its wartime threats grammatically separated from the memories of her youth Virginia strives to uncover, and they draw attention to the inescapability of war. As the text nears its end, then, we can see Virginia nearly abandoning the openly reflective connection to the present that she had emphasized in the opening chapters, and then re-adopted with renewed vigor and introspection as the war began; in fact, the final passage begins with no introduction of the present "platform," other than the parenthetical note "(15th November 1940)" (143). Over the course of the text, these dates come to be enclosed in parentheses, to anchor the more vague scene-setting of "Yesterday" or "this wet day," rather than building detailed introductions of the present moment; this gives readers encountering her work decades later the tools to connect her personal moments to the historical context, but does not offer those connections directly. At times, we almost overhear snatches of news about the war's approach, as communicated to Woolf by friends or by the press (107); but these too give way to the brief style that presents dates with little commentary. Woolf's continued inclusion of these present dates, even as she retreats from them to focus on the past and the "platform of time" shrinks and becomes unstable, implies a commitment to acknowledging the passage of time, and yet also a degree of difficulty in portraying or even acknowledging this present context and the Virginia that lives in it. Because these notes are so brief, it can be difficult to tell whether this paucity of detail are a result of Woolf's distance from the war at the time, or due to its

[28] van der Wiel also studies previous drafts of "Time Passes," concluding that they "enact a process of detachment and aesthetic transformation of emotion into abstraction which is necessary to acknowledge yet work through trauma" (93).

overwhelming but practically unspeakable presence—and it is quite possible that both are true at once, especially on war's outskirts.

Along with these shifts in forms of marking time come some slight shifts in the type of memories she recalls. Her interest in "memory images," Evelyne Ender's term for the sensually-rich traces of her infancy, is replaced by interest in "scenes" of "what is convenient to call reality" that "flood" into the "sealed vessel" of self (Woolf 142). Toward the end of the text, Virginia become especially invested in depicting something that was already outside of its proper time: her home with her father, the Duckworth brothers, and their home which she describes in 1900 as "a complete model of Victorian society. If I had the power to lift out of the past a single day as we lived it about 1900, it would give a section of upper middle class Victorian life, like one of those sections with glass covers in which ants and bees are shown going about their tasks" (147). Her focus here shifts from the basic elements of perception (vivid colors and general feelings of safety) to the social and historical cues that each scene evokes. There is a sense of containment still in the miniaturized scene and unimportant-sounding "tasks" that are on par with the work of "ants and bees," but there is a narrative frame of the day-to-day here that the memory images lack. Like Isherwood, Woolf has a partly recuperative aspect to her project; but why, in the face of World War II, would she feel compelled to preserve a cross-section of the element of British society that, according to Virginia herself, already felt obsolete? Coupling her critique of this era with painstaking detail suggests Virginia aims to not only preserve the contents of these memories for future study (in case of a cultural rupture after defeat in war), but also that she aims to show us the mechanisms through which she gathers these memories. In this documentary impulse to record her personal past and the past of the nation, we see the unique perspective

of the peripheral war witness, especially when the witness is removed from the soldiers fighting the war: a perspective that can strive to preserve a shared national or group history, and at the same time struggle with questions about their own identity and efficacy as a rememberer.

"A Sketch of the Past" is too irregular in the nature of its connection between past and present to offer clear conclusions to the questions it raises in its opening pages about mechanisms of memory: about the precise difference between "I now" and "I then," or how exactly to access the "ribbon" of scenes from the past. By the end of the text, it is clear that Virginia has stayed true to her word on May 2nd that she "[leave] it to chance," and her declaration that "I have no energy at the moment to spend upon the horrid labour that it needs to make an orderly and expressed work of art" (75). However, the incomplete nature of this "sketch's" form as published here fits the title well; like an artist's sketch that studies a subject from multiple angles, it lays out multiple potential perspectives and framing devices of memory and remembering. More importantly, though, by using and exploring multiple perspectives without necessarily connecting them, this sketch also shows how the "I now" may shift in temperament, in self understanding, and in practices of remembering before and after war's declaration—and in doing so, it ultimately shows a complexity of self in the face of war that goes beyond what Woolf may have anticipated when she began the project. Virginia's narrative voice loses both its self-consciousness and its atomistic exploration of memory's mechanisms as Britain enters World War II, which may illustrate the complexity of the peripheral perspective: one's sense of work and self shift when the duty to understand memory gets superseded by the duty to remember or record when a conflict arrives that threatens the safety of—and boundaries between—soldiers and civilians. While these

sketches do not show individual memories fundamentally changing (we do not revisit scenes she uncovered in 1939 with a new perspective in 1940), as a whole they demonstrate that our use of and attention to the mechanisms of memory shifts according to the circumstances under which we are remembering—that is, this sketch demonstrates the importance of the retrieval moment in the nature of our memories.[29] And while Virginia's changing focus could be attributed to many factors in Woolf's life—especially near its tragic end—nearly all of her later entries begin by dwelling on or mentioning the war. Even if there were other factors affecting her attention and focus at this time, the same can be said for many soldiers as well; so again, we are reminded of the impossible task of locating an objective memory of war in any individual account, and the seeming impossibility of separating the war from biographical writing on its margins.

Three Guineas and the Epistolary Self

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf draws upon another semi-private genre to juxtapose the national and the personal, in order to answer the question, "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?" While Woolf's critical response (particularly to the British experience of the Spanish Civil War, World War I, and the looming World War II) is an important resource for studying Woolf's perspective of war and its relationship to patriarchal social structures and especially relevant to questions of marginality in war, its epistolary form and accompanying meta-narrative voice aligns with that of the journal-style texts studied throughout my

[29] We can see a similar shift from self-exploration to recording when Isherwood (re-) writes his experience of the rise of the Nazi Party and the threat of World War II from England.

project.[30] Thus, my focus will be on the work's form and the narrator's meta-narrative commentary, even as this text comments most directly on war and women's positions in relation to it. Stylistically, *Three Guineas* and the works of Isherwood and Ishiguro share a self-reflexive first-person narrator, who comments directly on the setting and circumstances of the text's composition, and directly addresses the process and challenges of writing about war from what either she or others would label an "outsider" perspective. In sharing these traits, these texts also address similar concerns about remembering past wars, and narrating these memories: the value of speaking from the margins of war (both the value of the act and the value of the product), and war's effect on the narratives that we craft for ourselves and for others (including personal identity, and in this case, particular emphasis on personal and cultural or group memory in equal measure).

Three Guineas is framed as a series of letters (or one letter in three parts) directed to a single recipient, but it also has the private/public tone of an open letter. While its three chapters all address one correspondent (the man who has written to her, asking "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?"), the speaker responds to her primary correspondent by sharing other letters that she has received: Leila Brosnan notes that these come from "the treasurer of a women's college asking for funds, and another honorary treasurer requesting a subscription to support a society helping professional women gain employment" (130).[31]

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[30] In fact, if we take Ishiguro's authors to be writing to a specific audience (even an imagined one, like the replacement for Stevens that will never come as the class system that relied on butlers finally ends in *The Remains of the Day*), *Three Guineas* is the most closely formally aligned of Woolf's texts with the other authors studied here.

[31] Brosnan argues that, in responding to multiple letters, autobiographies, and other textual selves, "She is no longer object to [the correspondent's] subject, but dialogically a subject" (130). Brosnan also notes that one of *Three Guineas*' working titles was *Answers to Correspondents*, suggesting the importance of framing this text through the interpersonal letter genre (129).

Sharing others' letters (though these are more official requests than private correspondence, arguably, as they are made on behalf of an organization) already illustrates the semi-public potential of the genre. Elsewhere, Woolf had commented on the unique position and powers of the letter; Brosnan cites Woolf's remarks in *The Common Reader* that "letter-writing was 'an art that a woman could practice without unsexing herself,'" and that "'the art of letter-writing [was] often the art of essay-writing in disguise'" (124). Woolf approaches the letter, then, as a genre that shares content and potential effects with more public, declarative ones, and one that is more open to women as writers, in that it does not demand that they hide or set aside femininity or their life experience as women. Using the open letter genre to comment on war is, then, at once a means of drawing attention to the speaker's identity and of pushing beyond the boundaries that might be imposed on her due to that identity.

While *Three Guineas* is tightly constructed (in its devotion of three chapters to three means of discouraging war, and its extensive footnotes marshaling evidence from multiple recognized and unrecognized authorities on war and the values that cause or encourage it), the speaker frequently highlights gaps in her writing, particularly in the opening pages of the text. She does not draw attention to these gaps in order to excuse or undermine herself; rather, she does this as a means of examining how "we are to prevent war," and who is capable of doing so.

The opening line of *Three Guineas* acknowledges the time that has passed between the speaker receiving a letter asking, "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?" and penning this response to it. The text begins: "Three years is a long time to leave a letter unanswered, and your letter has been lying without an answer even longer than that" (3). In this opening sentence, the speaker lists multiple periods of delay—first three years, and then

an unstated amount of time beyond that. This calculation and recalculation echoes the gap between her reception of the letter and response to it; it delays, if only briefly, the reader's reception of her reply. This series of statements is too immediate and intentional to classify as a hidden or truly disruptive moment of unreliable memory or narrative; we are immediately aware that this contribution to the debate is delayed or incomplete, even before we know what it will entail. Like Isherwood and Ishiguro's narrators, this speaker's immediate priority is to acknowledge and comment on the imperfections of her perspective and delay in her narrative, so we cannot help but read the rest of her text looking for clues about the cause or effect of this delay.

Rather than simply exposing or examining her own unreliability, though, Woolf's speaker acknowledges but pushes beyond these self-accusations:

> A whole page could be filled with excuses and apologies; declarations of unfitness, incompetence, lack of knowledge, and experience: and they would be true. But even when they were said there would still remain some difficulties so fundamental that it may well prove impossible for you to understand or for us to explain. (3)

Woolf's speaker does not pretend to be immune to limitations of her writing and her perspective, though she arguably views her "incomplete" view of the subject as a consequence of her distance from the illogical nature of war and of patriarchy, rather than a lack of perception or reasoning on her part. However, she subtly draws her upper-class male correspondent into this incomplete knowledge too ("it may well prove impossible for […] you to understand"). She initially struggles to find the words to explain her position to war (or perhaps to believe that they will be received by her audience), but she hypothesizes that he will struggle equally to imagine her position as one that is different from his own. In its

critique of patriarchal social structure, *Three Guineas* proposes that gaps of knowledge about oneself (as an individual or as a nation) can lead to war as readily as gaps in knowledge of others can spur conflict. By asking her recipient to picture gaps in his own understanding at the start of the letter, she primes him for self-reflection via recollection: re-membering himself from a different angle.

There are also non-verbal gaps inscribed into the narrative through punctuation. After listing the traits that she and her correspondent share (namely, social class and the related ability to earn money through work), she continues, "But … those three dots mark a precipice, a gulf so deeply cut between us that for there years and more I have been sitting on my side of it wondering whether it is any use to try to speak across it" (4). The speaker uses ellipses to write pauses into the text, using the letter's physical form to make readers experience not only a delay, but also uncertainty about what will come next; she demands that her recipient acknowledge the "gulf" by momentarily delaying the reading process. She also frustrates grammatical expectations by seemingly not completing this sentence, commenting on the dots rather than the qualifier that would have followed "But." This gap draws attention to the physical existence of this text, and thus of its composition, and the process of its composition; and by abandoning the qualifier after "But," she does not allow us to take refuge in the sentence's continuation on the other side of the ellipses. While Woolf's speaker is confident that her perspective will contribute to her audience's understanding of war[32], she is also confident that it is important and valuable to acknowledge the process by which she shares those views; because her explanation of her lack of writing, in itself,

[32] The speaker does go on to say, "Let us then ask someone else—it is Mary Kingsley—to speak for us" (4). However, the person she asks to contribute to this discussion is a woman, who comments on her limited education; therefore, this is not quite a ceding of authority.

proposes something about the nature of war—not only how war is experienced and influenced by those outside the battlefield, but also how war comes to be waged in the first place. In this narrative's view, war arises from the same forces that make it difficult to speak about; it is immediately clear that there are political stakes to this text's inter-subjective form and (as I shall investigate soon) extensive use of autobiography as evidence.

Another gap may go unnoticed by many readers, especially when thinking of *Three Guineas* as a non- (or less) fictional text: the name of Woolf's speaker in the text. While the letter-writing voice certainly shares traits of class and perhaps profession with Woolf (based on her social standing, the personal correspondence she has received from multiple charities, and her wide-ranging knowledge of literature, feminist and anti-war movements, and more), she does not bear her name. In fact, like the recipient, the speaker's name is never mentioned. In this way too, *Three Guineas* exists in between genres[33]: just as we are denied the clear categorization of public or private writing, we are denied the easy categorization of fiction or non-fiction. While *Three Guineas* is close to a political treatise, it still operates with a fictional "frame narrative" that forces us to consider not only a "feminist, pacifist" view of war, but also to consider the challenges and advantages, and material and mental circumstances, of writing from this perspective.

While the speaker obscures the individual identity of herself and her recipient, but makes their gender and class identities central, she opens the book by declaring that she intends to bring the addressee of her letter to life. She tells her reader, "In the first place let us draw what all letter-writers instinctively draw, a sketch of the person to whom the letter is

[33] Generic categorization is further complicated by Woolf's conception of *Three Guineas* and *The Years* "as a 'unit'" (Madeline Hummel, "From the Common Reader to the Uncommon Critic," qtd. in Levenback 116).

addressed. Without someone warm and breathing on the other side of the page, letters are worthless" (3). In this assertion, and the description of her recipient as "a little grey on the temples […] [in] the middle years of life," with an "education at one of the great public schools and finished […] at the university" (3-4), the speaker rejects the recipient's neutrality or universality. While this description is rather broad, it is not exactly a caricature—as she states, she wants someone "warm and breathing" to address. She articulates these details of the correspondent's sex, age, and class that could be seen as implicit or default traits, in order to make him—and all of Woolf's readers—aware of their own position and subjectivity. Readers who fit this mold may feel surprise at not simply being talked to, but talked about: observed in a critical but non-combative way, reflected in the text in a way that demands that they recognize their own position. This physical description does not allow an easy, un-self-aware immersion into the text, especially when paired with the speaker's conjuring tone. Likewise, readers who do not fit this mold will have to consider immediately where they fit into the world that Woolf's speaker creates (perhaps even align themselves with the speaker, and imagine that they, too, are addressing him); so while this could further alienate readers traditionally seen as "outside" of conversation about war, it also acknowledges that not all readers will fit the positions assigned here, and another letter-writer who entered this conversation might find other responses or critiques to levy.

The speaker's primary means of creating a "warm and breathing" recipient are physical description that is at once vivid and laden with implicit meaning. The detail of "grey at the temples" also indicates age; so while the recipient may have been involved in World War I, by the text's publication in 1938, he is surely beyond the age of direct involvement on the battlefield in the impending World War II, or the Spanish Civil War currently being waged at

the time of writing. While the text goes on to include images of men (including "A General," "Heralds," "A University Procession," "A Judge," and "An Archbishop") whose clothes and titles are critically described to connect them to the patriarchal structure the essay/letter critiques, this initial sketch of the listener asks us to imagine the recipient based on snatches of physical, bodily details; the speaker makes the choice here to describe her listener rather than include images of him. Here we cannot help but recall her choice to describe rather than include of the photographs of casualties of the Spanish Civil War. This choice may be a result of the ubiquity of the images she describes—photographs of death and destruction in the Spanish Civil War, and the common sight of British civilians who are concerned about the spread of destruction—or it may be an invitation to the reader to invest their imagination in the portrayal of these figures, to become connected to them by picturing them for oneself (unlike the alienating, butterfly-under-glass description of the men in uniform).[34]

While the epistolary style of *Three Guineas* shares many traits with the diary genre (a self-reflexive first person narrator, organization around the act of writing, and implications of privacy or individuality), it does not recount the speaker's personal memory, or the act of remembering her own life. Instead of addressing the weakness of individual memory, or perhaps as a means of understanding one source of personal memory's weakness, Woolf's speaker addresses the weakness of cultural perception. While the speaker excludes her memory or personal history (beyond general observations about the opportunities for education of women in her position), the first evidence she turns to is the biographies and autobiographies (and therefore memories and self perception) of others—soldiers and pilots,

[34] See neurobiologist Semir Zeki's analysis of Michelangelo's *non finito* sculptures as invitations for co-creation with the viewer: "It seems to me […] that Michelangelo brought his sculptures to a certain finish, which he judged to be adequate to convey as well as he could the concept in his brain, leaving it to the viewer to complete the unfinished" (109).

women and clergymen. Only after she has presented these first-hand accounts from the center and edge of war (and gender) does she turn to history more broadly.

Again, it is not simply the content of the speaker's memories, but instead primarily the means and degrees of access to them, that occupy the speaker. Just as Virginia did in "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf's speaker begins with a brief fantasy of mechanical or physical means to achieve total perception of others' lives and minds: "Complete understanding could only be achieved by blood transfusion and memory transfusion—a miracle still beyond the reach of science;" and the substitute for this procedure that she settles on is reading widely in the genres of biography and autobiography (7). While *Three Guineas* lingers less on questions of memory and of understanding than the other texts studied here, it still opens by mourning the difficulty of "fully" understanding others, and yet still striving for that goal. In the speaker's estimation, we all share this gap in inter-subjective understanding—similar to the question of reliability of memory (whether attributable to trauma, everyday forgetting, or another source), these moments ask us to consider the extent to which we can understand others, especially in the context of ongoing or approaching war. Moreover, in the mention of "memory transfusion" as a means of interpersonal understanding, the speaker illustrates the importance of memory in understanding oneself and others—we need to not only understand a person's present social position, or even perhaps the facts of his or her past, but also his or her own perspective of it through the subjective medium of memory. Woolf's speaker here points out what Isherwood and Ishiguro will continue to grapple with: that it isn't merely war, and varying positions in relation to it as soldiers or civilians, women or men, that keep us from understanding each other—there are other factors that make connection difficult before the violence and conflict of war come into play. As I have argued previously, and as

evidenced by speaker's address of memory's faults before broaching the subject of war, our already-imperfect mechanisms of theory of mind and empathy can seem even weaker than they actually are, since war forces people to think of their identity and experience in relation to that of other individuals, groups, or nations. War and stories about war can thus lay bare the faults of memory and nuances of identity that are ordinarily glossed over.

In this context, scrutiny of one's own self-perception may have a similar effect to that of cognitive scientists who research memory in laboratory settings, a setting which exerts its own form of scrutiny and stress on the minds of those who are studied. Gillian Cohen and Martin Conway conclude their anthology of cognitive examinations of "everyday memory" or memory's mechanisms and reliability outside of the laboratory and the rigid experiments that lab study entails by explaining, "Research has tended to emphasize the errors that occur in everyday memory functions. […] People do make many naturally occurring errors in ordinary life situations but, arguably, the methodology has produced a somewhat distorted view of memory efficiency. […] The conditions of laboratory testing provoke errors and magnify their importance. In everyday life people are not pressed to make forced-choice responses and can always admit ignorance or doubt" (389).[35] One could argue that, for many people, wartime does not quite fit the description of everyday life; even when it lasts for years, and especially when it threatens the civilians of a country at war, there are subtle shifts in outlook on memory that become even more exaggerated when remembered by already-introspective writers of first-person, not-quite-fictional texts. And these shifts in scrutiny and importance are (perhaps surprisingly) mirrored between wartime and the laboratory—not

[35] As cited previously in this chapter, Cohen and Conway also name studies that center on keeping diaries and recalling their information later, which they find "have concentrated on failures rather than on successes," arguably revealing more about our expectations of diaries as they do about memory's functions and flaws.

simply in barrenness (though distance from war or the anticlimactic sensory-depriving trenches could make this link plausible), but primarily in psychological pressure to get it right or to admit fault before making a false or un-provable claim.

While *Three Guineas* focuses on the near present with some reflections on history, there are moments of commentary on memory as it affects perception. Like the opening lines of "A Sketch of the Past," these comments are focused more on the mechanisms of memory than on the content of particular memories. When the speaker makes the controversial claim that "photographs are not an argument; they are simply a crude statement of fact addressed to the eye," she follows with a qualifying statement that opens up the acknowledgment of subjectivity: "But the eye is connected with the brain; the brain with the nervous system. That system sends its messages in a flash through every past memory and present feeling" (11). So, while she goes on to describe this bodily perceptual process as a means of uniting multiple perspectives (11), the speaker also opens up the possibility that we process perceptions through not only our body's feeling but also our brain (and body's) memories, both individual and shared. Here, again, we see a link between Woolf's understanding of perception and Daniel Schacter's: both of them recognize the immediate role that memory plays in perceiving the present. Rather than turning to memory after perceiving a scene in order to make sense of it, we call on memory in the moment that we perceive something—as an integral part of the act of perception. Our combination of memory, body, and present emotions in each act of observation or recollection leaves room for potential differences from one viewer to the next. We may be united by our shared bodily vulnerability (in the sense that everyone has a body that can theoretically be harmed) and by the collective memory of nations and other groups (whether this memory is formed through shared experiences or

shared reception of history), and thus share some visceral or culturally determined reactions as we hear about others' experiences. But, as the speaker was careful to point out varying experiences between her and her letter recipient, we cannot help but notice the room that individual memory leaves at least some room for differences that may not be bridged.

Even before advocating the autobiographical genres as a means of making one's self no longer "confined to the minute span of actual experience" (7), the speaker begins turning to the life-writing of others: first, in fact, to the writing of a woman. Before quoting the life writing of Mary Kingsley (just after remarking on the "gulf" of the ellipses), she introduces her not simply as a source that will support a claim she has already made, but as someone who can speak when she finds it difficult to do so: "Let us then ask someone else—it is Mary Kingsley—to speak for us." The speaker goes on to make Kingsley's account of her relatively poor educational opportunities wider in scope: "Mary Kingsley is not speaking for herself alone; she is speaking, still, for many of the daughters of educated men" (4). Still, however, we reach this larger narrative by means of an individual's testimony. Woolf draws attention to the necessity of personal narration, even as she points to its initial unreliability by leaving her own testimony absent and lamenting memory's faults. The speaker goes on to present passages from the autobiographical writings of soldiers, and from their biographers. What she finds most of all, in studying these writings, is an almost overwhelming individuality of opinion and experience: after remarking that "the great majority of your sex are today in favour of war" (with evidence from two conferences of "educated men" and "working men"), juxtaposed with Wilfred Owen's notes describing war as treacherous, she asks how majority opinions are formed out of individual perspectives: "Yet since biography shows that differences of opinion are many, it is plain that there must be one reason which

prevails in order to bring about this overpowering unanimity" (8). It seems that biography and autobiography will only go so far in explaining the behavior of groups made up of diverse individuals; however, separating these through analysis of memory can suggest the complexity of identity categories (in this case, the difference between "men" and a patriarchal society.)

In drawing on multiple first-person (if not traditionally-labeled "firsthand") accounts of war and the social structure surrounding it, and framing the entire text as a letter, *Three Guineas* offers a potential solution to what literary trauma theorist Leigh Gilmore calls the "auto/biographical demand": that is, the need to both represent one's own story and to speak to the stories of others. As Gilmore asserts in *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*, readers make great demands on the autobiographical writer. The author/speaker's perspective must be at once unique and representative: unique enough to warrant examination, but perhaps also to make us feel like we are learning about an event that can feel initially too familiar for us to truly see differently; and representative enough to give us a sense that we have gained greater understanding about the event in question—or that, if we are in a similar position to the narrator, it represents our experience too (88, 8). Gilmore also makes the potentially-controversial claim that trauma is never "exclusively personal;" in other words, each event or series of events that is experienced by an individual has a historical and social context (31), and there are other people who are affected by similar circumstances even if they do not share identical experiences.[36] When Woolf's speaker draws on a series of autobiographical narratives, she openly comments on the "unique but

[36] As cited previously, Reina van der Wiel makes a similar claim specifically about World War I: "Almost every family in England had lost a relative due to the war, if not more than one, so the personal had turned into the public" (91).

representative nature" of stories like that of Mary Kingsley. The question, then, is whether Woolf's speaker draws on this variety of self-narratives in order to give readers an assortment of speakers through whom to understand war, or whether she wants to mitigate the "auto/biographical demand" by ensuring that each reader will feel that their story has been represented.

While Isherwood's narrator often leaves us feeling that we only scratch the surface of the characters around him, and Ishiguro's narrators make us feel confined to an unreliable narrative that cannot be wholly reconciled, Woolf uses a single narrator to demonstrate the process of assembling collective memory or self-understanding. Like "A Sketch of the Past," the most resonant moments in *Three Guineas* are those that create and explore an image. Susan Sontag has famously critiqued the speaker in *Three Guineas* for presuming a universality of reactions to images of war (110). However, the mode in which this image is framed complicates the idea of this universality even as it turns to it. Moreover, the speaker's dual use of personal narrative (both her narrative of perception's processes and her use of autobiographical narratives of others) as the means of receiving war and social strata that contribute to war, *Three Guineas* demonstrates the place of narrative and individuality of experience in how war is remembered, as well as (primarily) why it is conducted. She tells her reader, "Now happily we need no longer depend on biography, which inevitably, since it is concerned with the private life, bristles with innumerable conflicts of private opinion" when turning to "that record of the public life which is history" (26); but despite this critique of biography's subjectivity (which we may consider potentially insincere, given the speaker's reliance on the genre at the outset), we cannot help noticing that this text is also modeled after the subjective genre of the letter, and that it turns to this genre before engaging the

historical. And through this framing device, Woolf challenges readers to experience the same strict self-assessment that each peripheral narrator of war seems to encounter as they set about recording their experiences and memories.

Although "A Sketch of the Past" and *Three Guineas* differ in many ways—in their publication history and therefore degree of completion, their use of Woolf's biography, and their exact genre—they both mark a shift away from the free indirect discourse of the novel and toward the self-conscious first person narrator. While Woolf drew on her own life experiences and social position in many of her texts, these later pieces speak to an interest in displaying tension as author and rememberer between the subjective mind and objective aims, and the processes of perceiving, remembering, and recounting. My argument has been that Woolf's unique experience of World War II and the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany led to her increased public work in this genre, due to its ability to explore how time and circumstance shift an individual's memory, and how one's memory can shift one's identity. A lifelong reader and producer of diaries, and participant in memoir-writing groups throughout her adult life, Woolf was more familiar than most with this introspective genre; but in these texts that hinge on war, she makes use of its conventions to illustrate the extent to which war affects the state of mind and sense of self of people just out of war's reach. The insights that she reaches through self-interrogation reflect those that might be achieved by others who feel bound to describe an unfolding war, or a life or world threatened by that war, even as they feel or are told that they have not truly witnessed the conflict and thus cannot reliably or usefully speak about it. Beyond exposing the effect of present-day war on the process and project of remembering one's life, and illustrating the effects of un-critiqued

cultural memory on the waging of war, Woolf's non-fictional published texts show that her position on the margin of WWII allows, rather than inhibits, revelations about memory and the nature of "total" war.

Remembering as Re-Writing in Christopher Isherwood's Novelized Autobiographies

When Christopher Isherwood and W.H. Auden set out to cover the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1938, with the promise of a travel book deal on their experiences in the region, Auden told Isherwood, "'We'll have a war of our very own'" (*Christopher and His Kind* 289). Months later, when the pair moved to the United States just as the conflicts in Asia and Europe expanded to become World War II, they were "denounced as war-dodgers" by many of their countrymen (*Kathleen and Frank* 491). According to the logic of their critics, by leaving Britain for America—rather than braving battlefields as soldiers or front-line journalists, or returning to weather the Blitz at home—Isherwood and Auden had forfeited their right to be considered honorable wartime British subjects, much less writers with a "war of [their] own." The right to speak of World War II as a British subject could only be earned by seeing the conflict firsthand, and refusing to be uprooted by it.

It is unclear whether Auden's proclamation that the Sino-Japanese War could be "theirs" is a sentiment that would be shared by those critical of their move to the United States; they do not appear to have faced criticism for leaving Europe to cover the war in Asia, so it seems likely that others approved of this journalistic effort. It is also worth noting that Isherwood and Auden's ability to report on the Sino-Japanese War with access to officers and soldiers from both nations, and to claim (perhaps in jest) that the war as "theirs" by virtue of being some of the first Western European writers to witness the conflict, indicates its own type of privilege due to nationality, class, profession, and more. What is clear is that the impulse to claim ownership over a war or to deny it, to delineate who can speak about it and who cannot, is an impulse that made its way into the minds of Isherwood and Auden as it did the minds of their critics. Tinged with sarcasm or stained by colonialism, the declaration

"we'll have a war of our very own" reveals concerns about who has truly witnessed or taken part in war. Even as the conflict spread across the globe, such distinctions were felt to be important.

While his time behind the front lines in the second Sino-Japanese War made Isherwood a direct witness to the physical combat of WWII, in this project, I will focus on his writing about World War II as it related to Berlin. From 1939 to 1976, Isherwood published a series of genre-bending texts that revisit a single decade of his life: 1929 to 1939. These texts center on his experience both living in Germany in the early 1930s and following news of his beloved city and its inhabitants from abroad after that; Isherwood revisits and reframes his experience on the edge of World War II through memories of Weimar Republic Berlin, and the news he received as the war began. World War II and the people, the relationships, and the ways of life nearly destroyed by it haunt his memories and highlight the laborious, at times "unreliable" task of remembering. While a range of factors subtly influence each volume's recollections (including shifting legal and social views of queerness, attitudes toward war and citizenship, and changes in memory brought on by age and the passing of time), Isherwood's memories consistently seem to be disrupted by the self-reflection and self critique that accompany these shifts, rather than being altered by these changes directly.

Multiple genre labels could be applied to *Goodbye to Berlin, Down There on a Visit,* and *Christopher and his Kind*, the three texts on which this chapter focuses. Fictionalized autobiography, diary novel,[37] memoir, and travelogue are all accurate descriptions of one or more of these works. Throughout these variations in genre, however, all three texts carry two

[37] H. Porter Abbot coins this term in *Diary Fiction: Writing As Action.*

traits that are central to the writing of the peripheral witness. First, they dutifully note the time and place of setting and narration: chapters either bear titles, sub-titles, or scene-setting asides that let us know exactly how far in time or physical space the characters (and sometimes the speaker) are removed from the war. At the same time, in tension with this insistence on accuracy and regularity, these texts also feature a first person narrator who frequently questions his own reliability—sometimes as a playful denial of readers' expectations, other times as a result of real frustration at the work that remembering requires or the concept of "true" remembrance. Isherwood's writing, then, unites two features that Woolf's war writing explored (with varying levels of emphasis at different points in her career): the careful charting of time's passing, and questioning of memory and identity. While Woolf draws on the rhetorical device of self-critique in *Three Guineas*, and examines memory's mechanisms to find faults with its creation in "A Sketch of the Past," Isherwood regularly brings up questions of memory's veracity throughout his autobiographical works that allude to World War II, and more openly challenges his own authority or even ability to remember and tell stories of war—and in doing so, challenges expectations of war writing and life writing as well.

In examining Isherwood's work and its narrative voice across time, I do not read these texts as a series of increasingly truthful reflections that respond to increasing recognition or tolerance of queer sexualities (a simplistic and inaccurate linear perspective). Nor do I aim to verify or disprove either the literature or the sciences of memory by setting them against the other. Rather, my goals are to understand what prompts people in Isherwood's position of privilege and persecution to question their own memories; to chart his theories about both the frustrations and creative processes of memory; and to understand

what symptoms and sources this type of imperfect memory may share with other narratives of war, particularly narratives marked by psychological trauma. Using this method to flesh out the experience of the "peripheral witness" and its position in the increasingly growing field of non-traditional, troubled narratives of war, we can recognize the range of ways that war can trouble the memories and minds of those who live through it, and locate sites of connection in their similarly-troubled narratives without erasing difference.

My analysis will primarily focus on two categories of passages from Isherwood's novelized autobiographies. The first of these is the self-reflexive introductions we are given of our narrator and to the character "Christopher;" these often appear at the start of a text or chapter, or periodically throughout it in passages as Isherwood leads us briefly away from a memory and toward the act and time of remembering or writing. The second type of passage is more "concrete" memories of the past, especially of Berlin or of receiving news about the city and its inhabitants from abroad. These categories are often intertwined, as many specific moments that our narrator tries to remember prompt him in turn to question the character Christopher's motivations for his actions or reactions, and to interrogate his own right or even ability to recall these memories.

I will also consider these finished texts alongside related material from the Isherwood Archives at the Huntington Library. The final published works are clearly inspired by the form and the contents of life writing, and read as a series of approaches to the same subject (pre- and mid-World War II Berlin), making them also seem like a perpetual work in progress. Some differences in early drafts of each of the texts examined here can illuminate Isherwood's perspective of himself as an author, and diaries that Isherwood kept as the published texts were written or (in a few lucky cases) as the events were lived can do the

same; and in a few cases, they help to contextualize his experience and perspective of World War I.

In an appendix that corresponds to this chapter, I will focus on a surprising piece of history uncovered in these archives: a scrapbook assembled by Christopher's mother, Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood, that documents the time his father, Frank Isherwood, spent as an officer in World War I before his death at the Battle of Ypres, Belgium in 1915. This assembled text is primarily composed of materials sent by Frank before his death: transcribed letters, and pasted postcards, photographs, and even illustrations of the sights of war. Surrounding these letters are details of the memorials and poems dedicated to fallen soldiers, newspaper clippings about Frank in particular, and letters of condolence Kathleen received. Writing in the shadow of this extensive archival project by Kathleen, and the archive of the life and death of his father as an officer in war—a conflict that Isherwood rarely mentions in the texts examined here, and an experience (as the son of an officer who died in combat) that he only directly addresses in the afterword to *Kathleen and Frank*—Isherwood's attitudes toward war, and to the role of documentation and remembrance, were potentially influenced by Kathleen's experience and her narrative presentation of Frank and the family. Ultimately, I will analyze Kathleen's work as a significant intervention in the genres of war writing and memorials in its own right, as she subtly critiques the military's modes of communication and remembrance, offering this assembled text from the sanctioned position of the war widow but refusing to do so without critiquing what she saw.

In Isherwood's texts examined here, we can find three approaches to studying the effects of war on the memory and identity of those on its margins. In the first—*Goodbye to Berlin* (1939)—a pair of comparisons between remembering and photography seem to distill

these processes into mechanical and impersonal mechanisms, but they ultimately reveal the limitations and creativity inherent in both forms of representation. In the second—*Down There on a Visit* (1962)—a "crowd" of characters and versions of Christopher Isherwood jostle against each other to show how many "selves" a writer or witness on war's edge can call upon to remember the past, and how the anxieties and expectations of those selves may influence the story they tell today. In the third—*Christopher and His Kind* (1976)—a range of firsthand sources, works published by Isherwood and newly added memories are weaved together, and yet the narrating Isherwood primarily draws attention to gaps in this account. Each of these techniques, tied together by a narrator/author who questions himself and his own story, illuminates the fraught experience of narrating from the edge of war by drawing attention to the processes and gaps of memory rather than ignoring them or even working against them.

"I am a Camera:" *Goodbye to Berlin* and Creating the Self in Memory's Mechanisms

Isherwood's most famous meta-narrative remark—"I am a camera"—appears on the opening page of *Goodbye to Berlin*.[38] Famous for this invocation and critique of the medium of photography, this work invokes and critiques genres of life writing as well. It is comprised of a series of long chapters that each focus on a particular person or set of people whom our narrator meets; and, drawing on the form of diaries and journalism, all but one of these chapters begin with a note about the month and year in which the story's events take place (either as a sub-title to the chapter or within the first lines). This marking of time invites us to

[38] In "Boy Meets Camera," Glyn Salton-Cox cites David Thomas' comment that "the phrase is 'almost the obligatory starting point for discussions of Christopher Isherwood's fiction.'" We can see Thomas' comment in 1972 still holds true, as this line's ubiquity is addressed by critics including Lara Feigel, Tamás Tukacs, and Michael North,.

compare his perspective of historical events with others' views of the same events, and to consider how our the author may make sense of his past self from the view of the present (even though this text is narrated from the perspective of Christopher in Berlin, rather than that of Isherwood long after he has left).[39] Even though this narrator calls his own authority into question less often and less directly than future narrating Isherwoods will, he makes two meta-narrative remarks that highlight the constructed and imperfect nature of memory's processes—imperfections which inevitably affect this text's portrait of a disappearing world.

The first and last story of this volume are both titled "A Berlin Diary;" one bears the subtitle "Autumn 1930" and the other "Winter 1932-33." In these chapters we find a pair of bookending metaphors that study the acts of observing, writing, and remembering, addressing the role therein of subjectivity and multiple selves. In the first page, Isherwood's narrating character Christopher opens this "diary" with a detailed description of a "deep solemn massive street" below his window. Christopher's first remarks seemingly remove him from his own story and the world he describes, using a mechanical metaphor for the act of perception as he gazes out of his window in a rented room:

> I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair.
>
> Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed. (207)

In this passage, Christopher plunges his readers into the act of perceiving, rather than leading us through the torturous view of recalling and relating to the past that Isherwood's narrators in subsequent texts pull us into time and time again. This gaze at and through the camera is

[39] Mira Spiro notes that one chapter, "On Reugen Island," is narrated in the "diary-like" first-person present tense, "lend[ing] a jarring immediacy to the observations that are revealed therein" (213).

still not an immediate window to the past, though; Christopher has an eye to the future process of unearthing this memory, of "develop[ing]," "print[ing]," and "fix[ing]" it after the fact. This immediate tug from observing the act of perception to imagining the act of recollection makes this passage fertile ground for studying how remembering works and how we see our own acts of remembrance. The narrator Christopher may seek to observe and remember this scene in detail because he aims to be an author in the future, or because he anticipates that his life on this street will be meaningful to his sense of self; or the implied author Isherwood may strive to preserve his memories of a city and people that he knows have already been attacked by Nazi Party when he writes in the late 1930s. But whether this attention to memory and detail occurs to Christopher the character in the moment, or is a product of Isherwood the author revisiting these memories when war is underway, or both, he is motivated to preserve memories and to reveal its mechanisms.

In order to understand what this passage reveals about memory in the face of war, we must consider both the mechanisms of remembrance that it describes, and the layers of selfhood that contribute to this act. The passive voice of the final sentence—"Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed"—does not name a subject who will later remember the moment that Christopher "records" from his window. Thus our first impression of memory is as a product of a series of chemical reactions and mechanical actions, carried out by a system as automatic and trustworthy as the "device" that Woolf imagines we could use to "listen to the past" after "fit[ting] a plug into the wall" in "A Sketch of the Past" (67).[40] Decades later, in *Christopher and His Kind*, Isherwood complains that

[40] This connection between the machine and the mind is also expressed in Walter Benjamin's theory of the optical unconscious, which Smith and Sliwinski claim "unseat[s] the fantasy of mastery that surrounds the desire to see and to know" (2).

this passage was often interpreted as evidence that he lacked feeling for the characters he portrayed: "[...] there would always be some critic who would quote it praising Mr. Isherwood for his sharp camera eye but blaming him for not daring to get out of his focal depth and become humanly involved with his sitters" (58). Indeed, by casting himself as the protagonist and narrator as a machine, "quite passive, not thinking," it is easy to see why readers might interpret this as an attempt at becoming an invisible, non-influential observer. However, the metaphor of camera and photography leaves multiple openings for the creativity of remembering, and for the narrator or author's investment in his subjects.

One outlet for creativity within this model of memory is the role of the photographer, who chooses which subjects to observe and how to frame them. In Susan Sontag's words, in photography, "to frame is to exclude" (46). The camera's physical limitations mean that any photograph requires the photographer to make decisions about a the contents, composition, and perspective of a particular shot before the shutter is even opened. While Mia Spiro reads the limits of photography as a flaw in the medium that "novelization" can counteract by "expos[ing]" "the tensions and interplay between private and public, sexual and political, and reality and representation" (212), we can also read Christopher's choice in subjects as a choice that include those who are often excluded, even as it draws attention to its own limitations. In *Goodbye to Berlin*, Isherwood chooses to frame the city's queer nightlife and the working class men and women who live and labor alongside it. In doing so, the novel preserves a part of the city that was already marginalized and under direct threat in the narrative present, and had been long subsumed under Nazi control by the time the work was

published in 1939.[41] And taken as a whole, we can see that Isherwood's narrative reflections on Germany and World War II do not use act as a corrective against gaps in memory and perception, so much as dwell on and draw attention to the existence of these gaps to understand their origins—whether these are traced to imperfections in memory, Isherwood's position on the outskirts of war, or a combination of these factors and others. Turning to the position of the reader, this line also implicitly asks the audience to acknowledge the choices they make when they choose to read one narrative of a city under threat rather than another.

While Christopher's work as the photographer is clear, the object-oriented language reveals that he feels as if he himself is the camera that captures the scenes outside his window. This strange juxtaposition of the subjectivity of an art form with the objectivity of a machine suggests that Christopher is intensely focused on recording the moment at hand in the narrative present, and it reflects what is likely an unrealistic expectation of what memory can retain. While this line imagines a machine-like self or state of mind for "Herr Issyvoo" of 1930, it also leaves room for the remembering Isherwood to point the camera at particular memories as the photographer. This metaphor is further complicated by the fact that some form of Isherwood, or his readers, must work as the developer as well. The multi-step process of developing, printing, and fixing a memory is as intricate as the process of transitioning from negative to printed photograph: What chemicals will be used during the development process, coloring the memory? Will this moment be spliced together with others, as was the case in the spliced-together photographs of WWI photographer Frank Hurley (Hüppauf 52)? And where and how will this memory be displayed, if it is displayed at

[41] Critics have already noted the choice to focus chapters on different members of "the lost." Tamás Tukacs finds most chapters "may be treated as monuments erected to the characters of the sections in between: Sally and Clive, Otto and Peter, and Bernhard Landauer. Each chapter's end confirms the final loss of the narrator's friends" (277).

all? Even when one strives for accuracy, this photographic metaphor implies, one must tackle multiple steps to preserve and recall the past, and involve multiple versions of oneself in the process. And because all of these steps cannot be completed at once, two dreams are shattered here: both the dream of memory as an effortless transition to the past, and the dream of memory as a tool to unlock a coherent sense of self.

Christopher, of course, is not alone in comparing remembrance to photography, or in exposing the complexity that this metaphor belies. Daniel Schacter uses the metaphor of photography to differentiate two theories of how memory works: a process of retrieving, like digging up a photograph from an album, or (what Schacter finds to be the more accurate comparison) a creative process of assembling a memory based on scraps of information gleaned at different points of time and place. In *Searching for Memory*, Schacter states, "it is now clear that we do not store judgment-free snapshots of our past experiences" devoid of emotion; nor are memory's components "bits of data that we coldly store and retrieve" (6). Instead, he theorizes, each memory is built not only in relation to, but also directly from, other memories that have preceded it. Each time we remember a specific moment from our lives, we draw on multiple pasts: the actual moment that we are trying to recall, but also related memories from that time or similar circumstances, as well the present context which motivates us to recall that memory. This means that each memory is assembled at least twice: once in the moment of perception before it has even been stored, and again, when it is re-assembled as we are motivated to remember it. This multi-layered construction makes it unlikely, perhaps impossible, to isolate a single memory, even though some can seem quite vivid and whole. But we rarely see the seams of this multilayered process unless we are interrogating our own memory, or feel that others are interrogating it. In the hidden

complexity of the "camera" passage, Isherwood opens *Goodbye to Berlin* with a fitting representation of the layered resources, materials, and processes that shape each memory and create our complex sense of self.

The vivacity of Christopher's picture of the lonely street below, and Isherwood's invocation of the camera, both prompt comparison between this passage and the phenomenon of "flashbulb memory" as theorized by Schacter (and discussed in the context of Woolf's *The Years* in the previous chapter). After all, the term "flashbulb" is itself a reference to the light of a camera. Christopher's view of the adjacent apartments and the street below seems like an everyday moment, neither historical nor life changing. But just like Eleanor Partiger's unremarkable memories of watching her nephew play as a child take on a new aspect after he is sent to war in *The Years*, Christopher's gaze from the window and reflection on loneliness could take on the emotional resonance needed to make a memory feel clear and significant, when he write about it knowing that war had been declared, and he has lost contact with his lover Heinz and the queer scene of Berlin. In the final novel examined in this project, Isherwood revisits this moment and this line, revealing a humorous connection between this whistling in the street and his romantic life in Berlin's queer scene (*Christopher and His Kind* 58); and though he chastises his past self for making this moment seem dour and dramatic, this revelation makes it even more likely that this scene is both historically and personally significant to register in a way similar to both flashback and flashbulb memory.

While the opening scene of everyday life in Berlin is only implicitly related to the impending war and Nazi control, it is bookended by another scene at the novel's end that overtly addresses the nation's politics and the speaker's own. As Christopher prepares to leave Germany in "A Berlin Diary: 1932-33," he compares the changing political leaning of

German citizens like his landlady to "[animals that] change [their] coat[s] for the winter," stating that "After all, whatever government is in power, they are doomed to live in this town" (409). Here, he at once addresses his own ability to leave Berlin behind, and the inability of German citizens to legally do the same. There is a cynical tone to this comparison between the mindset of Berliners and the bodies of animals, but also an acknowledgment that even his somewhat forced departure grants him the ability to avoid this quandary.

Rather than completely condemning their shifting political views, identities, and memories (as he notes that his landlady Frl. Schroeder would "deny it hotly […] and in perfectly good faith" if anyone reminded her that she had voted for the communist party the year before), he notices an even more striking discord within himself:

> I catch sight of my face in the mirror of a shop, and am horrified to see that I am smiling. You can't help smiling, in such beautiful weather. The trams are going up and down the Kleiststrasse, just as usual. They, and the people on the pavement, and the tea-cosy dome of the Nollendorfplatz station have an air of curious familiarity, of striking resemblance to something one remembers as normal and pleasant in the past—like a very good photograph. (409-410)

With the aid of a shop window, the camera/photographer Christopher turns on himself, and the developer Isherwood gazes at his face alongside us. Christopher is separated from the Germans around him because he has the freedom to leave the country, and yet connected to them because he too takes pleasure in the beautiful weather and familiar bustle. When Christopher inspects himself and the world around him in that moment, calling it "a very good photograph," it seems hollow or two-dimensional: bland, pleasant, and above all detached from the upheaval and violence to which the rising Third Reich subjected the

nation's most vulnerable inhabitants. This hollowness makes the scene, and Christopher's memory of it, appear to be an inadequate reflection of reality, one that excludes the suffering of others. But through its obvious shortcomings and hauntings, this imperfect memory is a perfect representation of one of Isherwood's recurring subjects in this work and others: the insidious ways in which the threats of fascism and violence can come to seem banal. This comparison between memory and photography reveals memory's weakness as a literal and complete record of the past, but strengthens its role as an object whose composition and imperfections we can contemplate in order to understand the past. This is an elemental example of the knowledge that can be gained through the self questioning mindset of the peripheral witness: by stopping along the way to interrogate what he knows and how he knows it, Christopher reveals more about the social dynamics and mental states that the war would inflict than a "straightforward" account of pre-war Germany could provide.

This passage also challenges the notion that Christopher could have accurately portrayed himself, even if he had tried to account for his own perspective. The degree of discontinuity and detachment within Christopher at this very moment is a focused version of the jarring contradictions that may be found in the minds of the people around him. It is difficult to tell whether Christopher was struck by the incongruity of his smile at the time the memory was formed, or whether the mirror is a literary device that Isherwood the author uses years later to view the character Christopher—perhaps in the moment it did not strike Christopher as especially disturbing either. What is clear, though, is that a photograph could not fully contain either global history or personal experience. Even in its assembled state, it would naturally leave out some aspects of life in politically unstable Germany. This should not be read as a condemnation of one genre over another, of course: Christopher has cast

himself and his story as photographic from the start. What this self-conscious form of narrative might allow, though, is a greater realization of the limits of the frame.

After this passage, the chapter's final line appears: "No. Even now I can't altogether believe that any of this has really happened…" (410, ellipsis in original). It is not clear whether Christopher is casting pre-war Berlin as "unbelievable," or whether this final sentence reflects Isherwood's perspective as he writes while war begins. This sentence's proximity to the comparison between the present and a hauntingly pleasant photograph suggests the former, while its place at the end of the book suggests the latter. In either case, even this novel that begins with the metaphor of photographic accuracy ends in self-doubt. Throughout Isherwood's work, this self-doubt will be mentioned more frequently, always indicating multiple registers of meaning: what Isherwood questions about his own memory and authority, but also the social and psychological obstacles that prompt this self-doubt.

Goodbye to Berlin's use of the episodic diary form, coupled with the metanarrative passages examined here, shows that Isherwood turns to fragmentation as a central device even within this set of photography references that seem like a potentially satisfying frame. We are primed by this fragmentation, and the uncertainty that accompanies it, to look for absences or inaccuracies in his later texts about this same period—and each of the narrating Christophers that follow will oblige us.

"That Christopher is Dead:" *Down There on a Visit* and the Crowded, Skeptical Self

In Isherwood's second book to touch on his life in Germany, published twenty three years after *Goodbye to Berlin*, he is much more explicit about the temporal and physical distance between the character (referred to here as "Christopher") and the author, this time

given voice by the narrator who revisits these memories years later (referred to here as "Isherwood). Isherwood's comments that open and close each chapter, and even some that appear within the narrative, are overtly engaged in the work that Woolf imagines the autobiography writer must do "to make I now, I then, come out in contrast," and to avoid "leav[ing] out the person to whom things happened" ("A Sketch of the Past" 75, 67). Isherwood continually reminds us of the factors that separate his past from his present self, and he is more explicit about Christopher's perspective and experiences in the moment; but despite this added attention to Christopher and his experience, Isherwood is alienated from Christopher. With this combination of affinity and distance, Isherwood critiques Christopher's character, his motivations and methods for keeping a diary, and the memories with which he is left.

This self-skepticism may strike readers as a key to a more "truthful" picture of Isherwood's life in the interwar years than that provided by the comparatively author-evacuated narrative of *Goodbye to Berlin*; this volume leaves himself in more as a past character and present narrator, often critiquing his younger self. Despite this shift, the narrator of *Down There On A Visit* still is not focused on recuperating or unearthing lost facts. Instead, this text focuses on representing experiences of losing, or of growing more distant from oneself over time. Because *Down There on a Visit* jumps from one period of his life to another (across years, not months), Isherwood forces us to appraise his past selves along with him, to gather knowledge about him with minimal guidance from an unstable narrative, and to orient ourselves alongside him to explore each historical period with a "new" Christopher as our guide. This view of his past self—as a slightly embarrassing curiosity—will allow Isherwood to reflect more overtly on Christopher's relationship to

Germany, the rise of Hitler, and the approach of World War II. Christopher's approach to these situations, and Isherwood's policies in re-telling them, asks how and why he remembers or forgets now, or witnessed or missed then, what he records here. This self-scrutiny reveals that even decades after a war has ended, many who feel compelled to look back on seemingly-indescribable events like World War II will also feel compelled to interrogate, revise, or question their right and ability to narrate this moment in history; and the crowd of past selves that can seem to destabilize this search for truth or undermine one's credibility may be the most accurate representation the effects of World War II on those who are affected by war from a distance.

Even with its inward focus, readers looking for a "complete" story of World War II may find this novel's timeline more satisfying than its predecessor. *Goodbye to Berlin* was written and published as Hitler gained full control of Germany and World War II loomed, so it does not depict the war years. *Down There on a Visit*, in contrast, spans twelve years—1928 to 1940—and maintains an eye on Germany and the developing war even as Christopher spends most of the novel far away from it. In these twelve years, Isherwood recounts his first trip to Germany in 1928, his life on a Greek island that functioned as a queer haven, his time in England as war approached, and his life in the United States after the war arrived. It is clear from this series of locations, and from the title, that place is as important as time in making sense of the distance Isherwood feels between past and present self. Even the title *Down There on a Visit* reinforces an image of Christopher the character as wandering and disconnected, with a frivolity that suggests he is more like a tourist, someone who remains outside of the lives he recounts, than he is like a refugee—and readers today would likely consider him entitled to claim this role, though he contests this directly. The

book's ironically blasé title comes from a confrontation with Christopher's friend Paul, who scoffs when Christopher offers to try opium in order to understand Paul's addiction. The novel thus opens and ends with an expression of concern that both Christopher the character and Isherwood the author are as much tourists of others' experiences and emotions as they are of scenery, or are using the lives of others to reconstruct and tell their own.

Each of the four chapters is centered on a character that is not Christopher, and is titled after these characters rather than the location or the year of the chapter's events (as seen in Isherwood's other novels). Originally conceived as a road trip through Mexico that would pluck this work's main characters—Mr. Lancaster, Ambrose, Waldemar, and Paul—from Europe and the United States, this physical and temporal continuity was eventually abandoned in favor of a form of continuity via Isherwood's own memory ("The Autobiography of My Books, 1963-1965" 213). In one of his writing notebooks, an entry on March 17, 1959 sets aside the road trip idea in favor of "three quite unrelated character-studies, which nevertheless <u>are</u> related, through the character of the narrator, to each other" (Writing notebook, 1947-1962, 114-115). This assertion of connectivity is also made at the start of the final published edition of *Down There on a Visit*: "[…] through me, all these people are involved with each other, however much they might have hated to think so. And so they are all going to have to share the insult of each other's presence in this book" (11). Opening with this imperfect social network that lives on in Isherwood's mind establishes an amusing yet hopeful tone. Between an "uncle" from the previous generation, the passive leader of a group of queer outcasts, a young German man separated from his home country, and a southern sex worker to the wealthy, there is distance, even dislike; but there is some connection—whether they know it or not, and whether they like it or not—through

Isherwood who remembers them. This eclectic group shows crowds in a different light than the anonymous, difference-flattening Aryan crowd that the Third Reich attempted to foster in Germany and across Europe, and against which critics like Mia Spiro have argued Isherwood and other authors respond. Though Spiro's analysis is focused on portrayals of the crowd in *Goodbye to Berlin*, her contrast between the writing of "anti-Nazi" authors and the Nazis' offer to subsume the (Aryan) individual into the crowd, freeing them from consciousness, responsibility, and control, resonates in this passage as well (25-26). The people that Christopher meets over the course of the novel require greater attention and more nuance than a simplified narrative could provide.

Against the background of this connectivity between strangers, Isherwood's separate, often-conflicting selves indicate a similar crowd dynamic within the self. Narrating the first chapter, "Mr. Lancaster," over thirty years after the narrative's events (which begin in 1928 and end in 1959), Isherwood the narrator begins with a warning that we will not be granted complete accuracy of his memory, or complete continuity between the character Christopher and the remembering/narrating Isherwood:

> And now before I slip back into the convention of calling this young man "I," let me consider him as a separate being, a stranger almost, setting out on this adventure in a taxi to the docks. For, of course, he *is* almost a stranger to me. I have revised his opinions, changed his accent and mannerisms, unlearned or exaggerated his prejudices and habits. We still share the same skeleton, but its outer covering has altered so much that I doubt if he would recognize me on the street. We have in common the label of our name, and a continuity of consciousness; there has been no break in the sequence of daily statements that I am I. (13-14).

There are two registers of "revis[ing]" that Isherwood may refer to here. As a writer and rememberer, Isherwood may have changed some of what his readers will see on the page, by design as he wrote but also possibly unconsciously as he remembers the past, as memory naturally suffers the revision of distortion as well as the erasure of forgetting (Schacter *Memory Distortion* 1). This warping and forgetting, of course, should not lead us to discount Isherwood's memory, as scholars from history and cognitive psychology alike argue that veracity of memory for its own sake is neither a realistic or useful goal for a tool of consciousness that should adjust over time to account for new experiences (Cohen 385), should be drawn on to examine their aftermath (LaCapra 86), and must be examined with the subjectivity of the listener in mind as well (Davoine and Gaudillière 75). On the other hand, as an autobiographical author who is more aware than most that his identity is under construction, Isherwood may mean that he has "revised" himself as a person between 1928 and the present in which he narrates (from the late 1950s to early 1960s). These registers work together here to remind readers that as we form and recall memories, we create and construct ourselves, and our sense of self, over time. As Evelyne Ender puts it, "In imagining, constructing, scripting our memories, we give a shape and an identity to an existence that otherwise would be no more than a welter of disorganized physiological and perceptual events" (3). But this construction is not necessarily a steady or fluid process either. Isherwood's note that "there has been no break in the sequence of daily statements that I am I" comes up against this novel's notably disjointed organization, revealing how tenuous our thread of self-awareness must seem, formed as it is from nothing but statements to ourselves—especially when it is put up to the scrutiny that inevitably occurs when writing and presenting a memoir spanning 30 years and a World War. As we continue reading *Down*

There on a Visit, Isherwood the narrator frequently needs to step back to remember or reconsider who he is as he sets off on describing each new stage of his life—not an impossible task, but one that the narrative performs overtly to draw attention to the work and reassessment that self-construction requires.

This passage (the longest, but by no means the only meditation on "Christopher") continues with a new metaphor for the relationship between past and present self, with new implications about our means and ability of accessing them:

> The Christopher who sat in that taxi is, practically speaking, dead: he only remains reflected in the fading memories of those of us who knew him. I can't revitalize him now. I can only reconstruct him from his remembered acts and words and from the writings he has left us. He embarrasses me often, and so I'm tempted to sneer at him; but I will try not to. […] In a sense he is my father, and in another sense my son. (14)

The structure of dual kinship between Christopher and Isherwood connects both iterations of himself across a generational gap. When Isherwood declares that "the Christopher" of 1928 is now dead, the separation of the generational gap becomes even starker. Still, as Isherwood feels tempted to "sneer" at Christopher, and occupies the role of father and son at once, there is a suggestion of a more fraught and yet deeper connection between Christopher and Isherwood than there was between Christopher the camera and Isherwood the photographer/developer. Like the characters that are begrudgingly united in Isherwood's memory, the different versions of Christopher seem more present because of their discomfort in each other's presence. From here, Isherwood widens the family tree of father and son to include all of "those of us who knew him." In doing so, he extends Christopher, his memory, and his selfhood beyond the individual, even beyond the multilayered "selves" presented in

this narrative form. Just as Mr. Lancaster and Paul keep tense company in Isherwood's mind, a crowd of Christophers lives in this menagerie of memories made by the narrating Isherwood and by others who remember him too. Isherwood also claims that memory draws on a deeper well of resources, including stories he wrote and those he remembers: his self-reflective writing is as much of a window to himself in the past as his own memory (although when he begins excerpting his own diaries, he will find them full of meaningful gaps). Despite this series of caveats, Isherwood continues the narrative, and continues to question its accuracy in brief asides. Beginning with this self-critique does not, then, mean that the story must be abandoned; it only troubles the reader's desire for an "accurate" window into the past, unmediated, no assembly required.

The novel does not fully deny the stakes of imperfection in a narrative like this. While "killing off" Christopher the character seems playfully detached, in the context of a story that introduces real loss and the threat of loss (from the loss of the queer scene in Berlin to the war that reclaimed German citizens who had fled), it takes on a darker tone. Moreover, it carries over harsh critiques of Isherwood broached by others. Isherwood was seen as betraying at once Germany and England through his move to the United States and "away" from the anti-fascist struggle, even though Christopher's life would have been threatened by the Nazi regime if he had stayed in Germany or made his sexuality public in either nation. Isherwood may appear to exaggerate the distance between past and present self by saying "that Christopher is dead" (to express humor, stave off shame, or highlight time's passing), but this method of framing memories parallels that found in psychoanalysis and cognitive science as they are applied to literature and autobiography. In her analysis of Freud's essay on transference, Evelyne Ender concludes that "the scenes of the past that rememberers

create do more than merely mark an aesthetic experience, for their meaning is ultimately existential: they are life-affirming responses to our mortal condition" (180). By speaking of "that Christopher" as dead, and then retrieving key memories from the past, Isherwood's narrative introduces a method of recalling the past and the people it has claimed, even as he states that they are lost.[42] This narrative aside introduces the idea that we can resurrect others and ourselves through stories and memories that allow us to re-read the past. And rather than being a poor substitute for "real" memory, this imperfect resurrection via narrative operates through a method that echoes the one that we use to reconstruct ourselves each time we remember our own lives.

While introducing different "Christophers" allows Isherwood to address overarching concerns about memory and selfhood, the comments that Isherwood makes about and within specific diaries bring up more precise concerns about what motivates life writing and what influence it holds. The novel is not strictly composed in diary form, but it does state each chapter's location in time and place at the start. Here, I will focus on two chapters— "Ambrose" and "Waldemar"— that use the form and contents of Isherwood's own diary to represent differing relationships that Christopher holds with time as World War II grows from a latent threat to a daily reality. Just as the "crowd" of characters lose their dimension and meaning if they are made to fit into a fabricated narrative, Christopher's varying experiences on the edge of war are easier to notice and to study as Isherwood presents them though two differing uses of the diary form.

[42] Isherwood's description of multiple selves, and his declaration that "that Christopher is dead," presents a similar theory of self to that found in Leigh Gilmore's definition of the autobiography: an assembly of theories about oneself and about relationships to others (12).

In both chapters, Isherwood expresses skepticism at his own motives as a diarist. In "Ambrose," these diary entries make up half of the chapter; Isherwood notes in a bracketed aside that "[the entries have no dates]," and indeed near the end of the diary he loses track of how much time has passed between writing an entry and living the events it describes. His diary does not begin directionless though. Christopher hints that writing it is a self-serving act, a means of lending a sense of control to himself and of productivity to others. The chapter's titular character Ambrose assigns Christopher the work of novel-writing, but Christopher explains in a parenthetical aside that he is expected to do this "(Rather as the hens are supposed to lay eggs; not so much for consumption as to create a general atmosphere of productiveness") (92). Christopher ends up primarily writing these undated, often lengthy diary entries instead, but what he writes hardly seems to matter to Ambrose or to himself; the act of writing is sufficient to create a sense of control. In his diary, quoted in *Christopher and His Kind*, he will level a more explicit critique at his motivations for writing in the diary, calling it "this discreet literary journal, with one eye on the landscape and the other on the Hogarth Press" (141). But even within these pages, Isherwood feels compelled to analyze his use of the diary genre, then and now.

In the 1938 chapter "Waldemar," which takes place during the year of crisis before World War II was declared, Isherwood quotes Christopher's diary at length (though these entries cannot be compared to Isherwood's personal diaries, as the *Summer in Greece* journal ends shortly after he arrives in England). Christopher juxtaposes his personal records with careful notes of the date and international news. These entries do not mention the chapter's titular character Waldemar, or his companion Dorothy, who are instead portrayed through the chapter's lapses into traditional narrative. Isherwood himself offers us an explanation of this

absence within the chapter: “My diary writing was, at the time, exclusively about the crisis—which meant the crisis in relation to me. Dorothy and Waldemar just didn’t fit into it; their crisis was their own” (162). Of course, as Waldemar is largely based off of Isherwood’s lover Heinz, Christopher shared in the crisis as much as the seemingly fictional lover Dorothy; and the failed romantic weekends and anxiety-charged sexual encounters that Christopher mentions allude to this. In this absence, we see there are some limits to what Isherwood will record—or feel that he can record—about the war in this text. Nevertheless, Isherwood takes precautions to avoid seeming completely removed from his subjects, as a character and as an author. He interrupts his diary with extended sections about Waldemar and Dorothy’s relationship, and follows up the statement that “their crisis was their own” by saying, “But all the same, I was interested in them, deeply—I must have been, or I shouldn’t be able to remember these details now” (163). He acknowledges that memory is generally faulty, yet he asserts his ability to remember what happened to or with these friends despite the passing of time and lack of recording—and connects the strength of his memories to his emotional investment in the subject.

Of course, the diary is not the only form of daily recording and crisis-confrontation that occupies Isherwood’s attention. Christopher’s diary of 1938-1939 is stacked up against, and in constant contact with, representations of current events in print and film news. He notes that a trip to the movies no longer disrupts his sense of place and time, and yet disapprovingly notices that “The newsreel contained no scenes whatsoever of Hitler or the Nazis. Was this deliberate policy? Anyhow, it seemed fatally ostrich-like. I prefer to be

reminded of them, every instant" (171).[43] He also describes his "compulsive newspaper-buying" habit:

> I buy as many as twelve papers a day, barely glance at the stop-press bulletins and then throw them away. And this isn't just because I'm anxious to have the latest news. This is really an absurd act of superstition; I have a superstitious feeling that, if I buy *all* the editions, if I keep my eye on the crisis every moment, then it won't get worse. Actually, if it goes on much longer, I may end up sitting all day over a ticker tape! And then the van from the asylum will arrive. (173)

The daily record of the newspaper becomes a talisman that will paradoxically keep worse news from arriving. Christopher himself acknowledges that this is a superstitious attempt to influence what he strongly believes to be a situation that is out of his control. Even as Christopher stays glued to the news, something that should ostensibly unite a nation by exposing them to a united story through the same sources, he feels himself an outsider, and moreover an outsider due to his fixation on daily updates; and in this reflection on himself, he turns to self-deprecating humor ("And then the van from the asylum will arrive"). Even if Christopher isn't the only one hanging onto every printed and broadcast word—Virginia Woolf, for instance, also filled multiple notebooks with "newspaper clippings of Hitler's speeches and Nazi policies" (Spiro 56) —in this moment, he is isolated not only by his nation, but among fellow British citizens. Whether the asylum van refers to the judgment of

[43] The films that Isherwood saw in theaters would have certainly been censored in this manner. Spiro quotes Jo Fox's study of *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany: World War II Cinema*, noting that in addition to official censorship, British audiences in the late 1930s "wanted messages of hope, resulting in 'the virtual exclusion of the suffering of the Jews from British cinema during World War II'" (*Anti-Nazi Modernism* 39). Of the newsreel, Spiro quotes Alice Yaeger Kaplan, who says the newsreel "distances and controls war, rendering it a safe fantasy, and ultimately, a real possibility" (30).

"the Others" (Isherwood's shorthand for the paternalistic older generation that demanded respectable behavior and moves of thought), or to the concern of friends and family, it represents a brief moment of possible connection between himself and those who were traumatized by combat. Christopher and the traumatized soldier both experience unusual relationships to time and anxiety about what they can control, brought about by a new type and scale of war. Although Isherwood's offhand comment does not directly broach this connection, Christopher's anticipation (like his hyper-attention to detail) is familiar to readers who have encountered Woolf's shell-shocked veteran Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, stopping in the midst of traffic in post-war London, Septimus feels "the world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" (14).

This chapter ("Waldemar") and its predecessor ("Ambrose") use the form of the diary to represent time standing still; but time stands still for different reasons in each location. Both islands, Britain and the remote Greek outpost, feature some reminders of war. In Greece, an archetypal, timeless or time-stretching setting and set of characters includes traces of fascism: the dynamic that forces the combative, Hitler-admiring Geoffrey to depend on Ambrose, the circumstances that led Ambrose to leave behind a potentially successful yet socially maligned life at Cambridge (implicitly due to harassment that he faced for his sexuality), and the ease with which Waldemar slips into racist rhetoric ("Waldemar made a big sentimental scene with me before he left. He begged me to come with them. I refused. Tears came into his eyes. 'We Aryans have to stand together,' he said" [127]). Christopher, at this point keeping up the form of the formless diary, concludes, "All this happened four, five, six days ago? I've lost track already. It might as well be six months;" and follows this remark with a series of fragmented entries (including "Saw today what this island is. Words

no good" [129]). Isherwood does not ascribe a particular purpose to his diary on the Greek island in "Ambrose" when he sets out to write it, but he does note at one point that he cannot write about anything other than the island while he is on it (97). Christopher may feel ageless as he floats in the sea near the beginning of their trip ("Even this body I'm floating in might as well be that of a teenage boy or a healthy old man—myself at seventeen or seventy; I would scarcely be aware of the difference" [97]); but it is not an agelessness that is divorced from the dynamics of power at work in Germany. Their isolation from political news (which surely hasn't fully left their minds) brings out elemental causes or echoes of fascism, and the diary form underscores that this fact is time-bendingly unspeakable. On the other hand, in Britain, Christopher is overly aware of time's passage. As he examines each day's events in minute detail, and records the date and time of political upheavals alongside dissatisfying personal connections, time marches on at what seems like an impossibly slow rate. The nation seems to be in limbo, as negotiations fail and Nazi Germany creeps forward during the "long 1939" when war will not be declared for another year.[44] In this sense, Christopher's faithful recording represents the trajectory of the late 1930s and the disrupted perception of time, just as Woolf's shift in narrative focus in "A Sketch of the Past" reveals changes in her memory and narrative project within the span of a year (from theories of memory to cross-sections of life in London in her youth).

We can also see the influence of the travel diary not just within these chapters that draw on Isherwood's diaries, but also when we view the text as a whole. Each chapter opens with an extended description of that chapter's temporal and physical location, and introduces a "new" Christopher and a new titular character as well. Comparing the opening paragraphs

[44] Steve Ellis coins this phrase in *British Writers and the Approach of World War II* (7).

of these four chapters will allow a study of Isherwood's memories at different points in life, but also a study of his attitudes toward himself then and now. Like most narratives in this peripheral witness genre, these introductory sections will set up expectations of accuracy (especially by critiquing Christopher) only to subvert them.

"Mr. Lancaster" begins a bit differently than the rest of the chapters, focusing first on how much time has passed between the events that Christopher lived through and the narrative present from which Isherwood writes. The "novel" opens with the anticipation-building statement, "Now, at last, I'm ready to talk about Mr. Lancaster," followed in the next paragraph with "In the spring of 1928, when I was twenty-three years old, Mr. Lancaster came to London on a business trip and wrote my mother a note suggesting he should call on us" (11). We hear some of Christopher's childish unreliability when he "grimly" suggests to a girl that, at the time of her cocktail party, he will be "Somewhere in the middle of the North Sea. On a tramp steamer" (13). He then notes this early tendency to exaggerate his travels for fear of not fitting the role of world-wise traveler—a fear that also led him, when speaking with acquaintances, to "[contrive] to suggest that this would merely be the first port of call on an immense and mysterious voyage" (13). Even when the stakes seem comparatively low, at age 23 in 1928, Christopher was aware of an expectation that he needed to live up to as a traveler, perhaps particularly as a traveling author; and at that time, going to Germany would not be enough of an adventure on its own. By the end of the novel, Isherwood will more than have fulfilled this expectation of distance traveled; and while his ability to travel will keep him physically from harm's way as Nazi Germany persecutes queer people, it will also keep him from feeling that he quite belongs anywhere. Nevertheless, this opening chapter sets up

expectations of traveling and travel stories that Isherwood will continue to point out he falls comically short of.

In "Ambrose," by contrast, Isherwood plunges Christopher and his readers into a new time and place. "Five years have gone by—this is May 1933—and here I am, starting out on another journey. I am on a train going south from Berlin toward the Czechoslovakian frontier. Opposite me sits Waldemar. / What am I doing here? Who is he?" (61). The dashes that set off the precise date ("May 1933") from the date as it relates to his life and story ("Five years") bring into tense juxtaposition the two levels of experience that Isherwood will grapple with for the remainder of the novel. While the opening of the previous chapter is more natural ("In the spring of 1928, when I was twenty-eight years old"), the narration here has become more terse and erratic. Like Eleanor Partiger's memory of World War I being declared in *The Years*, or Woolf's bracketed notes of the present year as she writes "Moments of Being" in 1940, Isherwood's memory of 1933 jumps from the personal register to the political, from the travels documented in this text to the increasing influence of the Nazis across Europe. This movement from the individual experience to the political framework or environment allows us to trace the significance of a single moment in multiple contexts, but it also leaves us with a sense of narrative fragmentation and instability. It is as if Isherwood has not yet made up his mind whether to tell a personal or historical story, or whether it is possible to weave the two together.

Immediately after this dutiful notation of time and place, Isherwood struggles with how to contextualize this scene. The pair of questions, "What am I doing here? Who is he?" are not just an anticipation-building tease to the reader. They seem like genuine questions to

himself as the curator of Christopher's story; and this sense of sincerity comes from the length and complexity of his response to his own question.

> I suppose I could answer "escaping from the Nazis." […] And I shall probably describe this journey as though it were an escape and dangerous, one day when I am far from here and among people who are ill-informed enough to be impressed. But, this morning, I am well aware that that kind of posing would be heartless and childish. Not only are we perfectly safe, but we are surrounded by those who aren't. For this frontier, which we two shall soon so easily cross, chaperoned by my British passport, has already become a prison wall. On this very train there must be at least a few people in danger of their lives, traveling with false papers and in fear of being caught and sent to a concentration camp or simply killed outright. (61-2)

Here Isherwood admits that he will become an unreliable narrator at cocktail parties, at least. He also shows us what is just off-camera in his novels: the perspectives of refugees who must use false papers and other tactics to escape Germany alive. Although Waldemar's passport luck will run out in the next chapter, Isherwood here frames himself and his companion in terms of what he believes they are not: true refugees of Nazi Germany.[45] Even Christopher, whose "quite unserious" motivation for leaving Germany is a trip to Ambrose's Greek island, is aware that, in this moment, he has more agency than those around him—and because of this, may not fit his audience's expectations of a story about leaving Germany in the 1930s. Isherwood does not frame this unreliability as the result of Christopher's limited perspective

[45] Already he can hear some readers (especially those aware of his queer identity) protest at this separation between himself and refugees: he acknowledges this, saying, "Oh yes, I could make out a sort of case for saying I'm escaping all the same. It's true that I probably would have been asked to leave, sooner or later, if I'd stayed on in Berlin," due to his association with journalists and Jewish friends, as well as the police who had "been around to question my landlady about me;" but he is reluctant to accept or ask for this label (62).

alone; he also partly blames the social demands of telling a good story (and more playfully, the temptation to get away with it).

When Isherwood frames Christopher's journey in relation to refugees with false papers, who he says are in "real danger" that he has not experienced, he reveals a tension between two forms of narrative (and theories about the role of each): the story of one's own memory, and the genre of autobiography. The first theory is that personal memory is a tool for self-definition. As Evelyne Ender puts it, "In imagining, constructing, scripting our memories, we give shape and an identity to an existence that otherwise would be no more than a welter of disorganized psychological and perceptual events" (3). We see Isherwood grapple with his memory in this scene, ("What am I doing here?" about himself, and "Who is he?" about Waldemar, who we have already met); and we expect to find answers to these questions as we read the chapter. The second belief is that, once written, autobiography can speak to and for people beyond the author. This is what Leigh Gilmore terms the "auto/biographical demand," "in which the demands of autobiography (to tell my story) and the demands of biography (to tell your story) coincide" (72). When we see Isherwood telling his story of the inter- and mid-war periods, readers familiar with his life today or with the queer scene the depicted in *Goodbye to Berlin* may expect to learn about that scene, and perhaps by extension the experience of those persecuted by the Nazis. The narrating "I" subject is crucial to both theories; so Isherwood's heavy use of this narrative device demands that we confront these expectations.

If memory is a mechanism for defining oneself, this passage is not a straightforward example of gaining self-understanding. Isherwood does not commit to a particular identity here, instead describing himself as not quite one thing, not quite another. This reluctance to

define himself could be read as erasure of his most pressing reason for leaving Berlin—not his association with journalists, Jewish friends, or even his nationality (all reasons he lists in this chapter), but rather his status as a queer man with connections to the queer community of Berlin. Rather than reading this as erasure, though, we could read this scene as a critique of two expectations buried in theories of memory and autobiography: that memories can or should be used to craft a coherent sense of self, and that the story will represent the experience of a particular group. This protest against what Gilmore calls the Enlightenment-era "I" (coherent and individual) and the auto/biographical demand does not erase, but in fact exposes, the challenges faced by the victims of fascism and intolerance. Indeed, Nazism and fascism operated by giving people identity-encompassing labels and then promptly persecuting a number of those groups practically to erasure. On the train from Germany, Christopher finds himself surrounded by people facing harsher persecution, or possessing fewer means of evading this persecution; but his description of his fellow passengers on the train leaving Germany does not speculate about what prompts those around him to flee (religious faith, race, sexuality, or political affiliation), in another act against this impulse to flatten others through labels.

"Waldemar" continues the pattern of the terse introduction, with a keener eye on the landscape of Christopher's destination, Great Britain: "On a boat this time. / Late in August 1938; a cross-channel steamer, just coming into Dover harbor" (139). From this vantage point, Christopher is struck by "How tiny it all seems!" and notes "their" stubbornness despite the land's diminutive size: "If you have any criticisms, they have one unanswerable answer: you can stay off our island" (139). Beginning with a single line about transportation ("On a boat this time") ties this chapter to the two that came before it, which followed

Christopher boarding a boat and riding a train. By now we should expect Christopher to be on the move, but his arrival in Britain also ostensibly marks an end to his travels. And just as he described the cliffs of Dover, he describes Christopher's physical appearance: "Do I seem defeated, downcast, dismal? Anxious—yes. Those crow's feet at the corners of my eyes, I got them from constant, anxious squinting ahead, like a sea captain in a fog […] But my eyes are bright, my face is still youthfully lean, and a stranger would be surprised to hear that I shall be thirty-four at the end of the month" (140). Dover's "old cheese cliffs" and Christopher's "crow's feet" are both scrutinized in light of the mannerisms and philosophies they reflect, stubbornness and anxiousness respectively. Even if Isherwood decides at the end of the previous chapter that "I didn't belong on [Ambrose's] island. / But now I knew that I didn't belong here, either. / Or anywhere" (135), he is familiar enough with his home country to offer an intimate critique of it. His crow's feet also take on an ironic humor in the context of his earlier eagerness at twenty-three to cast himself as a world-weary traveler to friends and fellow sailors in the first chapter, and pitting his aged face against the aged cliffs of Dover holds them both up to the reader's scrutiny. While other openings suggested that Christopher was unreliable due to gaps in his worldview or desire to tell a good story, this chapter introduces hyper-vigilance as a central characteristic of our primary character.

The final chapter "Paul" uses two devices frequently employed by this novel: the mirror to bring a past self to life, and the journal log form to set the scene. They lend this scene an effect of tension rather than resolution, a tension that clearly fits the political climate:

> Another look into a mirror—my own face dimly reflected through the fashionable twilight of a Beverly Hills restaurant, confronting three people on a banquette with

> their backs to the glass. This is the autumn of 1940. We are just getting ready to start lunch. Six thousand miles away is the war. One step outside is the flawless blue sky and the California sun, which will hardly lose its warmth till Christmas. (191)

Shuttling between California and "the war," we cannot help but notice that Christopher is not arriving into a port or crossing a border via train; his travels seem to have come to an end. Still, his mind is almost equally preoccupied with the war, and certainly still fatigued by it. Dwelling for a moment on the reflection of Christopher's face, Isherwood notes, "I don't look happy, and indeed I am not. I am dully wretched because of the war, about which I can seldom stop thinking for more than five minutes at a time" (191). At this moment, Isherwood seems to fear that we will pity Christopher too much, so he notes a more pressing concern of Christopher's: "Also, I am sulking because I don't want to have lunch with any of these people; I have been pressured into it by Ronny" (191). Global war and an irritating social obligation are put into awkward comparison, made more tongue-in-cheek by Isherwood's description of Christopher as childishly "sulking." These concerns do not negate each other; instead, they complicate the picture that we are given of the mindset of those on war's edge. The war does not leave Isherwood's mind entirely, and it must exist alongside concerns that he casts as more trivial.

Isherwood's movement between California and Europe might illustrate the obstacles that keep Isherwood from fulfilling Leigh Gilmore's "auto/biographical demand" of telling a personal story that will resonate with others. But it is even more likely that this dual perspective is the best way to represent Christopher's experience of the war as his attention is split between the two locations. This introduction also takes up the thread of apparently un-serious motives from "Ambrose" and childishness from "Mr. Lancaster," pitting his

weariness at social obligations alongside his fatigue at training an eye on developments in the war. It effectively brings to a close the project of defining different "selves" with vested interests in Germany, finding common threads that shifted over time but do not bring us to a wholly "reliable" narrator by the end.

In between these moments of narrative self-fashioning, the scenes that Isherwood remembers with clarity stand out in stark contrast. The images of Germany that Isherwood recalls are particularly marked by their imagistic quality—they give us moments that stand still ("like a very good photograph," in the words of *Goodbye to Berlin*), but they also intrude into the story, proving difficult to incorporate. As all but one chapter of *Down There on a Visit* takes place outside of Germany, it is significant that the two scenes where Christopher first sees, and finally leaves, his adopted homeland share this vivacity in his memory. The first of these moments occurs when Christopher glimpses Germany from the ship in 1928:

> In the middle of the night I woke, just as if somebody had roused me. Kneeling on my bunk, I peered through the porthole. And there were the first lights of Germany shining across the black water, blue and green and red. (20)

The second moment comes as he leaves Germany at the beginning of the "Ambrose" chapter in 1933, after he has reflected on his own position ("What am I doing here? Who is he?"). His lengthy and torturous self-reflection ends with this seemingly simplistic picture:

> We are traveling along the valley of the Elbe. High above, on the apparently inaccessible face of a cliff overlooking the river, a hammer and sickle have been hugely daubed in red paint.
>
> "Man," says Waldemar, turning to me with a gleeful smile, "The Nazis will have their work cut out scrubbing *that* off!"

This is my last memory of Germany. (70)

Both images are marked by a lack of human life, even sparser than the side street from which Mrs. Crosby first hears the celebratory guns marking the Armistice in Woolf's *The Years*. Although both scenes bear signs of the city (in the lights across the river) and political turmoil of the people in it (in the Communist symbol on the cliff), they are unpopulated scenes. Because Christopher does not see the people who have created or will remove this painted symbol, we are also reminded of what Christopher has not seen or "fully" participated in (according to his detractors): the struggle against fascism and Nazism. Exacerbating the loneliness of these depopulated scenes, Christopher is further separated from both settings because he observes them while he is on mass transit (a ship and a train) and because a body of water lies between both (the ocean and a river). The transit reminds us of Christopher's position as a traveler or tourist, entering and exiting both countries at will, observing both scenes briefly; and the water reminds us of his separation from Germany as a British and eventually an American citizen.

The bodies of water that flow between Christopher and Germany in these memories are not simply sources of separation—they also each moment lend a visually striking reflective quality.[46] The lights "blue and green and red" are described as "shining across the black water," and it is hard not to imagine the hammer and sickle reflecting into the Elbe too. This quality of reflection draws together two seemingly disparate sets of memories: those of Germany reflected in water, and those of Christopher himself reflected in a mirror. The mirror has already been used as a device for memory in *Goodbye to Berlin* in the form of the

[46] In *Dreaming by the Book*, Elaine Scarry finds that light (or radiant ignition) plays a central role in creating narrative vivacity (77). Though these bodies of water are not directly described, we can imagine the city lights and Communist symbol reflecting off of them both.

reflective shop window in which Christopher is "horrified to see that [he is] smiling" (409-410), and it gains even more importance in *Down There on a Visit*, perhaps becoming the equivalent of the camera in Isherwood's first text. In "Mr. Lancaster," Isherwood analyzes the mirror as a device for understanding and remembering oneself: he claims that, "Very very occasionally […] a mirror will seem to catch your image and hold it like a camera. Years later, you have only to think of that mirror in order to see yourself just as you appeared in it then. You can even recall the feelings you had as you were looking into it" (27). He admits that it is an imperfect device, or a reminder of consistency rather than change in oneself, when he notes that his reflection did not show any changes after he scored a heroic football goal even though this felt like a momentous achievement at the time. In the context of this novel's use of reflection, Isherwood uses it as an imperfect device in order to understand Germany as something that he is both a part of and outside of. Even if these visual memories do not capture a moment of significant historical or personal change, they carry with them a snapshot-like trace of Germany and his place in it as he looks for a change in both. This fragmented, marginal image of the past serves as a reminder of the central role that fragments play in memory; our memories are typically constructed from fragments like this, with their jagged edges only coming to light when that memory is exposed to an unusual degree of scrutiny.

In their sparse but clear imagery and their social and political significance, both scenes harken back to the vivacity of flashbulb memories, which are preserved in strength but also potentially altered in content by frequent recollection by a group of people. The social aspect of flashbulb memory seems to clash with Christopher's isolation in these scenes, though. Even though Waldemar remarks on the hammer and sickle, Christopher does

not record his own participation in the exchange; and this scene seems even lonelier once we learn that Waldemar is later forced to return to Germany. Even if Isherwood frequently revisited both of these scenes through memory or conversation—and there is little indication that this is the case, separated as even the second one is from the embellished story of his "escape and dangerous" that Christopher imagines he will later add—they do not bear the signs of memories that have been formed and reformed under a social context. If anything, their quiet, individual nature suggests that Christopher and Isherwood have rehearsed the memory, a kind of "social" creation of memory that comes from internal reminiscence. These memories also differ significantly from flashbacks, another phenomenon of memory marked by vivacity.[47] Christopher's dual memories of Germany appear suddenly in the backward-looking narrative, so they are narratively disruptive in one sense; but they do not seem to interfere with his daily life. While these two memories of Germany share striking similarities in their vivacity, reflective qualities, and isolation, they do not quite fall under two major categories of memory affected by historical trauma—there is a common thread between both, but their differences are brought out by this comparison.

The novel's most laborious act of remembrance appears in the final chapter "Paul." This is paradoxical in two senses: its events have occurred most recently (beginning in 1940 and ending in 1952), and it is the longest chapter, making this one of the longest sustained relationships between Christopher and any of his other crowd of characters (with the exception of Waldemar, who appears in all four chapters). One might then assume that Paul

[47] David J. Morris outlines the history of this term for what might be more generally called "involuntary intrusive images," finding that while the term "flashback" originates in cinema, the experience of suddenly seeing or experiencing something from the past as if it were there is found in accounts of trauma across time, though described differently. For example, veterans of the United States Civil War describe seeing dead comrades as ghosts (61).

will be easiest to remember, but as Woolf notices as she attempts to remember her own mother, it is often most difficult to define or depict those who are closest to us ("Moments of Being" 81). If ideal memory is seen as a snapshot that is accurate and unchanging, this memory will fall short; the amount that Isherwood knows about and feels for Paul actually clouds his ability to resurrect the "first" Paul he met, and he catalogues this process in an extended parenthetical aside:

> (At this point, I'm trying to remember, as I reshuffle the impressions of all those years, just how Paul struck me that day of our first meeting. I had heard in advance, from at least three people, of his 'beauty,' and so I was predisposed to be disappointed in it. […]
>
> When I first set eyes on Paul, as he entered the restaurant, I remember I noticed his strangely erect walk; he seemed almost paralytic with tension. He was always slim, but then he looked boyishly skinny; and he was dressed like a boy in his teens, with an exaggerated air of innocence which he seemed to be daring us to challenge. […]
>
> I am watching him now, across the table. So this, I say to myself, is the 'fabulous'—how I loathe the way Americans use that word!—Paul […]. (193-4)

We see both the difficulty of remembering what happened in one moment, and the range of things that count toward our memory or first impression of someone. Isherwood's memories are made up of Paul's appearance and mannerisms, but also on Paul's reputation as others conveyed it to him. Isherwood begins by explaining how Paul's reputation would have already affected his view of him. In doing so, he shows us both the laborious process of

constructing our impressions of someone else, and the impossibility of accessing an impression that is exclusively our own.

Isherwood himself explains why this memory would be hard to unearth, describing himself as "reshuffling the impressions of all of those years." Cognitive psychologists would argue that resurrecting a pure first impression of someone else is an impossible task, as no memory—not even one of a formative moment, like meeting someone who will become important to us—is created on its own. According to James McClelland, there are at least three levels of knowledge that go into each memory: traces of the event we are trying to remember, representations of other events (known as "trace synthesis") and background knowledge that we acquire over a lifetime (88). On top of this, according to Daniel Schacter, memories are also influenced by the moment in which they are recalled (*Memory Distortion* 24). Isherwood begins with Paul's reputation in parentheses, before detailing his cynical reaction to "fabulous" Paul; in both, we see the effect of social context on his memory.

While Paul may seem like a strange character to dwell on in the midst of the war, he shares Christopher's nomadism, and is driven from his job with the forest fire service for his perceived queerness—a reminder of the state-sponsored intolerance at work in the Allied powers as well, and another register implicit in Christopher's perception that he was not quite at home in any of his adoptive home countries. Paul, like many characters in Isherwood's novel (and like Isherwood himself), both assigns himself and has been assigned many labels by others. In showing us the effort of sifting through his memories for the "true" Paul, Isherwood shows us the insidiousness of others' labels, and the difficulty of creating a complete, chronological, unaltered narrative that preserves those who have been lost.

Despite this novel's presentation as a series of notes and ruminations recorded after international travel, the expectation of bearing witness to a tragic period of history hangs over all four chapters. Isherwood remembers some images and moments with striking clarity, and he struggles to understand others as he revisits them. To tackle these challenges to memory, and act against the homogenizing and discriminatory practices of Nazi Germany and his home country of Britain, Isherwood uses elements of the journal form to juxtapose unlikely groups of characters, as well as different versions of himself throughout his own life. His ambivalence as a narrator can perhaps best be summarized by his closing remarks about Mr. Lancaster, who dies by suicide after Christopher's visit in 1928:

> Mr. Lancaster's act impressed me a great deal. I strongly approved of suicide on principle, because I thought of it as an act of protest against society. I wanted to make a saga around Mr. Lancaster's protest. I wanted to turn him into a romantic figure. But I couldn't. I didn't know how. (56)

In *Down There on a Visit*, Isherwood has abandoned the project of romanticizing many things—including his own position as a traveler. Passages that describe Christopher crossing a border or returning to a country frequently mock expectations that his story will have the excitement of an adventure story, or the gravitas of a refugee's life writing. In Isherwood's first novel to describe the events of World War II as they unfolded, he works to keep readers from interpreting his own rootlessness as victimhood, or perhaps more accurately, to avoid having his victimhood cast in ways that would collapse his individuality. Memory embarrasses Isherwood more often than it fails him in this text, but it draws attention to conflicts between the multiplicity of Christophers that populate the novel, and the varied

approaches to witnessing, writing, and remembering that he contends with (from without and within) over the course of the text.

"As frank and factual as I can make it:" Documenting Forgetting in *Christopher and His Kind*

Christopher and His Kind (1976) initially reads much more like a straightforward memoir than its predecessors. Its sources and narrative voice appear to reject narrative intervention or artistic embellishment, favoring the practice of archival assemblage and narrative that sets the record straight. Many of the journal entries, letters, and other sources that Isherwood quotes are copied verbatim from the original documents, and Isherwood's already-published works are quoted at length in order to comment on the failings of the earlier narrating Isherwoods that we have met, diagnose the origins of these failings, and give corrective notes when possible. And yet, despite this extensive use of primary sources and critique of his previous authorial decisions, this Isherwood will also disrupt his audience's expectations of reliving the past, by regularly pointing out what he cannot remember and how his sources have come up short. The gaps in his sources and his memory, of course, tell their own story of war's effect on Isherwood and those around him, and the effect of judgments of others.

Isherwood opens *Christopher and his Kind* by warding off the potential perception of this work as a sequel to *Lions and Shadows* (published in 1938, nearly forty years before this one). The publisher Farrar, Straus, and Giroux lists both texts under "Autobiography;" however, Isherwood explicitly separates the two texts without using genre labels for

clarification. He warns us that we should not take the fact that this book picks up where the other left off as a sign that this one is a sequel:

> There is a book called *Lions and Shadows*, published in 1938, which describes Christopher Isherwood's life between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four. It is not truly autobiographical, however. The author conceals many important facts about himself. He overdramatizes many episodes and gives his characters fictitious names. In a foreword, he suggests that *Lions and Shadows* should be read as if it were a novel.
>
> The book I am now going to write will be as frank and factual as I can make it, especially as far as I myself am concerned. (1)

In this passage, there are three Isherwoods at play: Christopher Isherwood the character, the nameless "author" of *Lions and Shadows*, and the present narrating "I" (who I again refer to as Isherwood). This trio of roles is reminiscent of the three identities from *Goodbye to Berlin*—the camera, photographer, and developer—but more overt in separating these roles into different versions of himself, as was seen in *Down There on a Visit.* While Isherwood gestures toward this crowd of identities, he does not take the time to sort them out and comment on their relationship in as much detail as the "father" and "son" of selves in *Down There on a Visit* (though the reference to "frankness" cannot help but remind us of Isherwood's own father, Frank, whose life and death as an officer in World War I undoubtedly left its mark on Isherwood's later life in Germany and how others perceived it). Instead, the reader must distinguish them for herself, recognizing their separate roles, different settings in time and space, and the threads that weave them together. As readers work to sort out this tangle of identities, we cannot help noting that Isherwood separates

himself from "the author" of *Lions and Shadows* to an even greater degree than he separates himself from the character "Christopher" in this work or in any other. He does so linguistically, through use of the passive voice ("There is a book,"), and the impersonal term "the author." By beginning where this last text has left off, and critiquing "the author" for drawing on his personal experience only to obscure crucial aspects of it, Isherwood suggests that he will not attempt to re-write *Lions and* Shadows here, though he will respond to it in many ways, including revealing the true names of the characters he had introduced in the first novel (with the exception of two of his lovers, who retain their nicknames and anonymity). What Isherwood will re-write in *Christopher and His Kind*, and what he has re-written in each text, is not just who he is, but also his role as the author and his relationship to World War II.

Isherwood's early drafts indicate that the debate over his role as character, author, and narrator was still occurring as he wrote. A meta-narrative included in a draft of this text (but edited from the final published work) echoes *Down There on a Visit* in its extensive self-critique:

> I will not pretend, even to myself, that speaking of myself as Christopher automatically turns this book into a scientifically objective narrative. Some identification with Christopher remains. And, although the past is irreversible, I still find myself tempted to falsify it in order to beautify my darling image. Furthermore, I am embarrassed by Christopher's posing—as for example after Heinz's arrest—and would like to rectify it. I must not. I will try to resist. (Box 39, CI 1027)

It is clear from the faults that Isherwood points out Christopher and their harsh phrasing that Isherwood still wishes to recognize what embarrasses him about his past; and while his

temptation to falsify or "rectify" Christopher's behavior is exorcised by this reflection, while the desire (if not ability) to achieve objectivity remains. This note echoes the introduction to *Down There on a Visit*, underscoring the fact that both autobiography-based texts addresses similar concerns (falsifying memories or records out of vanity or consideration of others' feelings) but addressing these concerns through radically different narrative means. Isherwood here rejects what he will call the "arty talk" of re-writing his memories by destroying or altering his old ones, a goal that he recognized as false when he used it to explain burning the diaries he used to write *Goodbye to Berlin*. Isherwood also sways from grand narratives about how Christophers change across time, a topic that he frequently examined in *Down There on a Visit*. In this third and final meditation on the 1930s, Isherwood instead grapples with individual memories and periods of time, working to resurrect them when he can (often with the aid of others' memories and writing) and to acknowledge gaps in his memory when he cannot.

Isherwood's task of correcting records leads him to revisit both *Goodbye to Berlin* and *Down There on a Visit*, with goals ranging from re-writing scenes and re-labeling characters with their true names to adding parenthetical connections to his other books where readers can find more details, like a network of footnotes to navigate his autobiographical works. One character who undergoes significant re-examination is Ambrose from *Down There on a Visit*. Isherwood discloses Ambrose's true name, Francis, and includes a block quote of his physical description from that work in order to follow up with this corrective comment: "This is true to life, more or less, except for the last three sentences, which relate only to the fictitious part of Ambrose. Photographs of Francis at that time show that he was beautiful, certainly, but that he had the face of a self-indulgent aristocrat, not a contemplative

ascetic" (24). He then goes on to describe Francis as "an invalid, though an incredibly tough one," and traces his illness to recovery from syphilis treatment at the Hirschfield Institute. This addition brings forward what had been implicit in *Down There on a Visit*: the role of queerness in bringing these characters together, and in separating them from the rest of the world—and possibly from each other, as Isherwood notes that Francis was impatient with those who had never contracted syphilis (24). By amending his explanation of how these characters met, as well as how Christopher saw Francis (and why he saw him this way), Isherwood makes explicit the significance of homosexuality to his own life in Berlin, and the network of people it also affected. This revision of past characterizations of others and himself suggests that Gilmore's theory of the auto/biographical demand has become a more prominent force over the course of his career—though it does not lead him to take a straightforward, recuperative position as an author.

Isherwood also links this text to projects about entirely different periods of his life. In one section on Christopher's mentor as a young writer, Isherwood notes in a parenthetical aside that readers wanting to know more about this should "(See *Kathleen and Frank*)" to fill in information that the two paragraphs she is given in this text could cover (32). This parenthetical self-citation indicates that there is truth to be found in his past writing. More importantly, it indicates how widely a narrative would have to reach in order to account for a whole life or network of lives. Even when truth and completion are ostensibly Isherwood's goal, he cannot fit everything into one book; and in making this apparent with brief notes that seem to pause the story, he reveals that even genres like "novel" and "autobiography," traditionally predicated on the making of a coherent story and self, are limited in what they can convey.

Alongside physical records, Isherwood draws on the record of his own memory. He quotes at length an account of September 28, 1938: "This is an account of the final day of the crisis, September 28, taken partly from Christopher's diary, partly from *Down There on a Visit*, which contains added details, remembered, not invented: […]" (323). There is no hint that Isherwood finds this patchwork of sources unreliable; in fact, his statement that the details added are "not invented" conveys his certainty that he can distinguish fact from fiction, and therefore that this distinction is important as well. At times, the moments that Isherwood remembers from his past with some clarity are separated from the rest of the text by parentheses. One such scene appears in the second chapter, after Isherwood has revealed his connection to the Hirschfield Institute for Sexual Science, and it describes an experience there in a style that echoes the still scenes he recalled in previous works:

> (I have a memory of Christopher looking down from a room in the Institute and watching two obvious plain-clothes detectives lurk under the trees which grow along the edge of the park. They hope that one of their wanted victims will be tempted to venture out of Hirschfield's sanctuary for a sniff of fresh air. Then, according to the rules of the police game, he can be grabbed and carried off to prison.) (19)

This memory, and other parenthetical asides that note what the narrating Isherwood remembers or believes now, break the third-person narrative that the book largely maintains, and sets this book apart from its predecessors. The parentheses and the use of "I" rather than "Christopher" draw attention to Isherwood's frequent use of memories and present-day knowledge, as opposed to written sources alone to construct this story. In this passage, we are told that we are looking at both a pattern of behavior by authority figures of the time ("*the rules* of the police game") and a concrete memory of a particular moment ("*a* memory of

Christopher looking down"). Isherwood constructs this clear scene by using two levels of memory, the trace of an individual moment and a pattern of similar moments, in a process similar to the memory-making mechanisms theorized by cognitive scientists (McClelland 69-90). The complexity of selves at play in this passage, and their isolation from each other and others—"I have a memory of Christopher looking down […]"—underscores that he has not left behind the sense of separation between the character Christopher and the narrating Isherwood; and yet he possesses Christopher's memory, linking two selves as he remembers and writes. Christopher's position in the window mirrors the one that he immortalized as he declared, "I am a camera," bookending two stories from the same period of time (late 1920s) with parallel acts of observation from a distance. This time, however, Christopher's distance from the people below is a measure of safety, much different than the lonely objectivity he described from his bedroom window in *Goodbye to Berlin*; he does not long to join the detectives below, although the "sniff of fresh air" that he describes hints at a desire (felt by himself and others) to get beyond the confines of the Institute without fear of repercussions. Just as Isherwood explored Ambrose/Francis to reveal the role of sexuality in his interwar life and the lives of those he met, this memory holds clear historical significance. This significance is brought into sharper focus when Isherwood later reveals that the view from his window in *Goodbye to Berlin* was not lonely, but rather inviting—his only fear was that his boyfriend Otto would find him with someone else (58). While his tone in exposing this truth could seem almost trivializing, it shows that his self-deprecating humor or skepticism of his past narrative choices need not obscure the risks he faced.

Despite this active use of memory to unearth images that will tell a story, Isherwood acknowledges memory's limits shortly after. He recalls the frustrating experiences of trying

to remember his first impression of Sally Bowles' real-life counterpart Jean Ross, when representations of her (both his own and others') obscure the "source memory" of Jean and their original meeting:

> I wish I could remember what impression Jean Ross—the real-life original of Sally Bowles in *Goodbye to Berlin*—made on Christopher when they first met. But I can't. Art has transfigured life and other peoples' art has transfigured Christopher's art. What remains with me from those early years is almost entirely Sally. Beside her, like a reproachful elder sister, stands the figure of Jean as I knew her much later. And both Sally and Jean keep being jostled to one side of my memory to make room for the actresses who have played the part of Sally on the stage and on the screen. These, regardless of their merits, are all much more vivid to me than either Jean or Sally; their boldly made-up, brightly lit faces are larger than life. (60)

Here, the crowd of characters that have contributed to Isherwood's memories—described as "jostling" each other aside for attention—is a hindrance rather than a way of approaching a truer sense of one person (as the crowd was treated at the start of *Down There on a Visit*). The difficulty of isolating a single memory or period of a person's life—taking one of the earliest moments in the narrative of Jean Ross' relationship with Christopher—is compounded by the chorus of voices that have added their own "brightly lit" versions of Sally; this number of competing narratives, with differing degrees of vivacity that favor fictional or culturally shared accounts, proves to be a difficult match for Christopher's eyewitness narrative. We could note that Isherwood's goal is not simply to resurrect Jean in her youth, but to remember how Christopher saw her when they met for the first time. This

means that his goal is not to isolate Jean's "true self," but rather to pinpoint their relationship at one moment—perhaps a more realistic goal, though still impossible to achieve perfectly.

Memories of Christopher's life in Berlin like this one are at least partially lost to Isherwood because of the destruction of the diary he kept during that time of his life. However, this absent object has its own value as a carrier of memory, as the text aims to expose Isherwood as an author and rememberer, acknowledging the destruction of this diary and his reasons for destroying it lets Isherwood acknowledge an aspect of Christopher's life that was never fully revealed before. This leads him to explain that the diary "was full of details about his sex life and he feared that it might somehow fall into the hands of the police or other enemies." He then critiques his previous explanations for burning this diary after using it to write *The Berlin Stories*, put forth in the 1954 introduction to the collection, which resonates with the claims that he had made to friends at the time when he destroyed this record:

> Christopher's declared reason for burning his Berlin diary was unconvincing. He used to tell his friends that he had destroyed his real past because he preferred the simplified, more creditable, more exciting fictitious past which he had created to take its place. This fictitious past, he said, was the past he wanted to "remember." Now that I am writing about Christopher's real past, I sadly miss the help of the lost diary and have no patience with this arty talk. The Berlin novels leave out a great deal which I now want to remember; they also falsify events and alter dates for dramatic purposes. (41)

Here, Isherwood presents a radically different definition of "truth" and "memory" than Christopher previously held, or claimed to hold; he is suspicious of the "arty talk" that

previous iterations of himself as an author had used to justify presenting memories that had been knowingly altered. Isherwood goes on to reveal that he obscured concrete facts in the letters he wrote to friends; the few that remain do not hold dates, which he believes they found to be "beneath their dignity as artists—something bank clerkly, formal, and mean-spirited" (41). Both *Goodbye to Berlin* and *Down There on a Visit* placed dates prominently in their narrative, whether in the title or the opening pages of each chapter. But as Isherwood now claims that some dates in these novels were falsified for dramatic purposes, we cannot help but wonder if the dates he now includes in *Christopher and His Kind* serve a new purpose: not to juxtapose the personal experience with historical narratives, but now to correct his own record, perhaps in order to avoid accusations of falsification that could undermine his credibility. And as Isherwood aims for truth through accurate records of time, he stops altering the timing, facts, and fate of individual characters' lives to better represent the fate of the group—in other words, he rejects the fictionalizing that might be done to meet the auto/biographical demand. Bernard Landauer's true fate, for example, is less poetically neat than the death of his counterpart in *Goodbye to Berlin*; while Bernhard is arrested and presumably sent to the concentration camps because of his Jewish faith, Landauer dies aboard a plane shot down by the Nazis who seemed to be targeting someone else (72). This correction—along with explanations of character traits that Isherwood had previously left out—gives a more nuanced perspective of the fate of his Jewish friend, fellow émigré and organizer of resistance against the Nazi agenda. This reveals one of the dangers of fictionalizing historical events to represent larger, historical-level actions or events: doing so

risks taking individuality away from people who are already at risk of losing it at the hands of the Nazis.[48]

In his pursuit of historical accuracy and transparency in his sources, Isherwood reveals that he turned to an unlikely contributor: "My most reliable source of information proves, ironically, to be the diaries of [Christopher's mother] Kathleen, whom Christopher was trying to exclude from his Berlin life altogether" (41). We can see Kathleen's commitment to accuracy of time and date within the volume about her husband Frank Isherwood's final weeks and eventual death in Ypres during World War I—but in these same volumes, we see that her narrative is not a neutral recounting of history either. And as Isherwood claims that Christopher shared very few details of his life in Berlin with Kathleen, we can see what a prominent position time and place have taken in Isherwood's priorities for this autobiographical work; to still turn to this source that he argues was largely based on hearsay means that chronology is crucial to this project.

Despite Isherwood's seeming insularity—looking only at his own limited memories and shaky accounts of his life written by himself and others—his personal recollections remind readers of other stories and sources that Isherwood cannot write, including Landauer's story but many others as well. While the burning of Christopher's Berlin diary was motivated by self defense rather than political demonstration, this autobiography's act of deliberately sifting through familial journals and correspondence archives, as well as openly lamenting the loss of his own life-writing texts, serve as a reminder of other memories and archives of memory that were lost—whether through the direct persecution of the Nazi

[48] Spiro argues that both Isherwood and Woolf play into this stereotype of the Jewish person as "the ultimate Other" in *Goodbye to Berlin* and *Between the Acts* (140). Perhaps in drawing attention to his own past manipulation of Landauer's story, Isherwood here aims to counteract some of the limiting narratives he granted to Landauer and others.

regime, the persecution under British laws against homosexuality, or the indirect "forgetting" or repression of the memories of those who were and often still are socially discouraged from sharing their lives. When we learn of the destruction of his relatively privileged or powerful memory, we see both the difficulty of preserving others' memories and his own, and the strong need and desire to do so. Scholars have previously offered quite different readings of the role that other characters play in *Christopher and His Kind*. Rose Kamel, for example, notes that this work represents not a complete story of self, but a constantly made and unmade *Künstlerroman*; however, she asserts that this undoing of the complete life story is partly achieved through the "fictive strategy" of presenting characters that function as flat alter egos, each of whom represent "what he revolts against or is" (163). Many characters are certainly rendered incompletely—however, it is an incompletion that Isherwood draws our attention to; and as was the case with the shaky memories of Jean Ross, this flatness may ultimately serve as a reminder of their individuality. The people represented in this text cannot be summed up into a type or stand-in for a group, and thus it is unlikely that they serve solely to represent a part of Isherwood in an attempt at self-understanding through pantomime. They may belong to groups with which Christopher is also affiliated (the queer scene of Berlin, British ex-pat authors, and so on) or to groups with which he may feel an affinity (Jewish people facing persecution, citizens of his would-be adoptive homeland Germany); but his overt work against the typecasting and allegorical stories he has told in the past suggest that Isherwood has a different understanding of his narrative project and the role of "incomplete" characters.

As he pursues this level of truth, one thing remains constant from his previous work (especially *Down There on a Visit*): his belief that Christopher was not a true victim of the

war, or at least that he did not face the greatest threats. He even goes so far as to condemn "Christopher the novelist" for not trying to meet Hitler and "take a psychological interest in the Nazi high command" in 1932:

> Christopher wasn't Jewish, he belonged to the Nazis' favorite foreign race, he spoke German fluently, he was a writer and could easily have been accepted as a freelance journalist whom they might hope to convert to their philosophy… What inhibited him? His principles? His inertia? Neither is an excuse. He missed what would surely have been one of the most memorable experiences of his Berlin life. (120)

"Memorability" may sound like a callous aim when contemplating alternative approaches to the Third Reich that Isherwood may have taken. But if his goal in *Christopher and His Kind* is to tell a true story of the interwar era, it is clear that his motivations go beyond memorability for its own sake. But this aim does belie one crucial aspect of Isherwood's life in Berlin and beyond—an aspect that he has so far brought up with relative consistency While Christopher's queer identity is at the forefront of the rest of this autobiographical work, it is not mentioned in the passage quoted above; instead, his nationality, whiteness, religion, and even profession as a journalist are all presented as tools of privilege that would have allowed him to infiltrate the highest ranks of the Nazi Party. This omission is difficult to ignore, coming up against his frank retelling of scenes and periods of his life with direct commentary on his and others' sexuality. Later, Isherwood explains his narrating characters' silence on his own sexuality in earlier works by noting that he aimed to give the reader an "unobtrusive" narrator whose pserspecitve any reader would feel ready to ender, but also to avoid the risk of "creat[ing] a scandal" for his family by moving from "[living] fairly openly" as a queer man to presenting this perspective in published form (185). With this goal of

unobtrusiveness ostensibly removed, we are invited to ask why Isherwood would remove this aspect of his experience from his ruminations on turning down the possibility of approaching Nazis as a journalist. The lack of reference to sexuality suggests that Isherwood is still working through his paradoxical mix of persecution and privilege as an upper class, British queer man. He avoids what he called the "heartless and childish" posing of his younger self in *Down There on a Visit* by leaving his own persecution unmentioned in this passage.

While Isherwood here brushes off Christopher's "principles" and "inertia," aspects of his emotions or values that could have held him back from infiltrating and reporting on the Nazi Party, he does address the role of fear in his Berlin life. After noting that Christopher would have been "merely" expelled "from a country which he was only too eager to leave" in 1933, he traces the nature and sources of his sense of unease in Berlin just before he left, an example of what he is certain he could not directly know (the threat of violence and imprisonment by the Nazis) and yet certainly seems to feel here:

> Nevertheless, there was terror in the Berlin air—the terror felt by many people with good reason—and Christopher found himself affected by it. Perhaps he was also affected by his own fantasies. He had always posed a little to his friends in England as an embattled fighter against the Nazis and some of them had encouraged him jokingly to do so. "Don't get killed before I come," Edward Upward had written. "I'll see you unless you've been shot by Hitler." Now Christopher began to have mild hallucinations. He fancied that he heard heavy wagons drawing up before the house, in the middle of the night. He suddenly detected swastika patterns in the wallpaper. He convinced himself that everything in his room, whatever its superficial color, was basically brown, Nazi brown. (128)

Before and after Isherwood protests that the idea of him being in danger was humorous, we see the impact of personal threats and the psychological impact of others' fear. This fear is not just a product of his "fantasies" of life as an intrepid war journalist gone too far; they arise in part from living among others who are under threat of expulsion with limited resources, or are under threat of death. The exchange of affect in "the Berlin air" between Christopher and those forced to hide, flee, or live permanently under this regime may not be outlined in detail (as the exchange and contrast of affect between Eleanor Partiger and Peggy in Woolf's *The Years*), but it seems that Christopher was part of a collective sense of fear. At the same time, the idea that all of this fear comes from those around him may disguise the personal threat of that homophobic Nazi laws posed to Isherwood. The images of Nazism interrupt his sleep and invade his rented room, intruding into his private life and mind in a way that suggests threats felt based on his sexual identity. This threat would shared by others at the Hirschfield Institute, the Cosy Corner, and anyone in Berlin who did not fit the Nazi Party's ideal (including his friends, boyfriends and sex partners); but it isolates him in the domestic space of his room at night. Dwelling on the personal, isolating nature of this threat, Isherwood does not entirely claim this experience as his own—rather, he represents this isolation, a fundamental aspect of the Nazi project of dehumanization, as something that he "[finds] himself affected by" from those around him who feel it "with good reason."

This focus on concrete events clearly has not taken Isherwood's attention away from the question of how to present his life in writing; the difference now is that Isherwood aims to expose the complex, historically significant motivations for his choices. As he reveals this web of motivations and fears, he exposes the complexity of the unreliable narrator category. He differentiates omissions that are made for self-preservation or easier acceptance by

readers who "cannot" imagine life from a queer man's perspective, from the invention of details one can find in everyday communication with friends. He thus does not reject all parts of his previous work that would not pass the documentarian standards of his present project—in fact, the absences in his previous works are rendered revealing by this one. This re-examination has the effect of making us as readers look inward. Just as following Isherwood's memories forces readers to decide which recollections he ought to record here, encountering this claim about falsity in "one's" storytelling invites his audience to consider what accommodations to the reader should be defined as falsehoods.

If *Christopher and His Kind* is meant to correct Isherwood's previous writing about 1929-1939, it does not achieve this goal entirely. With so many weary, impatient interjections from Isherwood as he narrates from the present—noting memories and records that are lost due to over-recording by playwrights and filmmakers, under-recording by himself and his friends, and decisions that frustrate him as an author—it is difficult to imagine that even Isherwood believed this autobiography would be capable of lending complete truth and order to his life story. If this record cannot resurrect every memory, though, it can locate and examine the layered, social and personal causes of this forgetting. Isherwood's means of doing this at once make plain his membership to the queer "tribe" of Berlin, and work against the typecasting of people that belong to it, returning some of the individuality that Nazism tried to erase.[49] It also works against what Jahan Ramazani calls "the economic problem of mourning," by representing the victims of the war and of Nazi persecution without aiming for a transcendent narrative that codes their deaths as necessary

[49] Isherwood uses the term "tribe" to describe the people represented by and attending the Hirschfield Institute, drawing on language associated with colonialism to first describe them and "their distasteful customs" as a curiosity and a source of embarrassment (16).

sacrifices for freedom, or of proof that Western society is on a linear, progressive path toward acceptance of queerness. The gaps that Isherwood presents amidst the sources he collects here reveal the complex network of selves that make up Isherwood, and implicitly those that make up the people whose lives he returns to here.

Repetition and Forgetting After War: The "Generation of Postmemory" Imagining War's Edge in the Fictionalized Memoirs of Kazuo Ishiguro

Describing his approach to his earliest novels, Kazuo Ishiguro maintains that he treated memory as a "technical device," but the perspective of memory that he describes suggests a deeper level of interest: "I just wanted to enter a world of memory. It gave me a thrill, to be in this kind of mode when a narrator would say he or she couldn't quite remember" ("The New Seriousness" 258). To Ishiguro, a world of memory is marked not by the strength of recollections, but instead by uncertainties, gaps, and faults. Each of the narrators in his first three novels—*A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1989)—dwells on the past, and they are just as interested in interrogating the texture and faults of their own memories as their author. This "world of memory" is also unique in that it stretches deeper into the past than Ishiguro and many of his contemporary readers would be able to remember. Each novel is narrated by characters who belong to the generations of Ishiguro's parents or grandparents, who reminisce about the years just before the declaration of World War II or just after the armistice; one novel is narrated decades later, but the other two are narrated only a few years after the armistice, in the late 1940s to early 1950s. Rather than viewing his works as "historical novels," in the sense of texts that strive for "authenticity" through period-specific details or "authorial insights into historical figures" ("historical novel," *Bedford Glossary*), Ishiguro has stated that his novels aim to show more "universal" problems that people face rather than to "reproduce, in an historically accurate way, some past period" ("An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro" 149, 139). Nevertheless, the historical settings of these novels are more than allegorical, as they raise questions that resonate with the position of the generation born

after World War II. As these three novels imagine the perspective of peripheral witnesses who lived through war, they reveal a shared set of questions that both groups face when confronted with the memory and legacy of that historical event.

Ishiguro could thus be said to write from a position similar to what Marianne Hirsch calls "the generation of postmemory:" those who are born after a catastrophe that affected one's family and who seem to carry memories belonging to the earlier generation, not through recall, but through "imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (*The Generation of Postmemory* 2, 5). Ishiguro does have familial a connection to World War II, as his mother survived the atomic bomb attacks in Nagasaki. The principle of "imaginative investment" is certainly at work in his novels, when he writes from the perspective of his parents' and grandparents' generation, and when he writes from a range of perspectives that connect to but do not directly correspond to his own: a mother who emigrated to Britain as an adult, a propaganda artist and informant in Japan, and a butler to a British Nazi sympathizer. His novels can be said to address questions like those that Hirsch argues face a younger generation when they come into contact with the traumatic experiences of the generation that came before them: "How can we best carry their stories forward, without appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and without, in turn, having our own stories displaced by them?" (2). But the last clause of this question does not seem to concern Ishiguro as much as the others, as his narrative approach implies that he can give voice to challenges and concerns that are relevant to his generation without direct self representation. Rather than separating "their stories" and "our own," Ishiguro looks to the past for frameworks that illuminate questions that are shared by people on different peripheries of

war: Who has influenced and been influenced by World War II? What needs to be remembered or forgotten, through personal memory or through writing?

Like Woolf and Isherwood, Ishiguro grew up in the aftermath of one war and in anticipation of another. He describes feeling as if he grew up "under the shadow of the memory of Nagasaki," a description that resonates with the legacy of the atomic bomb but also with his experience moving away from Japan at an early age, for what his family assumed would be a temporary move for his father's career ("Exclusive Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro"). Indeed, in one photograph from Ishiguro's childhood, we can see a visual representation of this shadowy legacy: positioned in front of a set of empty sword sheaths ("blades removed by American occupation"), with a family member out of focus on the edge of the frame, Ishiguro in his infancy is depicted amidst historical objects with haunting absences ("Personal/Professional: Photographs—Childhood in Japan & England"). But in the same interview where he speaks of the "shadow of a memory" of Japan, he also speaks of the psychological impact of the Cold War tensions during his childhood in England, where they held frequent drills at school for potential attacks. This experience of living in the aftermath of one global war, only to be threatened by the prospect of another, would surely be familiar to Woolf and to Isherwood, both of whom lived through the Spanish Civil War, the "long 1939" (to use Steve Ellis' term), the rise of Nazi Germany, and the "Red Scare" during which Western powers tried to rally their citizens against the "threat" of communism after World War I. The seemingly-unending threat of the atomic bomb (from the attacks his parents witnessed and survived to the ones that he and his classmates anticipated) and the omnipresent but shadowy "memory of Nagasaki" shape the texture of the "world of memory" that Ishiguro creates in his novels: memory that alternates between gaps and

repetition, and speaks to a simultaneous sense of responsibility and lack of agency on the part of the speakers who "write" each novel as their relationship with the war and the past is refracted through the post-war present.

With this common position of living in war's aftermath and anticipating its return, there comes a common psychological state and narrative response. There is a simultaneous urge to accurately record what war has destroyed and otherwise changed, and to underscore faults in these records, especially gaps caused by the limited view of the remembering subject, or misremembered moments where the speaker's reconstruction of the past proves incorrect or incomplete. Ishiguro's novels present this fraught narrative and psychological position with remarkable similarity to the works found in Isherwood and Woolf: he too draws on the form of the journal by noting dates carefully (usually as chapter titles), and uses a first-person narrator to comment on past and present events and turn a critical eye to their own memories. The peripheral witness' hyper-vigilance is turned toward the speaker's past guilt and present powerlessness, often in terms of their parenthood or their career. And in Ishiguro's novels more than any other examined in this project, these narrative choices are accompanied by phrases, situations, and memories that repeat and echo each other.

While Woolf and Isherwood return to the same historical periods throughout their works, and Isherwood revisits some memories in texts that are written years apart, Ishiguro's narrators frequently revisit the same memories throughout their novels. They also tend to conflate similar or related memories, responding to patterns in experience or emotional resonance without always realizing that this dynamic is at work. Each narrator falls into his or her own patterns of repeated memories or thoughts that speak to their unique position in relation to war. In *A Pale View of Hills*, Etsuko recounts multiple characters' admonitions

that she should forget the past to avoid perpetuating the war's destruction into the next generation. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ono feels critiques of his generation and of his profession as an artist echo from one character to the next, and suspects that his memory is "drifting" when, in fact, the connections between past and present are more than clear to readers. Finally, in *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens hears critiques of his decisions and indecision as a butler echoing in different memories, and revisits well-worn recollections to explain his curt denial of past relationships in the present. All three also contend with a sense of duty to stop repeating things from the past in the present: Etsuko more than most as a mother, but also Ono as a grandfather and painter, and Stevens as a caretaker and informal historian of Darlington Hall. Their simultaneous use and suspicion of repetition clearly resonates with theories of the repetition impulse in trauma theory, and they gain a different sense of urgency from their connection to Ishiguro's status as the son of a survivor and as an author. Like the characters represented in his novels, Ishiguro and his readers must remember but also re-examine the stories that are passed on from the past, and must do so from the edge of these catastrophic experiences. As is the case with my chapter on Isherwood, I include an appendix that addresses archival sources that are relevant to Ishiguro's family and their perspective of the war. Though there are only a limited number of documents in which Ishiguro's family refers to World War II, and there are no accounts of this period written by his mother Shizuko, the war and its legacy for Japan and Ishiguro's family are referenced in unpublished texts by Ishiguro and other family materials. Focusing on the use of narrative distance and isolation in "Flight from Nagasaki" (an unfinished story that Ishiguro wrote based on his mother's experiences of the days after the bomb), and on the family photographs that seem symbolically constructed to preserve the history of Japan and of their family, I

suggest that the uncertain perspectives of Ishiguro's narrators in his published works reflect a position in relation to war that is similar to the one constructed by his family: aware of gaps in what can be remembered and preserved from the past, and the meaning that can be found in those gaps as well.

"There is nothing to be gained in going over such matters again:" Motherhood and Forgetting in *A Pale View of Hills*

Etsuko, the narrating protagonist of *A Pale View of Hills*, begins her story with a critique of the newspaper writers who seemed to attribute her elder daughter Keiko's death to her nationality: "Keiko, unlike Niki [Etsuko's younger daughter], was pure Japanese, and more than one newspaper was quick to pick up on this fact. The English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary; for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she had hung herself in her room" (10). This admonishment serves as a warning to readers to examine their own assumptions about a story of post-war Japan, particularly one that deals with death and psychological trauma. It may also serve as a warning to Ishiguro himself, as he writes about a nation and a culture that have been flattened into stereotypes in Western literature before, and that exist as a "shadow of a memory" based on his youth, his family's experience, and popular culture.

Though this is may be the eeriest of Ishiguro's first three novels—deploying the device of repetition through echoing images and phrases, and characters who refract and collapse into each other—memory and its faults are not simply manipulated to create drama, suspense, or fear. Rather, memory's faults detail the effects of war and of post-war culture on the memories of survivors. Already, critics like Cynthia Wong have worked to move

discussions of this novel away from "the schizophrenic interpretation" that treats *A Pale View of Hills* as a story of Etsuko's isolated madness, and to read it instead as evidence of widespread trauma felt throughout the attacked cities in Japan ("The Shame of Memory" 132). Here, I aim to trace an aspect of World War II that stretches from Etsuko's narrative to readers and writers in the late twentieth century: the task of not simply carrying forward memories, but also of forgetting, and the effect of sharpening and blurring memory that the debate between remembering and forgetting can create. Etsuko is attuned to the texture and accuracy of her memories, especially those that mingle clear details with uncertain context or time. She is also attuned to the forces that can disrupt memories, and what others expect her to remember and to leave in the past. Well aware that those around her believe she should strive to forget the past in order to be a "better" mother, Etsuko's preoccupation with and extensive knowledge of the textures of her own memory suggest that she rejects this expectation, but cannot shake the sense that this expectation hangs over her still. At the same time, she grapples with repeating and blurring memories that cannot be contained.

The most obvious juxtaposition of memory's vivacity and meaning and apparent "failing" appears near the end of the novel, when Etsuko conflates her neighbor's rebellious young child Mariko with her own daughter Keiko. Etsuko seems to fuse two memories into one, and her subtle use of neutral pronouns ("the child" rather than Mariko or Keiko), followed by the sudden statement "'we can always come back'" give this a haunting quality that eludes confident interpretations from readers who study this scene to examine its portrayal of memory. But in the scenes before this, when Etsuko finds Mariko after she has run away to the river, this juxtaposition between memory's failings and its meaningful vivacity is present in a subtler pattern. When Etsuko recounts these moments, she pays as

much attention to the texture of her memories as she does to what she remembers, illuminating a pattern in what she recalls: from uncertainty over particular details, to a feeling of stillness (from shock or peace), to concrete physical details. In the first of these moments, when she and Sachiko suddenly see Mariko on the ground by the river, Etsuko interrogates her memory before she describes the scene:

> It is possible that my memory of these events will have grown hazy with time, that things did not happen in quite the way they come back to me today. But I remember with some distinctness that eerie spell which seemed to bind the two of us as we stood there in the coming darkness looking towards that shape further down the bank. Then the spell broke and we both began to run. As we came nearer, I saw Mariko lying curled on her side, knees hunched, her back towards us. (41)

On another night, when Etsuko sets off alone to search for Mariko by the same river, we see this pattern again:

> I cannot be sure how long I spent searching for her that night. Quite possibly it was for a considerable time, for I was advanced in my pregnancy by then and careful to avoid hurried movements. Besides, once having come outside, I was finding it strangely peaceful to walk beside the river. Along one section of the bank, the grass had grown very tall. I must have been wearing sandals that night for I can remember distinctly the feel of the grass on my feet. (83)

As both of these scenes are placed at the start of new chapters, after Mariko has run away and her mother and Etsuko realize what has happened, they further prolong the pause between a realization that Mariko is missing and finding her. They also both begin with a disclaimer from Etsuko that this memory is unclear, or that it is less clear than it seems. This is followed

each time with an "eerie" or a "strangely peaceful" feeling that leaves Etsuko either rooted to the spot, or walking with no sense of urgency. Then, she lends the memory more precision by including a concrete physical detail (the fading light of the sunset, or the feeling of grass on her feet). The gaps and uncertainties, juxtaposed with small vivid details, and perhaps most of all the pattern of memories that follow this format, makes these moments feel closer to remembered events than pieces in a larger story. As Ender explains of Woolf's "first memory" in "Moments of Being," "it is the very poverty and crudity of the image—an image so poor that it is presented as a mere blob, or as the most primitive of rhythms (one-two, one-two) that brings this memory to life" (55). The stillness of these scenes also resonates with Ishiguro's own theory that we generally remember in still images, rather than scenes that have narrative and shape (O'Hagan et al). Both of these theories are linked to a timeless quality: the crude, decontextualized image for Ender, and the still, similarly decontextualized image for Ishiguro. But even if these imperfections and pauses in Etsuko's memory make it seem all the more lifelike or vivid to readers, the caveats that Etsuko offers before describing each memory (about the deleterious effects of time, and the difficulty of estimating the duration of time) indicate a pattern of thought that causes her to find faults in her own memoires almost automatically, as they appear or as she tells them to her imagined readers. Poring over aspects of each memory for its gaps and its certainties, remembering with Etsuko feels like consistently returning to the same critiques leveled at her memory from without and within.

Under different circumstances, the similarity of these scenes might make Etsuko wonder why they remain in her mind. Her introductions to other memories suggest that she believes that only exceptional memories will remain in our minds. Even though her own

memory frequently recognizes patterns rather than singular, defining moments, she seems surprised when everyday events remain in her mind. Before she describes a mysterious black car pulling up to Sachiko's home—a scene that seems to have prompted Etsuko to remember the vision of a young girl who was hanged in their neighborhood—she stops herself from reading a connection into these juxtaposed scenes:

> Memory, I realize, can be an unreliable thing; often it is heavily coloured by the circumstances in which one remembers, and no doubt this applies to certain of the recollections I have gathered here. For instance, I find it tempting to persuade myself it was a premonition I experienced that afternoon, that the unpleasant image which entered my thoughts that day was something altogether different—something much more intense and vivid—than the numerous day-dreams which drift through one's imagination during such long and empty hours.
>
> In all possibility, it was nothing so remarkable. The tragedy of the little girl found hanging from a tree—much more so than the earlier child murders—had made a shocked impression on the neighbourhood, and I could not have been alone that summer in being disturbed by such images. (156)

Here Etsuko comments that she may invest this memory with more significance now as she looks back on it. Then, she rejects the idea that she experienced an isolated premonition in that moment, deciding instead to categorize the sudden, intrusive image of the hanging child as a repeated, everyday experience; and she widens this vision from an experience unique to her mind to one that was shared across her neighborhood. Before this, when Etsuko remembers her walks from her own barren apartment building to the derelict house where Mariko and Sachiko live, she goes further to protest that memories of a particular summer are

not even unique to that year. When she describes the "increasingly unpleasant" environment between her apartment and Sachiko's cottage, she says,

> I still remember those journeys vividly, and they—like those misgivings about motherhood, like Ogata-San's visit—serve today to bring a certain distinctness to that summer. And yet in many ways, that summer was much like any other. I spent many moments—as I was to do throughout succeeding years—gazing emptily at the view from my apartment window. On clearer days, I could see far beyond the trees on the opposite bank of the river, a pale outline of hills visible against the clouds. (99)

As *An Artist of the Floating World* will illustrate in even greater detail, the reconstruction process for Japan after World War II was a years-long process that occurred in fits and starts. But when Etsuko fixates on familial or domestic images—the hanged child (which she still distinguishes from "the earlier child murders") and the "unpleasant" terrain of the homes in Nagasaki—she addresses a form of trauma that Leigh Gilmore finds has been ignored historically. Gilmore finds that some readers of autobiography and testimony have not recognized recurring events as potential sources of trauma (26-27), because they disrupt earlier, limited definitions of experiences that are "outside the range of usual human experience," in the words of the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual ("Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder"). (Subsequent editions of the DSM have removed this language, but this definition from 1987 reflects the prevailing focus on single-event triggers of trauma during the decade in which the novel was written and from which Etsuko narrates). As Etsuko contends with the disintegrating terrain around the home, and prepares to give birth in a time when child murders are so frequent that the less lurid ones remain in the background of the shared mentality she imagines citizens of Nagasaki carry with them, we see the

challenges of post-war life intruding into her everyday life, and that they could thus be significant and memorable *because* they recur. Etsuko does not show that she is aware of this assumption as she works with and against it. Instead, her widening from the singular to the general seems almost like an apology for singling out this moment when there is so much more to say about life after World War II.

One reason for Etsuko's careful examination of her memories seems to be linked to social expectations of her duty as a mother. This is not a mental change that is inherent with motherhood, but rather the product of others' expectations and advice—and much of this advice paradoxically revolves around *forgetting* parts of the past in order to create a happier future for her child. Adding to this layer of self-scrutiny is the fact that women around Etsuko are usually the ones to give voice to this expectation, while the male characters do not comment on Etsuko's pregnancy. As Ken Eckert notes, Etsuko's husband Jiro makes no comment about the child that they are expecting, or Etsuko's experience with the pregnancy, in his limited dialogue within the novel (84); he seems detached from the pregnancy entirely. Even Jiro's father Ogata-San, who has a close, fatherly relationship with Etsuko, limits his discussion about her pregnancy to questions about the gender she is "hoping for," and the practice of naming children after family members; and he is careful to avoid pressuring her into making decisions about this with him in mind (33-34). By comparison, the women Etsuko speaks with not only speak with her about her pregnancy immediately, but also raise concerns about her mental state as a mother. The first character to offer Etsuko such advice is Mrs. Fujiwara, a close friend of Etsuko's mother and the owner of a noodle shop where Sachiko has found temporary work. Mrs. Fujiwara detects unhappiness in Etsuko's expression, and warns her, "'You must keep your mind on happy things now. Your child.

And the future'" (24). But Etsuko's pregnancy is more than a source of happiness, it is why Mrs. Fujiwara believes Etsuko must be happy: "'Your attitude makes all the difference. A mother can take all the physical care she likes, she needs a positive attitude to bring up a child'" (25). Mrs. Fujiwara believes that remembering the dead should fall to people like herself; she does not even insist that her young adult son Kazuo accompany her to the cemetery that she visits each week. Etsuko's happiness is frequently cause for concern among the novel's characters. When Ogata-San repeats to Etsuko, "'You mustn't let this [argument between Ogata-San and Jiro] upset you,'" perhaps he has this concern in mind too, though he does not say it directly, and could just as easily repeat this to comfort himself (130-1). Both admonitions are relatively benign, and may indeed be more concerned with Etsuko's well being; but when Mrs. Fujiwara tells Etsuko that her attitude is as important as her physical health, she makes remembering and emotion things to control.

As other women offer advice in a similar vein—even strangers—we can see the repetition of questioning and judgment from others that may well have influenced Etsuko's mindset after war. While Etsuko visits a park in Inasa with Sachiko and Mariko, she also receives unsolicited "advice concerning the care of babies" from a kindly if indulgent mother who is preoccupied in part with the effect of music: "'Our older son doesn't have as fine an ear for music as Akira […] My husband says this is because he didn't hear good enough music when he was a baby, and I tend to think he's right. In those days, the radio was broadcasting so much military music. I'm sure it did no good at all" (118). The military's negative impact on education is explored more explicitly later in the novel, when a former pupil of Ogata-San's criticizes his work as a teacher and administrator who sided with the imperialist government; but the woman in the park is concerned with the type of education

that is communicated through culture and the arts, influencing children in their infancy. This mother does not seem to take issue with particular lyrics or messages, instead limiting her concern to her son's "ear for music," his ability to create it or even appreciate it. This may seem like a trivial concern in comparison to the more devastating losses documented throughout the novel, but at the same time it voices a suspicion that war and cultural manifestations of militarism might affect the deepest layers of mind and memory, influencing the skills her child can later acquire and even his perception of his surroundings and his culture. (We see a more dramatic example of this concern in *An Artist of the Floating World*, when a well-known neighborhood man with a mental disability is savagely beaten for continuing to sing jingoistic songs that he was praised for repeating years before.) Close to Mrs. Fujiwara's affect-focused advice of keeping a "positive attitude," this woman's advice of exposing children to "good music" focuses on the environment in which her child will be raised. Etsuko must put the sorrows of the war behind her, and also shield her child from negative sources of influence from the culture. Even though Etsuko has expresses suspicion at unremarkable memories that seem to stick out in her mind, here we see that everyday experiences in the form of her child's environment were precisely her concern.

Decades later, Etsuko's daughter Niki also attempts to shape Etsuko's relationship to memory, though her advice initially seems to oppose that which she has received so far. In the middle of her visit, Niki mentions that a "brilliant poet" and friend of hers is writing about Etsuko: "'I was telling her about you […] About you and Dad and how you left Japan. She was really impressed. She appreciates what it must have been like, how it wasn't quite as easy as it sounds'" (89). In response to this summary-of-a-summary of her life, Etsuko asserts that Niki likely got her information from her father, and that "despite all the

impressive articles he wrote about Japan, my husband never understood the ways of our culture, even less a man like Jiro" (90). But simply through the act of suggesting that her mother take pride in her past decisions, Niki has not quite deviated from the type of advice that Etsuko received from Mrs. Fujiwara and that of the nosy mother in the park in Inasa. Niki's advice about how to view her past amounts to another set of standards suggested for what a mother ought to remember or to forget. The advice may differ, but the concern with Etsuko's mental state and how her memories affect it recurs throughout her life, even into the present moment.

While the women around Etsuko give her advice about what she ought to remember, Etsuko occasionally questions how accurately others are "remembering" on her behalf, from Niki and her husband to Niki's "'marvellous friend'" the poet. Her skepticism arises in part from their distance from Japan, but also from their status as writers; she says that her husband never understood men like her first husband Jiro despite his writing about Japan, and she openly challenges the kinship that Niki's friend expresses with Etsuko. By the end of the novel, when Niki brings up her friend and her poetry again, Etsuko responds more gently but with a similar bemused tone. When Niki asks her mother for a memento from Japan—"'A photo or something […] Just to see what everything was like'" (177)—Etsuko responds skeptically: "'Well, Niki, I'm not so sure. It has to show what *every*-thing was like?'" (177-178, italics in original). In the end, Etsuko leaves Niki with a page from a calendar that depicts the hills over the harbor of Nagasaki; her explanation that a day trip there was the scene of a happy memory with Keiko clearly harkens back to the trip that she took with Sachiko and Mariko, suggesting that she has conflated another pair of memories in her account of life in Japan. But because the entire novel has not revealed the full significance of

that day until this picture is presented (that is, to Etsuko and to the reader who knows some of its context or the emotional valences associated with that setting), there seems to be an implicit critique of the project of preserving the memories of others through art or writing.

Etsuko's narrative juxtaposes the concerns of two groups: how parents (in this case, mothers) should forget the traumas of the past to raise their children, and what writers should recognize they cannot know or entirely represent—especially when they do not share the experiences of their subjects, though they believe they might be in a position to relate. Both parents and writers are thus concerned with how the war and the post-war experience will be remembered, forgotten, and narrated. And while Etsuko is undoubtedly close to the center of trauma—with little mention of the bombing destruction and the lives lost, suggesting it is too overwhelming to put into words—there is one moment that she seems to interpret as an extension of the war's destruction that she did not witness: the death of her eldest daughter Keiko. Reflecting on Keiko's death, Etsuko raises another link between trauma and the everyday:

> I never saw Keiko's room in Manchester, the room in which she died. It may seem morbid of a mother to have such thoughts, but on hearing of her suicide, the first thought that ran through my mind—before I registered even the shock—was to wonder how long she had been there like that before they found her. […]
>
> I have found myself continually bringing to mind that picture—one of my daughter hanging in her room for days on end. The horror of that image has never diminished, but it has long ceased to be a morbid matter; as with a wound on one's body, it is possible to develop an intimacy with the most disturbing of things. (54)

Etsuko is simultaneously preoccupied with an image of her daughter's body that she did not see, and also with the ways in which Keiko was unseen by others. She notes that she had never seen her daughter's room in Manchester, and she worries that Keiko was alone and unnoticed even long after her death. We also see the repeated reverberations of trauma, which focuses on a single image, and feels like a "wound" in Etsuko's own body. Unlike Eleanor Partiger's pain at the foot of the statue in *The Years*, Etsuko does not hesitate to claim this pain as her own. But Etsuko's preoccupation with the unseen aligns her with the writers she critiques. By beginning the novel with the note about what English newspapers assumed or got wrong in their writing about her daughter's death, Etsuko sets us up to search for what these newspapers missed; and though she is haunted by the (imagined) image of her daughter's death, and conflates or echoes memories of her daughter with those of Mariko, in the end she will show us that the unknown plays a prominent role in the legacy of this war.

Ultimately, Etsuko rejects this advice to forget. She names her daughter Keiko after her dead mother-in-law, she passes objects from her past on to her daughter Niki for use in a friend's poetry, and she pores over memories of the aftermath of war. But she is never wholly comfortable with the project of remembering; we know there are experiences from the war that she has not disclosed, and even those that she has discussed are promptly left, telling herself and her readers, "There is nothing to be gained in going over such matters again."

"But I see I am drifting:" Interrogating Memory and Selves in *An Artist of the Floating World*

In Ishiguro's second novel set in Japan, our narrator's suspicion of poetry and other forms of writing gives way to other characters' critiques of the visual arts leveled at our new

narrator; and the repeated admonishments for Etsuko to forget are replaced by recurring, conflicting messages about what artists and older members of a community should remember and renounce. Ever since his first forays into painting in youth, Masuji Ono tells us, people close to him have devalued his work and identity as an artist. The earliest detailed memory that Ono recalls is one of his father criticizing the character of people in the profession: "'Artists […] inhabit a world which gives them every temptation to become weak-willed and depraved" (46). This criticism is echoed years later by an imperialist named Matsuda, who tells the Ono, "'You are on the whole an astonishingly decadent crowd. Often with no more than a child's knowledge of the affairs of this world'" (170). But perhaps the most devastating of these comments on the "world" that artists like Ono inhabit comes from his well-meaning daughter Setsuko. She expresses concern at Ono's comparison of himself to men in positions of power who have died from suicide in the wake of Japan's defeat, telling him, "'Father painted some splendid pictures, and was no doubt most influential amongst other such painters. But Father's work had hardly to do with these larger matters of which we are speaking. Father was simply a painter. He must stop believing he has done some great wrong'" (192-3). Two of these characters pass moral judgment on Ono's profession, but all three generally agree that artists exist in a world of their own, one that is immoral, naïve, or simply benign. Though the novel's title takes the phrase "floating world" from a genre of art that depicted the pleasure districts of the Edo Period (Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art), the phrase "floating world" with its implications of fragility but also separation also resonates with this echoing critique of Ono and of artists in general.

But Ono is more than "'simply a painter.'" On the one hand, he and his family were victims of the devastation that World War II wrought on Japan: his wife Michiko was killed

in a "freak raid" near the end of the war, his cherished home that he owned through an "auction of prestige" was destroyed, and his son Kenji died as a soldier fighting on behalf of Japan in Manchuria. On the other hand, Ono also supported the imperialist Japanese government, both by painting propagandistic scenes that supported military expansionism, and (we eventually learn) by acting as an informant for the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities, reporting artists whose work could be seen as a betrayal of Japan's new political values. These experiences as a victim of war's destruction, and his interventions as a supporter of war, make it problematic to label Ono as peripheral to World War II. But he himself seems to hold this opinion; by the end of the novel, Ono struggles to convince himself that even his worst actions really affected the course of Japanese history and culture.

As Ono looks back on his life with these three extreme identities in mind—victim, perpetrator, and helpless bystander—he considers each memory carefully to forge a manageable sense of self from this tumultuous past. This makes it simultaneously important to him to focus on the story at hand and also difficult to do to. He grapples with this task by commenting on his own memories: explaining how or why he remembers certain moments, probing his recollections for traces of inaccuracy, and drawing or refusing to draw connections between one memory and the next. His refrain—"but I see I am drifting"—reminds us of his narrative aims, but often this phrase intrudes jarringly when the connections between one event and the next may be quite clear to readers. And even with these frequent meta-narrative interventions from Ono, he only confronts the most traumatic or damning of these moments from an oblique perspective: in refracted, secondhand forms, in asides that set up a scene (such as Kenji's funeral) or are reported to other characters or by them (such as the brief condolences paid by the former owner of his house). By examining

the "wandering" and echoing texture of Ono's memories, and the interpretations that he offers or refuses to offer for this, we can see the impact of self-interrogation on narrators and artists who tell stories of war—notably, two positions that Ishiguro himself occupies.

One conversation between Ono and his elder daughter, Setsuko, demonstrates the type of moment when Ono "drifts" from one memory to the next, and how plainly readers may see the nature of the connections between these supposedly unrelated scenes. When Setsuko stumbles on Ono in the reception room, he is reminded of the respect for such rooms that his strict father instilled in him, and of one night when his father denigrated the morality of artists and destroyed his earliest paintings in the reception room. After recalling that formative night in detail, Ono returns his attention to the present and to his daughter, who suggests that he ought to meet past colleagues to smooth over any "'misunderstandings […] about the past'" before investigations begin for his younger daughter Noriko's marriage (48-49). It is clear to readers why his daughter's anticipation of judgment from a detective would bring to his mind a foundational moment of judgment from his youth, so when he transitions between these by saying "However, I see I am drifting," it is clear that this "drifting" serves narrative aims. Drawing attention to the challenges and questions that he has faced may not feel like the most solid ground on which to construct a sense of self, but this interrogative refrain at least tells Ono and us which questions have recurred throughout his life.

Ono also attends to gaps and uncertainties in his memory, drawing our attention to these by probing them in detail and attempting to trace their cause. When he recalls a recent visit from his family, when he insisted too forcefully that his grandson Ichiro should pretend to be a samurai when he plays rather than an American cowboy until Ichiro ran away, Ono states,

> I cannot recall precisely what I did with myself for the next several minutes. Quite possibly I remained sitting there in the piano room, gazing at Ichiro's drawings, thinking about nothing in particular as I am increasingly prone to do these days. Eventually, though, I rose to my feet and went in search of my family. (33)

Ono alerts us to a gap in his memory, and offers an interpretation that attributes this gap in memory to his old age. This is, significantly, just after we have learned that Ono has hidden his paintings (or "tidied [them] away for the moment," as he puts it to his grandson [30-31]); so when he subtly attributes this empty moment to his retirement, we can already see its significance for his sense of purpose and self. This is by no means the only moment when Ono offers an interpretation for his faulty memory. At various times, he tells us he misremembers his exact phrases in an argument due to the passage of time (69), that his memories of a family event are fuzzy from a combination of alcohol and nerves (132), and that he might have mixed up his mentor's musings on legacy with his own due to the inheritance of speech patterns from one generation to the next (162). He draws on a litany of reasons that his memory may not be reliable, and in doing so, he displays fastidious attention to the accuracy of his memories and with how they will be received by others. He may be searching for excuses and self-exoneration for what he cannot remember or will not admit, but in order to do so he has internalized the skepticism that others have leveled at him for years.

If Ono's most salient contribution to the pro-imperialist movement is his testimony against other artists, then his concern with narrative accuracy may be easily explained as a trace of this experience in the texture of his memory. Scholars have previously analyzed Ono

and the self-accusatory nature of his narrative as an examination of historical determinism;[50] but on the level of the individual narrative of identity, his halting narrative can illustrate the consequences of the quest for narrative logic and accuracy in testimony—both as testimony is conceived in life writing and in more investigative settings. Leigh Gilmore argues that some authors reject traditional styles of autobiography, or even the genre label itself, because they do not accept what they believe to be faulty standards of self-narrative that prioritize facts that can be readily verified by others over affective or mental truths (14). In this case, Ono appears to be the primary advocate for truth; he has internalized this expectation, and it leads to a hesitant narrative. On the other hand, in the rigorous setting of the scientific memory laboratory, psychologist Gillian Cohen concludes that memory seems more unreliable and error-prone than it does in our everyday lives (389). (In the laboratory experiments that Cohen observes, subjects are not allowed to admit ignorance or doubt; then when they are probed to force a clear recollection, their memories often turn out to be imperfect or false.) We see this lack of subtlety play out when Ono protests to the police at Kuroda's house, "'I had no idea […] something like this would happen. I merely suggested to the committee someone come round and give Mr. Kuroda a talking-to for his own good;" and "star[ing]" at Kuroda's paintings as they continue to burn, "It was quite unnecessary to burn those. There were many fine works amongst them'" (183). The committee and the police that act on Ono's words only see Kuroda and his works in a binary, simplistic judgment of traitorous or appropriate. Notably, however, Ono does not narrate his testimony to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities—we only see the consequences. Still, this is a

[50] Thinking of judgment in terms of historical narrative, Timothy Wright argues, "Ishiguro uses Ono as a figure to examine what Milan Kundera has called *the tribunal of history*—the subtly coercive means by which the present condemns the past in order to surreptitiously validate itself" (63).

central moment in Ono's life, one that his narrative has hinted toward as his daughter suggests smoothing over past relationships, as Kuroda's pupil coldly recounts the atrocities of Kuroda's prisoner experience without acknowledging how Ono was involved, and as Ono recounts a day that he believes he saw Kuroda in the middle of the street. In the narrative of Ono's life, this moment encapsulates multiple roles at once: he attempts to counteract what he and others believe to be immorality in his field of painting, but recognizes himself (then and now, given the reference to the fire that so closely mirrors his father's judgment), and ultimately his powerlessness over the situation.

There are memories that seem quite vivid in Ono's mind, though this vivacity again hints at his extreme attention to his own narrative accuracy. One of these memories is covered at the beginning and end of the chapter "November 1949," and it involves Ono's reputation. Rather than opening this chapter by describing a moment close to the narrative present (as he does in the other three chapters), he abruptly claims, "My recollection of the first time I ever saw Dr. Saito remains quite vivid, and I am thus confident enough of its accuracy" (133). He concludes by revisiting the vivacity of this memory, insisting, "There can be no doubt that Setsuko is mistaken" (194). The memory in question is of Dr. Saito introducing himself to Ono just after Ono has moved into his beloved house (gained from "an auction of prestige" by a the family of a prominent member of the community [9]). Ono insist that Dr. Saito recognized his name on the gatepost, and introduced himself to Ono by saying it was "'A real honour to have someone of your stature here in our neighbourhood. I am myself, you see, involved in the world of fine art'" (131). This is yet another moment that Ono uses to trace the reach of his influence within the artistic community and even beyond it; but Setsuko insists that "'Dr. Saito was never so familiar with Father's career,'" hinting that

his condemnation of his own career at Noriko's *miai* earlier that year were unnecessary and even troubling (193). The repetition of this memory from the beginning of this chapter to the close, including the phrase "'A great honour to have an artist of your stature in this neighbourhood,'" draws our attention to the meandering, expansive nature of Ono's memory and all that is contained within what seems to be a single thought. Though he begins and ends the section "November 1949" with this moment, it ranges from sixteen years ago to the previous month, and through the early days of his tutelage under Mori-San (who guides his pupils to adapt the "floating world" tradition with Western influences), to his first meetings with Matsuda and his rejection of his master's style, even to the encounter with police who were destroying the art and home of his former pupil Kuroda. When Ono insists on returning to the narrative thread of these two memories (Dr. Saito's greeting sixteen years ago, as filtered through Setsuko's protests against his memory from the previous month), we are asked not only to consider this memory and its significance afresh, but also to witness the almost disorienting narrative structure and span of events that come to bear on this moment, and what the nature of his "stature" was as an artist, then and now.

For all of his self-interrogation and attention to detail, only a few recollections are strikingly distinct in their texture. One of these is a memory that is embedded in Ono's mind so hauntingly that he does not feel compelled to evaluate its accuracy. Instead, he introduces it so briefly that readers might not notice the shift in time and place—an uncharacteristic move for a narrator who signals every other shift in time quite clearly. Near the end of the novel, Ono transitions abruptly from describing the night when his mentor Mori-San seized his first works of propagandistic art (ousting Ono from his villa of artists in the process), to describing the morning when his betrayal of his own star pupil is revealed:

> For all that, it is clear that such arrogance and possessiveness on the part of a teacher—however renowned he may be—is to be regretted. From time to time, I still turn over in my mind that cold winter's morning and the smell of burning growing ever stronger in my nostrils. It was the winter before the outbreak of war and I had been standing anxiously at the door of Kuroda's house—a shabby little affair he used to rent in the Nakamachi area. The burning smell, I could tell, originated from somewhere within the house, from where also came the sound of a woman sobbing. (181)

If the previous scene had not vividly described the sunset that he and Mori-San watched, it might take readers even longer to notice the leap from that evening in the 1920s to the winter morning of the 1930s, and from the judgment that Ono was subjected to at the hands of his mentor to the persecution that he brought to bear on his pupil Kuroda. The significance of this memory for Ono's identity, career, and legacy are clear. We witness his destructive influence as a "Member of the Cultural Committee of the Interior Department," and as "an official advisor to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities" (182). In the same moment that this is revealed, though, we also see the limits of Ono's power, when the officers at the scene coldly order him to leave, telling him, "'This is a police matter now, Mr. Ono. It doesn't concern you any longer'" (183). Just as these two aspects of Ono's identity—official advisor and meddling civilian—seem impossible to reconcile, this memory is nearly impossible to incorporate within the orderly narrative of this journal-form novel. It is as if it has entered the story by accident, with very little fanfare and no interpretation offered.

The distinct memory of smelling smoke is a recurring thread in two more of Ono's most significant memories: one that he recounts in detail, and one that he only recounts

secondhand. It first surfaces in the earliest memory that Ono recalls for his readers: the night when his father burned his paintings. Ono does not see his father burn the paintings, says that his mother would not confirm that this had happened, and finds no evidence of ashes in the earthenware pot in the center of the room. Yet the gathering of his paintings and the smell of smoke is enough evidence to Ono that his father has destroyed his paintings. He tells his mother that this attempt to deter him from creating art was unsuccessful, punning on the use of fire by saying twice, "'All he's done is kindled my ambition'" (47, 48). We are thus poised to expect that the "smell of burning growing ever stronger" will be a fire set by Mori-San when he refuses to return Ono's new propagandistic paintings; but when the "smell of burning" introduces the morning when Kuroda's house was ransacked by police, the sudden narrative progression and reappearance of smell suggest that Ono feels he took on the role of the condemning patriarch almost by accident. The final chapter introduces yet another significance for the smell of smoke, when Ono visits Matsuda in the narrative present of June 1950: "A soft breeze was coming into the room, and with it a faint odour of smoke;" he remarks to Matsuda, not directly to his readers, "'The smell of burning still makes me uneasy […] It's not so long ago it meant bombings and fire […] Next month, it will be five years already since Michiko died'" (200). Readers have been prepared to expect destroyed art when we hear of smoke, but this brings up an entirely new dimension of war's destruction; and because Ono feels that his art may have spurred the coming of war, these two dimensions are linked. He is prompted to remember, but notably not to describe, the loss of his wife and the sustained trauma of repeated bomb attacks by this same smell; and when he implicitly links the "uneasy" feeling that smoke causes to his wife's death, it raises the possibility that

he has felt this tragic undercurrent with each intrusion of smoke in his mind, though he has not mentioned it at any point in the novel.

Smell, like other small details of a larger moment, is strongly connected to traumatic memory. People living with post-traumatic stress often report that seemingly insignificant details, aspects of a moment that would be meaningless to people who had not shared, can trigger symptoms from flashbacks to general anxiety. In his investigation of trauma, David J. Morris notes, "environmental stimuli associated with the traumatic event, even the most trivial and spurious stimuli, like the smell of diesel fuel, can become triggers" (115). But scent has its own particular traits: even though "Flashbacks, as they are experienced by survivors of trauma, tend to be dominated by the visual sense, […] they are often triggered by smells" (115). In other words, flashbacks are usually experienced visually, but they can be brought on by smell. The linked senses of smell and taste also figure heavily in the "madeleine moment" of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*; and as Evelyne Ender points out, the link between these sensations and memory is not limited to pleasant moments from the past. To counteract prevailing associations between these memory triggers and positive moments, Ender cites a local newspaper's description of the overwhelming, intrusive memories of a Canadian general who is reminded of the violent and mass deaths he witnessed in Rwanda as he walks though a market at home in Canada, because "'in the markets of Kigali, Rwanda's capital, the odor of rotting flesh and rotting fruit mingled in the open air during the slaughter'" (9). For Ono, this single smell is associated with multiple life-changing moments from his life. As his mind returns again and again to this single sensation, it underscores the fact that even the barest sensory materials can be imbued with multiple levels of significance. Smoke features strongly in memories that are fundamental to multiple

visions of himself, from the persecution of his art, to the persecution he inflicted on others, and finally to the death of his wife that brings together victimhood, perpetration, and powerlessness to stop the war's destruction. It is clear why the process of remembering and retelling would be at once laborious and crucial to Ono.

But Ono is not alone in his disrupted perception of time. He accuses his daughter Setsuko of misremembering their conversation about preparing for marriage investigations the previous year, and of being ill informed about the history of Ono and Dr. Saito's acquaintanceship. Ono is confident that he remembers Setsuko's word accurately when he first records their conversation in "October 1948," with no hints that he suspects himself of a faulty or sporadic memory; and since we can compare his record of their conversation then to their competing claims now, it seems possible that Setsuko may indeed have forgotten this exchange. Setsuko may have forgotten this conversation, or may deny it deliberately—and in fact Ono may have been mistaken after all. Though we cannot trace the origin of these diverging memories between father and daughter, it is possible that Ono may not be alone in his distorted memory.

More significant, perhaps, are the instances of what appears to be disruption in memory or perception at a national level. Because the narrative present is set from 1948 to 1950, and does not recount the years of the war directly, the novel only shows us the lingering devastation of the early post-war years, including the drawn-out process of reconstruction that is described in terms of a form of devastation in and of itself. He describes the rubble beyond Mrs. Kawakami's restaurant—the one remaining establishment in the formerly bustling pleasure district—thusly:

> Coming out of Mrs. Kawakami's now, you could stand at her doorway and believe you have just been drinking at some outpost of civilization. All around, there is nothing but a desert of demolished rubble. […] 'War damage,' Mrs. Kawakami calls it. But I remember walking along the district shortly after the surrender and many of those buildings were still standing. The Migi-Hidari was still there, the windows all blown out, part of the roof, fallen in. And I remember wondering to myself as I walked past those shattered buildings, if they would ever again come back to life. Then I came by one morning and all the bulldozers had pulled down everything. So now that side of the street is nothing but rubble. No doubt the authorities have their plans, but it has been that way for three years. The rain collects in small puddles and grows stagnant against the broken brick. (26-27)

Ono's extreme attention to accuracy and order is displayed here as he corrects Mrs. Kawakami's use of the term "war damage" to describe the rubble left by bulldozers. On one level, Ono's lingering gaze on this scene brings to our attention that the process of post-war construction is only progressing in fits and starts, the stagnant water showing how this state has settled into the environment. But in another sense, it highlights the extent to which strict attention to factual accuracy can obscure certain facts as well. After all, the rubble in the street *is* the result of the war and the current occupation. Ono's internal debate with Mrs. Kawakami over whether to call this "war damage" illustrates another way that chronology and literalism can erase some truths about war, especially how its effects bleed beyond the physical and temporal boundaries of combat. The temporal boundaries of this war are still up for debate in Japan; but rather than safeguarding a narrow definition of wartime, many have advocated for an expanded sense of what constituted "the war." According to sociologist

Akiko Hashimoto, a vocal contingent of "Japanese progressive intellectuals and educators" argues that "the Fifteen-Year War" is a more fitting name to describe this conflict because it acknowledges "the salience of Japanese imperial aggression in East Asia for a decade preceding the war in the Pacific" (8-9).[51] It seems likely that Ono would have sided with the more conservative voices in this argument, who protest that Japan has been excessive in the guilt it assigns to itself for this war; but in this scene, Ono at least recognizes that the destruction of this war resonates long past Japan's declaration of surrender. Rather than showing us a lone man who is "stuck in the past," scenes like this hint that senses of identity, chronology, and responsibility have been disrupted at the level of the nation.

Ono also attends to how others receive the news of deaths in his own family, opening the novel by excusing another character for what appears to be insensitivity in the face of his losses in the war. He recounts the "auction of prestige" by which he won the rights to purchase the house of "one of the city's most respected and influential men," Akira Sugimura (7); and he remembers a visit from one of Sugimura's daughters just after the war ended, when she "gave only the briefest of commiserations on hearing about my wife and about Kenji, before embarking on questions concerning the bomb damage" as it affected the structure of the home (11). Ono notices shifts in her normally "haughty" behavior, "how her eyes would roam involuntarily around the room, and how she would occasionally pause abruptly in the middle of one of her measured formal sentences;" he concludes that "she was experiencing waves of emotion at finding herself back in this house once more" (11). Here, Ono recognizes a number of traits in Sugimura's daughter that he too exhibits: a normally

[51] Hashimoto also explains that "as people became wary of the political baggage that each name carried, the war ultimately came to be called 'the last world war,' 'that war,' and even 'that unfortunate period of the past.'" A letter from Ishiguro's father Shizuo, housed within the Ransom Center's Ishiguro Archive, uses the vague moniker "the War" as well (2001).

measured manner of speaking, overtaken now by apparent insensitivity, and inability to focus on the conversation at hand coupled with a deep concern with the destruction around her. Ono may well introduce this woman to offer an explanation for his own wandering attention, gaps in memory, and seemingly callous behavior. Indeed, when Ono does bring up his son Kenji, he becomes irritated with himself for doing so in what he believes to be a "trivial" argument with his daughter Setsuko over the parenting practices of Ichiro.

Archival holdings indicate that when Ishiguro began the project that would become *An Artist of the Floating World*, it was far from a foregone conclusion that he would return to the single character narrator device. Early versions feature as many as four narrators in an intergenerational story: a grandfather character similar to Ono, and a grandson roughly equivalent to Ichiro in adult form, but also a grandmother and an aunt. This version of the project also extends across a much wider timespan, from the early twentieth century to the mid-1980s ("*An Artist of the Floating World*: 'Second Novel'"). But in the final published novel, as Ono contemplates three roles that he may have played in the war at various points—victim, perpetrator, bystander—his narrative style brings the complexity of a multi-perspectival novel to this four-part fictionalized memoir. The historical and familial events that might be considered by multiple characters in the first project are instead revisited in the context of Ono's varying impressions of himself, over the course of months rather than years. As a bridge between the past and the present, from the survivors of the bombings (like Ono) to members of Ishiguro's generation who were not yet born when it ended, Ono may seem like a troublesome cipher—after all, even he has trouble weighing the strands of his relationship to the war when he looks back on his achievements, failures, and missed opportunities. But these divergent identities—victim, perpetrator, and bystander—throw into

relief how many interpretations and senses of self can spring from a single memory. As for Ishiguro himself, Ono's work as an artist and as a storyteller in this four-part volume may resonate with Ishiguro's categorization in the "international" literary movement of the 1980s, and more specifically writing in the wake of the nationality-focused publicity of *A Pale View of Hills* ("An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro" 135). Like his protagonist, Ishiguro has been tasked by others with representing Japan through his art, as critics and casual readers alike read his work historically rather than an allegory. But his most famous novel on World War II, Ishiguro will make a third return to this period of history through a new perspective.

"Why should I deny it?" Remembering "The Best of England" in Oneself and Others in *The Remains of the Day*

In the prologue to *The Remains of the Day* (1989), character narrator Stevens levels a subtle critique at his new American employer's understanding of what it means to "see" one's own country. When Mr. Farraday asks Stevens, who has served as the butler at Darlington Hall from the 1920s to the narrative present of 1956, "'How do you ever get to see around this beautiful country of yours?'" Stevens replies, "'It has been my privilege to see the best of England over the years, sir, within these very walls'" (4). Over the course of the novel, we learn that many of the people he encounters during his trip would critique his description of Darlington Hall as "the best of England," as we learn that Lord Darlington's name has become synonymous with fascism, anti-Semitism, and Nazi sympathizing. Stevens staves off guilt and shame for his work in Darlington's home by reconsidering definitions of dignity and greatness; and as with Masuji Ono, the nature of Stevens' profession as a butler may lead us to ask if he had the power to either help or hinder the course of history. This

internal conflict plays out in Steven's mind and in the pages of this travelogue that Stevens records during a motoring trip across England's countryside. This trip leads Stevens to revisit, reconsider, and revise his memories; and the texture of these recollections and his interpretation of them reveal the disorienting process of acknowledging the role of creation, inference, and interpretation in memories—both of our own lives, and in the lives of others.

If "I see I am drifting" was Masuji Ono's refrain in *An Artist of the Floating World*, then Stevens' refrain is "Why should I deny it?" Stevens deploys this phrase in varying forms in at least half a dozen instances, ranging from, often in moments where personal feelings and professional duties have clashed; but he rarely acknowledges this class directly, despite the anti-denial phrasing.[52] Both "drifting" and "denying it" draw our attention to the life story that Ono and Stevens construct throughout each novel, though each indicates subtly different concerns. Ono's refrain implies that he strives to preserve chronology and causality, and that he fears becoming unmoored in his memories. Stevens too accuses himself of "drifting" at times, but more often than not, he admits this diversion was intentional, often as a temporary reprieve from an embarrassing moment in the present, or for another form of comfort. On the other hand, Stevens' refrain "why should I deny it?," indicates that he is concerned with what people might assume he might not "admit" or say, as if he is aware of expectations that he maintain a stiff upper lip as a form of "dignity in keeping with [his] position," to use the Hayes Society's term (33) by refusing to disclose his motivations. It also suggests that he is

[52] Stevens uses variations on this phrase when he discloses that he has been considering a motoring trip after receiving Miss Kenton's letter (5); when he declares that memories of the 1923 conference bring him "a large sense of triumph" (110); when he admits the romance novels Miss Kenton caught him reading bring him some pleasure (168); when he wonders what might have happened if he had agreed to reinstate their evening meetings (175); when he admits that his "large sense of triumph" on the night of the meeting with Herr Ribbentrop was preceded by some sadness (227); and when he exposes his sorrow at leaving Miss Kenton forever (239).

attuned to what he has not been able to admit before, and readers are often left with the sense that something in fact has been denied in this explanation. Indeed, as each "why should I deny it?" occurs in the midst of a sentence, separated by em dashes, the punctuation reveals that Stevens still hesitates to speak. This hesitation is balanced—perhaps even caused—by the wide variety of textures and interpretations that Stevens can apply to memories of a single night.[53] Much as Ishiguro and his contemporaries must grapple with varied and contradictory reports of World War II in others, Stevens seems compelled to account for the intersections and deviations between his life story and those of others (like Lord Darlington and his father), and to lend them cohesion and meaning that they may not have felt in life.

While the narrators of Ishiguro's first two novels lived in towns that were heavily bombed during World War II (Nagasaki in *A Pale View of Hills*, and an unnamed city in *An Artist of the Floating World*), Darlington Hall seems to have escaped "the Blitz" entirely, as no mention is made of any damage to the Hall or to Oxfordshire where it is located. So although Stevens (like Etsuko and Ono) does not narrate any of the events of World War II, and goes so far as to avoid any mention of the 1940s, this novel feels still more distant from the battlefield, and from the air raids that defined the experience of this war against others for many British civilians. This is not to say that Stevens, his career, and the household he serves are neutral observers. On the contrary, through Lord Darlington's activism and political connections, Stevens' work at Darlington Hall could be said to support the policies and philosophies of fascism, anti-Semitism, and Nazi Germany. Stevens may be right when he

[53] James M. Lang theorizes that Stevens' narrative displays that "public and collective historical accounts can suppress and deform private memory," and while "private memories" can allow us to "recapture and relive the openness and contingency of historical moments in the face of the deterministic tendencies of the national collective memory," it also shows that self-interest in the judgment of these individual memories can obscure our view of the past as well.

protests that many British households and politicians openly associated with the likes of British Union of Fascists leader Sir Oswald Mosley (136-7), and of course anti-Semitism could be found far beyond Germany. But on at least one occasion, Stevens carries out orders from Lord Darlington that force him to put these beliefs into practice, when he follows Darlington's instructions to fire all Jewish members of the household staff. In this scene, Stevens arguably takes the most active role of any of Ishiguro's narrators, while still maintaining a thin sense of separation from his actions because he carries out orders from his employer. Though he tells Miss Kenton that he disagreed with Darlington's decision, the only hints of his resistance are buried in his repeated questions: he responds, "'Sir?'" when Darlington tells him "'We cannot have Jews on the staff here at Darlington Hall,'" and says "'I beg your pardon, sir?'" when Darlington tells him of the two Jewish staff members, "'Of course, you'll have to let them go'" (146-7). This echoing question is the closest that Stevens comes to challenging Darlington, a persistent but ultimately ineffectual refrain as he ultimately follows Darlington's instructions against what he would like us to see as his better judgment.

While Etsuko and Ono both experience the death of a romantic partner in the air raids in Japan, and both lose a child to the war directly or indirectly, Stevens does not have as immediate a personal connection to the battlefields of World War II. This is not to say that Stevens is entirely separated from the war and its losses, though. Lord Darlington's godson, Mr. Cardinal is killed in the war; his attention to Stevens' visibly upset state at the 1923 conference, and Stevens' clear memory of two conversations they shared (including a botched discussion of "'the facts of life'" that Lord Darlington requests Stevens make on his behalf) suggest that Stevens might have felt Mr. Cardinal's loss keenly, though he only

briefly notes to Miss Kenton that "'his lordship was very fond of Mr. Cardinal and took it very badly'" (234). Then, there is Lord Darlington himself, who appears to have died in disgrace after his political interventions escalated from criticizing the Treaty of Versailles to arranging diplomatic meetings between British and Nazi German officials. Though Stevens partially reflects on Darlington's life and legacy to measure the impact and value of his own career, it seems clear that he felt a personal connection to his employer of thirty years as well.

Other than brief mentions of the Treaty of Versailles, and the tragic disintegration of Lord Darlington's German friend that ends in his death from suicide, World War I is not mentioned—an odd absence, as Stevens presumably would have been of age to fight in this war. Stevens does mention that he lost a family member in war, though this occurred long before World War II and even World War I. Early in the novel, Stevens rather abruptly reveals that his older brother Leonard died during the Boer War, in what he calls "a most un-British attack on civilian Boer settlements" (40). Stevens does not discuss Leonard and his death in the context of war's destruction, though, but instead to demonstrate his father's dignity and dedication to professional service as a butler, as he volunteered to serve as valet to the general who was responsible for this "particularly infamous manoeuvre" (40). Stevens describes his father's professionalism despite the general's own undignified behavior, including "relat[ing] anecdotes of his military accomplishments—as of course military gentlemen are wont to do to their valets in the privacy of their rooms" (42), and praises his father's decision not to keep the "unusually large tip" that the general leaves for him (41). His father's refusal of this tip illustrates the difficulty of separating the work of service from the acts of the men one serves. By refusing the general's tip, Stevens' father sets himself

apart from his employer, who invites the general "to lay the foundations of a lucrative business transaction" Stevens also notes that the general was poised to conduct such business because of the terms under which he was "discreetly retired" from military work (41), meaning that he is still profiting off of his disastrous military career. At the same time, his fathers' livelihood is tied to Mr. Silvers' business, so he cannot entirely divest from this without forsaking his professional role.

Despite Stevens' criticism of the general, they share some surprising common traits. They both generally exhibit a level of attachment to their professions that equates their careers with their identity. Although we could imagine Stevens thinking of the general in similar terms to the lesser butlers who he describes as "playing some pantomime role" (43), their profession is central to both. But there is another, more specific connection between them in their use of military language. One point of evidence for the General's deplorable behavior is his language: "[The General's] talk was conspicuous for an eagerness to apply military similes to a very wide variety of matters" (41). But as he recounts a few key scenes from his professional and personal life, Stevens himself turns to similar phrases when recounting his tasks in managing Darlington Hall. He describes creating a "staff plan" for the 1923 conference and probing it for weakness "as, I imagine, a general might prepare for battle," and even says that he gave his staff "a military-style 'pep talk'" (77). This language is not limited to the occasion of this political and military conference. When Miss Kenton remarks that his "butler's pantry" is so bare and damp that it "resembles a prison cell," Stevens explains to his readers that this room must be kept starkly lit and absent of décor, as it is "the heart of the house's operations, not unlike a general's headquarters during a battle" (165). In each of these moments, Stevens does not simply apply military terms—he uses

similes, the same figure of speech that he critiques the general for using so liberally during his visit to the home where his father was employed. Stevens adds hedging language between these ("as, *I imagine*, a general might prepare for battle," "*not unlike* a general's headquarters") or scare quotes that emphasize the figurative nature of his comparison ("a military-style 'pep talk'"); but even as he distances himself from the military actions he references, he repeatedly uses it to describe his work. And it is perhaps no coincidence that he uses these terms when describing his work on days when he has distanced himself from his father and Miss Kenton. Stevens' language here can be seen as an inappropriate misuse of military language, or as a subtle form of aligning his work with war and acknowledging the destruction that his employer's charitable work ultimately supported. The meaning that we assign to this language depends on our perspective of Stevens' influence over the war: is he a marginal figure who has no claim to such terms, or is he a perpetrator whose support of Lord Darlington and execution of his anti-Semitic orders makes him complicit in similar blunders to those of the general? Stevens does not seem aware of the subtle hypocrisy of his critique, so it is up to readers to decide what this language means for the story of Stevens' life and legacy.

The memories Stevens recounts, and the way that he recounts them, present questions about his role on the edge of World War II, and his interpretations of it today; and though there are patterns to his recollections and the interpretations he offers, there is such variety that it seems clear that his memories do not serve one particular interpretation—as much as he or we might hope this to be the case. Narrative theorist James Phelan used Stevens' story to introduce six separate forms of narrative unreliability; but rather than listing these as a means of "diagnosing" Stevens or other characters, Phelan explained that his goal was to

"move away from the common assumption that reliability and unreliability are a binary pair […] and, instead, to recognize that narrators exist along a wide spectrum" (53).[54] By studying the forms that Stevens' memory takes from the perspective of cognitive psychology, studying the same narrative with forms of memory in mind, we can see that Stevens' narrative also bridges categories of memory experience: between flashback and flashbulb memory (not unlike that of Eleanor Partiger in front of the Edith Cavell statue in *The Years*), and also between vivid yet incomplete memories of unincorporated traumatic moments and enticingly incomplete ones that suggest an attempt at building suspense and redemption.

Some of Stevens' memories are all the more vivid for their strangeness. When he remembers the night of his father's death, for example, he is struck by Mrs. Mortimer's effusive presence in the room. The first time he visited his father, he recalls, "I noticed she reeked powerfully of fat and roast cooking" (104). And he is still preoccupied by Mrs. Mortimer after his father has died, comparing the grease marks that her apron has left on her face after crying to "a participant in a minstrel show," as well as her smell: "I had expected the room to smell of death, but on account of Mrs. Mortimer—or else her apron—the room was dominated by the smell of roasting" (109). Between the "minstrel-show" appearance of her face, and the overpowering smell of food, Mrs. Mortimer seems to have an overwhelming, almost garish emotional presence (the sound of weeping, the image of a face painted to highlight facial expressions and play to racist stereotypes). Combined with the vivid smell of roasting associated with the diplomatic gathering, Mrs. Mortimer seems almost excessively tied to life, but it may simply be the gap between Stevens' expectations and his

[54] Kathleen Wall also examines the novel's deviation from "our usual definition of an unreliable narrator as one whose 'norms and values' differ from those of the implied author" (18), finding that "the novel may be *about* Stevens' attempts to grapple with his unreliable memories and interpretations and the havoc that his dishonesty has played on his life" (23).

experience that makes him repeat this detail. As seen in the analysis of Ono's memories of the smell of smoke through Morris and Enders' examples of scent as a trigger of trauma, here it is useful to remember that traumatic memories are frequently made up of small, surprising details of the scene. In this case, the aspects of this scene that Stevens retains are not simply surprising because they are minor details. Rather, they remain in Stevens' mind because they contrast sharply with the understated emotions displayed by his father, who asks Stevens with an "impatient look" if "'everything is [in] hand'" [97], and his own broadly positive reactions ("'I'm so glad Father is feeling better'"). We only need to look to Stevens' own clearly "under-reported" references to his emotional reactions once he resumes work at the reception—where others note that he seems to be crying, and where he responds to other's emotional displays by mirroring them, "smil[ing] also" and "smil[ing] again" to see this fraught relationship with emotional display. [55]

These memories of his father's death and their final moments together seem reliable in part because of their surprising contents and seemingly unprocessed nature. But in other memories surrounding this night—memories of the discussions involving the United States politician Mr. Lewis and the French representative M. Dupont—Stevens seems to play up the gaps in his memories or general "premonitions" (that he acknowledges may be a product of his knowledge today) as a means of creating suspense. When he recounts Mr. Lewis' early arrival at Darlington Hall, he warns readers, "It is possible this is a case of hindsight colouring my memory, but I have a distinct feeling that it was at this moment I first sensed something odd, something duplicitous perhaps, about this apparently charming American gentleman" (87). Stevens warns us from the start to suspect Mr. Lewis of duplicity, but he

[55] Wall points to this "fail[ure] to report emotions or reactions that other characters notice" as one aspect of his unreliability as expressed through "Scene and Commentary" (25).

acknowledges that he has no reason to do so at this point in the memory. But even this warning this reads more like a move to arouse interest than to fix an inaccurate recollection of that moment in time. Later, when Stevens overhears Mr. Lewis reporting Lord Darlington's own critical words about the French to M. Dupont, he claims he only heard snatches of this discussion because the heavy bedroom doors muffled the conversation (95). This too would likely pique the interest of many readers, inviting us to imagine what has gone unheard and how M. Dupont will react when he rises to speak during the final night of the conference. In these cases, Stevens seems to deliberately report just the right mix of memory fragments and present knowledge to engineer suspense in readers and underscore the triumphant conclusion of this event, when M. Dupont pledges to shift French policies to be sympathetic with Germany at an upcoming international conference (100). Set against the jarring memories of his father's deathbed that play out alongside these stories of intrigue and triumph, as both events unfold at the same time, we are confronted with the uneven terrain of Stevens' memories. While memories of this professional triumph are integrated into Stevens' self-perception (even lending it the narrative qualities of intrigue, suspense, and triumph), the memories of his father's death bear their own subtle reflection of Stevens' life and personality.

Of all the moments from the past that Stevens recounts, a few are "lodged" in his memory, though they are divorced from their context—and as Stevens works to re-contextualize them, his scrutiny and interpretive comments reveal his fraught relationship to both the personal and the professional aspects of his life. The first of these occurs when Stevens remembers a somber comment about his father's declining ability as an under-butler. He first attributes this statement to Miss Kenton, remembering it in the context of an

argument about his father's most recent mistakes, and says that her last words on the matter were an appeal: "'These errors may be trivial in themselves, Mr. Stevens, but you must yourself realize their larger significance'" (59). Immediately after describing this exchange, however, Stevens realizes, "I am not sure Miss Kenton spoke quite so boldly that day," because this exchange took place when they did not no each other quite so well (60). He then places this phrase in the context of an exchange with Lord Darlington, as they prepare for the 1923 conference. Stevens recalls that it was Lord Darlington who warned, "'What happens within this house after that [conference] may have considerable repercussions' […] And it was then, I believe, that his lordship said as he looked down again into his volume and awkwardly fingered an entry: 'These errors may be trivial in themselves, Stevens, but you must yourself realize their larger significance'" (62). Transposed from the mouth of one character to the next, little more than three pages apart, this phrase echoes in the novel as much as it echoes in Stevens' mind. Its repetition hints that Stevens is preoccupied (then and now) with his father's declining health, possibly concerned that others are judging his father's health and his own ability to manage the house as a butler as well. But another layer of guilt is introduced when Stevens links this decision to the mounting pressure of Darlington's conference. When this phrase is transposed from the argument with Miss Kenton to an appeal from Lord Darlington, the "larger significance" shifts in meaning. Cutting back his proud father's duties against his wishes is not solely motivated by concerns for his father's well being, or even by pride in the quality of Stevens' staff plan. It becomes a decision in support of the conference's goal of developing welcoming relations with Germany. The stakes of this memory are therefore quite high, as Stevens revisits the personal impact of his career and the political consequences.

If Stevens had not felt obliged to turn over this memory again, placing it more accurately in the context of his life and the state of his relationship with Miss Kenton at the time, his readers likely would not have suspected that this memory was faulty. And while his revision indicates that he is aware of potential faults in his memory and is working to counteract them, this rewriting can leave readers feeling disoriented. This phrase's decontextualized place in Stevens' memory aligns it with memories of trauma. It is not as jarring as the disturbingly vivid and suddenly remembered "flashbacks" that are most commonly associated with psychological trauma in popular culture, but its repetition and unclear context leave this memory unstable in time, if not entirely outside of it. Psychobiologists John Krystal, Stephen Southwick, and Dennis Charney find, "Traumatization appears to alter patterns of memory encoding, leading to the formation of memories with reduced contextual information;" and moreover, as this memory is revisited, "The focus on central details at the expense of contextual information present in the initial encoding process becomes even more pronounced in rehearsal of traumatic memories" (158). It is Stevens' repeated return to this phrase in his memory, his interrogation of what he remembers, that makes this memory troublesome to pin down in the narrative of his work at Darlington Hall. Again, though it seems extreme to label this subtle admonition from Miss Kenton or Lord Darlington a source of trauma, his changing view of his father and his decision in response do seem to influence his self-perception. And yet, Stevens is able to draw on the context of his relationship with Miss Kenton at the time to notice that this phrase does not fit the context he initially assigns to it.

Stevens' impulse to revise a memory he has already recounted, and the mixture of decontextualized phrases and acute awareness of the state of his relationships with each

character, both indicate that Stevens feels significant pressure to recall the past correctly. But while his self-interrogative approach to remembering seems to yield more correct information as he revisits this phrase and this point in his life, it cuts against the way that memory typically functions. Neurologist Marek-Marsel Mesulam argues that memory's "tendency for distortion […] is not a consequence of a deficiency in brain function but a reflection of adaptive evolution. Rewards are not given for veridical reproduction but for the adaptive value of what is recalled" (382). In other words, memory is normally expected to synthesize and reorganize traces of the past to help one understand oneself and others. Stevens may make the narrative that he tells about himself and about those around him seem less trustworthy by exposing its faults; but as a narrative that represents not-quite-traumatic memories being held up to intense scrutiny, it exposes how our expectations and needs as we revisit a memory can have complex effects on what we remember.

In the narrative's final scene from the interwar years, Stevens is finally able to anchor a second "fragment of a memory" that persistently resurfaces: of himself standing motionless outside Miss Kenton's door, believing (though he cannot know this) that Miss Kenton is crying. He describes "that moment as I paused in the dimness of the corridor, the tray in my hands, and ever-growing conviction mounting within me that just a few yards away, on the other side of that door, Miss Kenton was at that moment crying" (226). He attributes this memory to the day that Miss Kenton learned of her aunt's death (176), only to later place it on "the evening, in fact, when the young Mr. Cardinal turned up at Darlington Hall rather unexpectedly" (212), and finally to specify that he is "now sure" that this occurred just after a rather one-sided argument between himself and Miss Kenton about the news that she had accepted Mr. Benn's marriage proposal that night (226-7). This pause outside Miss Kenton's

door is immediately echoed by a longer one, when Stevens stands outside the door of the meeting between the Prime Minister and the German ambassador. While he guesses that he remained outside Miss Kenton's door for "only a matter of a few seconds," because he "was required to hurry upstairs to serve some of the most distinguished gentlemen in the land," he acknowledges that "at the time it seemed a significant period;" Lord Darlington immediately sends him to wait outside when he returns to the drawing room, where he remains for an hour. Stevens describes this second period of waiting not as the result of hesitation or indecision, but rather of commitment to waiting passively: "No event occurred which obliged me to move from my spot. Nevertheless, that hour I spent standing there has stayed very vividly in my mind throughout the years" (227). Stevens describes a shift in his mood from "somewhat downcast" to "a deep feeling of triumph," attributing this shift to his "com[ing] through a very trying evening, throughout which I had managed to preserve a 'dignity in keeping with my position'—and had done so, moreover, in a manner even my father might be proud of" (227). Outside of both Miss Kenton's door and the Prime Minister's, Stevens is a bystander, though not quite a witness. He insists that he has no evidence—other than an "ever-growing conviction"—that Miss Kenton was crying. And when Mr. Cardinal asks Stevens repeatedly about the meeting occurring that night (though Mr. Cardinal feels certain that he already knows what is taking place), Stevens says, "'I would not say I am not curious, sir. However, it is not my position to display curiosity about such matters'" (222). Stevens is thus not only compelled to be physically passive and distant, but mentally so as well: not to display curiosity, but also by implication to avoid curiosity about the matter altogether.

While the first of these memories (pausing outside Miss Kenton's door) implies that he prioritizes or finds comfort in the professional above the personal (and its repetition

suggests that this decision haunts him today), the second memory (outside Darlington's drawing room) and his final comments about his father's pride suggest that he has imbued his professional work with its own form of personal significance. As Stevens easily places this hour of standing outside Darlington's door in its context within the story and within his identity, with details of where he stood and shifts in his mood, the texture of this memory echoes the phenomenon of the "flashbulb memory." As Schacter argues, this type of memory gets its extreme vivacity not from an unusually strong impression on one's mind, but rather from social rehearsal (*Searching for Memory* 197). Of course, Stevens does not seem to have rehearsed his memories of this night in the type of social context to which Schacter refers in his study of the phenomenon. Rather, the social context is largely an imagined one. Stevens imagines how his father might have reacted to his professional behavior that night if he had lived to witness it, and seems to have drawn this conclusion many times before. It also indicates an imagined conversation about the nature of "dignity in keeping with one's position" with the long-defunct Hayes Society, and with the reader that he imagines himself addressing here. All of these amount to conversations that Stevens has imagined with himself, but he imagines them from a range of perspectives, from the professional to the familial. Still, while the well-rehearsed professional triumph is like a flashbulb memory that is sorted into a narrative and catalogued as part of his identity, the vivid but wandering memory of stasis and loss, is like a haunting, de-contextualized flashback. Like the warning about the "larger significance" of his father's declining health that wanders from Miss Kenton to Lord Darlington, the memory of pausing outside Miss Kenton's door has been removed from its original context and returns to his mind unbidden. Stevens seems to succeed ultimately in incorporating these memories into the narrative of his past, but it is

clear that the terrain of his memory is convoluted. Tellingly, both memories are of moments of stasis: standing outside Miss Kenton's door, and then Darlington's. This echoing position, coupled with their juxtaposition in time, lends the triumphant flashbulb memory another tinge of tragedy (especially when coupled with his reply to the incredulous Mr. Cardinal that it is not Stevens' job "'to display curiosity about such matters'").

In what sense might Stevens' layered and conflicting experiences of memory resonate with contemporary readers? Ishiguro has offered the interpretation that "we are all like butlers," working with little influence and hoping that it contributes to some greater good. He uses this phrase to describe our relationship to "the world stage" in his preparatory notes for the novel ("Butler—notes and ideas as they come"); and in 2015, he offers this phrase in the context of work when an interviewer asks him to speak about the novel's reported popularity in the business world ("Kazuo Ishiguro: The Book I'll Never Write—and Other Stories").[56] But in terms of the process of remembering, Stevens' most relevant trait may be his duty or impulse to frame the lives and decisions of others. As Stevens spends much of the novel arguing for the "dignity" of his father, Lord Darlington, and himself, we see the self-questioning that accompanies storytelling after war and post-war upheavals of power and values.[57] Timothy Wright suggests that Ishiguro's narrators have a pattern of viewing history differently: that he "chooses […] those marginalized from historical processes, those without

[56] Under the heading "Realism or Not," in the preparatory notes, Ishiguro states, "this is not a book about butlers, but a book about people like us; it's saying we are all like BUTLERS when it comes to the world stage" (underline and capitalization in original). In the 2015 interview, he states, "*Remains of the Day* is about the fact that most of us do jobs and, by and large, we don't really know how our contribution is going to be used .We offer it up to the people upstairs and just try to do our job well. […] At some level we are all butlers in our relationship to economic and political power."

[57] This dynamic is also seen in *An Artist of the Floating World* through Ono's impulse to apologize for his past while maintaining that he had done what he believed was right

agency, or without agency any longer," because their "marginal relationship to history allows them to see history […] not necessarily from a clearer vantage point, but from a less familiar, one, a position reminiscent of Benjamin's Angel of History […] unable to reassemble the shattered fragments accumulating in his wake" (86). My argument has been twofold: that this perspective of "history" (both global and familial) has affected the texture and use of Stevens' memory, as it has to Ono and Etsuko as well; and that this position is resonant in unique ways with Ishiguro's generation, who by virtue of their age as well as other factors must view history from a distance, even as they are presented with (and perhaps as authors, asked to uphold and present) "'a chain of events,'" rather than "'one single catastrophe,'" as Walter Benjamin describes the view of the Angel of History (249). The texture of Stevens' memories is more varied than either of these. Each significant day that he recounts (such as the night of the 1923 conference when his father died) is remembered and narrated differently based on the context it has been assigned.

Another link between Ishiguro and Stevens alike is the question of authenticity. For Ishiguro, and for others who are expected to present the perspective of a particular nationality, period of time, or class (in the case of Stevens), expectations of authenticity create another layer of pressure when remembering the personal and historical. Even though Mr. Farraday bemoans Stevens' limited travel beyond Darlington Hall in the novel's opening pages, he employs Stevens because he is, in Mr. Farraday's words, "'a genuine old-fashioned English butler'" who has been attached to the career and to this house for decades (124). The vast majority of reviews of Ishiguro's first novels focused on his nationality, and Ishiguro linked his own positive critical reception to the "international" movement toward recognizing a wider range of literary voices to categorize his work alongside that of Salman Rushdie,

Timothy Mo, and other authors that Ishiguro felt had distinctly different styles ("An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro" 135). "Authenticity" is also addressed in *An Artist of the Floating World*, albeit obliquely, through Ono's description of the first "firm" where he painted stereotypically Japanese scenes a great speed and with little creativity (69). Stevens must go a step further than Ono here, by serving as a living prop for Darlington Hall. While Stevens is expected to carry the memory of "'genuine old-fashioned'" England'" by performing the increasingly obsolete job of butler at Darlington Hall, Ishiguro in the past has been expected by British and American audiences to carry forward memories of Japan, but also to represent an ill-defined "international" literary movement.

Stevens points to one peculiar relationship between his profession and memory, when he describes what he calls the "'trimmings'" of service work that include "eloquence and general knowledge." He states that the work of some butlers, at the behest of employers and guests, devolved into a competition amongst houses to test whose butler possessed the greatest range of encyclopedic knowledge. This one-sided trivia game led to such tiresome scenes as guests asking the butler "who had won the Derby in such and such a year, rather as one might to a Memory Man at the music hall" (35). Again, Stevens' critique of the performance of lesser butlers resurfaces in the music hall reference; and though they are asked to perform feats of memory, they are asked to perform a type of memory that is focused on trivialities. Perhaps by his third novel on the subject of post-World War II memory and identity, the too-literal interpretations that some reviewers tied to the historical settings of his novels have begun to feel like just such trivial performances.

Although the readings offered in this project may initially appear more tied to the historical context than the "universal" perspective that Ishiguro hoped readers would bring to

his texts, I have aimed to examine these novels to find common patterns or nodes of experience shared between people who are on the outskirts of war in various ways. Ishiguro imagines his way into the perspectives of men and women who lived through World War II with varying levels of agency and peripherality; and in imagining his way into those on war's edge in the past, his narratives recognize a chain of imperfect but important memories that stretch from the people who lived during war on its outskirts to the "generation of postmemory" that must reconstruct history and construct themselves from repeating, vivid, yet illusory traces of the past.

Coda: Temporal Distance and Meta-Fictional Imagination Through Children in Barker and McEwan

Though the authors examined in this project turn to the same narrative devices to represent the experience of the peripheral witness, this literary phenomenon is defined first and foremost by the mental states that it represents: feeling affected by a moment of large-scale trauma, but unable to speak of it adequately because their perspective feels distant and thus inadequate. And as the novels examined in this project have been written at increasingly large temporal removes from World Wars One and Two, this dimension of separation has become increasingly relevant. Two contemporaries of Ishiguro, Pat Barker and Ian McEwan, introduce another variation on this narrative approach when they address questions that crop up as one generation is faced with the task of stewardship for the memories of a moment that they do not feel entirely belongs to them.

Here I examine two novels that present similar narrative responses to the task of writing about World War II: Barker's *The Man Who Wasn't There* (1988), and McEwan's *Atonement* (2001). Rather than drawing on the journal form to represent the responsibility and self-critique of contemporary authors and readers, Barker and McEwan write meta-fictional novels in which a young character refracts events from their own life on the edge of war through more public media: cinema in the case of Barker, and the novel in the case of McEwan. There are other formal differences between these novels and those of Woolf, Isherwood, and Ishiguro, including the use of third person limited narration, and of sustained entries that cover a single day (unlike the shorter, regular entries in Isherwood's works or the entries that veer between past and present in Ishiguro's works, but similar to Woolf's novels

that are set entirely within a single day).[58] There are significant differences between Barker and McEwan's novels too, most notably in their temporal settings: *The Man Who Wasn't There* is set in the 1950s, and *Atonement* is set in 1935 and 1940, with a surprising afterword set in 1999. But as both novels' narrators imagine writing about themselves and those around them in more public genres, they use this meta-fictional thread and an assortment of well-worn conventions associated with their genres of choice (the masculine-coded bravery of the war film or the mutual suspicion of the espionage film, the psychological complexity of the novel and the "happy ending" of the play) to draw critical attention to the narratives contemporary readers receive and how they meet them. And as these novels explore this from the perspective of a young character, they lend both playfulness and urgency to the self-critique and uncertainty of the peripheral witness.

By concluding with a brief glimpse at the form that these novels take, I aim to underscore the flexibility of narrative explorations of this psychological state. Their shared traits of organization and narrative self-questioning represent a one narrative strategy to express a fraught relationship to war in which the urge to record is met by the urge to interrogate one's own knowledge, motivations, and sense of self; but these have always shifted slightly in their execution from one artist and one text to the next, and surely will continue to shift in future works that take up this subject. I begin by examining these speakers' ages, and their positions in relation to World War II that at first seem closer than most examined here (the son of at least one war volunteer, and a young nurse who treated

[58] Barker's novel is organized into three parts named "Thursday," "Friday," and "Saturday," retaining some of the regularity of the journal form but delving more deeply into each day than an ordinary diary might. Briony marvels at the fact that all the events of "Part One" take place within the span of a single day, and of course lends much more significance to the tradition of signing the end of a novel with the author's initials, location, and year.

soldiers that had been evacuated to London), to chart why these characters might resonate with contemporary authors and readers. Then, I analyze their use and critique of their chosen media (films and novels) to outline a parallel, not-quite-alternate perspective to that offered by Ishiguro's novels, of readers who are separated from the war by time and by social circumstances alike.

For Barker and McEwan's primary characters, their ages are a significant factor in how they see war. Both characters are adolescents during most or all of their novels; Colin is twelve throughout his novel, and Briony is thirteen in Part One, and eighteen in Part Three, though she ostensibly writes the novel much later, at 77 years old. Although Colin's story is set years after the war (in the 1950s), and Briony's largely takes place before the war and its first years (in 1935 and 1940), their youth seems tied to the narrative devices they choose. Their age sometimes shows though in their fascination with storytelling and play, composing narrative about or for their family and friends, or even by themselves: Colin's walk home at the novel's opening turns into a sniper attack rendered in slow motion (10), while Briony's nettle-thrashing moves from a symbolic destruction of people who frustrate her to an admirable athletic display at the Berlin Olympics (70-71). We can see the pains of growing up through their eventual rejection of one genre of narrative convention in favor of another: Colin decides he is tired of the over-the-top bravery of war films, while Briony self-consciously works her way from a morality play to psychological stories. And of course, their age also affects the stories that others share with them: Colin's mother frequently tells him that he will learn about his father when he is older, and Briony senses that her sister's interest in her play is patronizing rather than admiring. In Briony's case, the relationship between age and storytelling is further complicated by her diagnosis with vascular dementia

at 77 in the epilogue "London 1999," bringing further scrutiny to how time and age affect one's perspective of war.[59] Though Woolf, Isherwood, and Ishiguro all narrate or comment from the perspective of an older character or version of themselves in at least one novel, the urgency of Briony's diagnosis and the strange glee with which she greets it make this perspective even more dramatic; and as we will see in her meta-narrative comments in the novel's epilogue, in many ways her style and desires remain the same.

But whether Colin and Briony feel young or old in a particular moment, their self-conscious attention to their own age and to the stories they create aligns them with contemporary readers, and more specifically with those who feel tasked with carrying on the memories of a generation that may be dying out. Taking on the fictionalized perspective of a teenage narrator in the shadow of war (rather than narrating from Barker's or McEwan's autobiographical position in the contemporary moment), and assigning each primary character a genre of fiction with which to experiment, both novels dramatize a contemporary audience's concerns with what they cannot know due to their own age, what they have been told through fiction and half-revealed truths, and what they must tell.

For Colin and Briony, factors like age, gender, and occupation bring them closer to World War II but also make their relationship to it more vexed. Colin's mother Vivienne tells him very little about his father, though she initially claims that he was a soldier shot down during the war: thus, "For Colin, the mystery of his father's identity as bound up with the war, the war he'd been born into, but couldn't remember" (32). Thinking of himself as "born

[59] Colin's older self also makes frequent but mysterious appearances; a shadowy man in a black coat seems to follow Colin throughout the novel, only to show up at Colin's home asking, " 'Mam?'" (152). The house is emptied of furniture as soon as the man enters the room, suggesting that Colin is seeing his future self, "his own ghost," on a visit that he pays to his childhood home.

into" World War II implies a degree of ownership, but also implies that fate has thrust this onto him, as it would have been onto most boys from his generation. Colin is hyper-aware of the limits of his own knowledge, and of the limits in masculinity that others believe he will inevitably experience as a boy growing up without a father. He notes that whenever he is rude to his mother's boyfriend, Mr. Boyce, the man "looked at him with a tolerant and understanding expression. *Brought up without a father*, he seemed to be saying. *What else can you expect?*" (136). He uses this assumption to his advantage, driving out his mother's would-be suitor by gleefully offering to call him "Dad" (136); and when his school principal assumes that Colin's father died in the war, and treats Colin with more sympathy, "Colin understood, perhaps for the first time, why his mother lied about his father. People did not have an automatic right to know" (65). Meanwhile, his mother's involvement in the war effort is never acknowledged at school or in town. Only her friend Pauline mentions their work with the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS) during the war; instead, Colin's teachers ridicule his mother for working as a cocktail waitress today, and Pauline and Viv recall their parents' protests when they joined this more direct branch of military service rather than working in factories. This perspective of his parents, incessantly reinforced by adults and children alike around Colin, must show Colin that some experiences of the war are more readily recognized than others, even when they are more than likely fictions. But as Colin imagines a film script that casts himself and those around him in the screenplay of a war espionage film, and as he grows increasingly critical of the war hero movies that have been a model of bravery to him, his narrative also points to the limits of others' stories about war, from playground battle reenactments or after-school games in the remaining ruins of bomb sites, to war films that fuel these recreations.

On the other hand, Briony participates directly in the war effort as a nurse when she turns eighteen and the hospitals and homes of Britain prepare to take in wounded soldiers. Her duties involve two tasks in equal measure: treating gruesome wounds and recognizing the limits of her knowledge of war. When Robbie condemns her for finally admitting the error of her testimony at eighteen, when "There are soldiers dying in the field at eighteen," Briony finds that "It was a pathetic source of comfort, that he could not know what she had seen" (323). And from her descriptions of the first night when London's hospitals received a deluge of wounded soldiers from the retreat at Dunkirk, we know that "She came the closest she would ever be to the battlefield, for every case she helped with had some of its essential elements—blood, oil, sand, mud, seawater, bullets, shrapnel" (287). But part of her experience also included recognizing the signs of trauma's arresting hold over others—and to her, this requires her to recognize the limits of her view of the war. When Robbie abruptly stops speaking to her, his sudden affective shift reminds her of the behavior of some soldiers in the hospital: "She had learned the little she knew, the next-to-nothing scraps that came the way of a trainee nurse, in the safety of the ward and the bedside. She knew enough to recognize that memories were crowding in, and there was nothing he could do. They wouldn't let him speak. She would never know what scenes were driving this turmoil" (324). Though she has treated the gruesome physical wounds of war, and has seen the gallows humor and isolating effects of psychological trauma, these experiences leave her with the impression that it is her duty to recognize when the things that she has not seen are haunting others. Moreover, this description of Robbie—"there was nothing *he* could do" [emphasis added]—illustrates the extent to which Robbie and other soldiers suffering from psychological trauma after war are unable to name, narrate, or control their own memories

too. Briony's attention to the limited access she has to other minds befits her budding fascination with the psychological novel at thirteen (38) and eighteen (265), though the narrative voice of "present-day" Briony subtly intervenes in the first to explain that in the first case, "She was to concede that she may have attributed more deliberation than was feasible to her thirteen-year-old self," in a moment of layered narrative selves that rivals those found in Isherwood's *Down There on a Visit* (38). Always attending to the limits of what she knows of other experiences, or what she can accurately remember of her own childhood, Briony presents herself as a careful and skeptical observer—even though (or perhaps because) the plot largely centers on a critical mistake in her testimony as a child.

Both Colin and Briony become fascinated with genres that correspond in some way to their experience of the war: the portrayals of masculinity and bravery in war films for Colin, and the psychological complexity of the novel for Briony. Both narrate a story close to their own lives in their genre of choice. The novel's third-person account of Colin's life is sporadically interrupted by a screenplay that Colin seems to be composing in his mind to make sense of events that occur throughout the day, casting himself as the unusually young spy Gaston; and while we see Briony at thirteen attempt to stage a play and eventually turn to the short story genre, we learn in the end that the entire novel is composed by Briony decades after the events from her life that inspired it have taken place. But as Colin and Briony draw on these genres to shape their stories, they also reflect on what their genre of choice offers, what its limits are, and how others receive it.

The tropes of war films hold a prominent but contentious position in Colin's sense of self. He draws on them for comfort and guidance at first, but is already wary of the genre before the novel's narrative present when he senses that his mother, Viv, has lifted the story

of his absent father from a recently released film. After a brief summary of the dramatic story that Viv told him about the night his father's friend returned from the war alone, this story is immediately undercut by a film that Colin sees just a few days later:

> It was a moving story, the way Viv told it. Colin was moved. He was moved again a few nights later when he saw the same story on the screen of the Gaumont. A plane exploded, violins swelled, tears glistened, a young girl walked home, alone.
>
> He'd never believed anything Viv said since. (32)

There is a bitter irony in the flat description of Colin's emotions as "moved," applied to both the day his mother tells his about his father's disappearance, and the night when he discovers that this story was likely fabricated from a popular war film. Even the "tears" that "glistened," a physical display of emotion, are disembodied. They are likely the tears of the heroine on screen, since the surrounding action (plane explosion, violins, and the young girl) takes place within the film; but they could also be Colin's tears, or even those of the audience as they watch the film entirely unaware of the disorienting significance of this revelation for Colin. If we imagined that the film viewing experience might lead to a unified emotional experience (especially compared to the comparatively isolated genre of the personal journal), this expectation is undercut by this depersonalized description. The story of Colin's night at the theater bears all the hallmarks of a tragic narrative, but the repetitive and disjointed narrative separates the pieces—the people, the film, the tears—so that cause and effect must be inferred. Just as Eleanor Partiger was compelled to trace the sources of her pain and interpreting Peggy's statement of bitter irony at the foot of the Edith Cavell statue in *The Years*, readers here must assign and interpret these glistening tears, signs of cathartic grief or disappointment that could come from any of the novel's characters or the film stars within it.

At the same time that Colin introduces this fractured sense of himself through film, he also exposes the fractures within film audiences, suggesting that though the genre draws on stories and images of war from their nation's perspective, it does not unite them. As soon as the film ends, "The audience was already on its feet, some of them running up the aisles in their determination to avoid 'God Save The Queen.' Here and there an elderly couple, or a young man in uniform, stood to attention" (32). Though the audience convenes for a war film, the anthem drives many moviegoers out of the theater, hinting that the link between war films and patriotism or support of the empire has grown more tenuous. Even if a handful of audience members stay behind due to their age or their connection with the military, the anthem brings under view a notable separation within the audience. It is a less dramatic rejection of propagandistic songs than the attacks on the mentally disabled man who is attacked for singing such songs in Ishiguro's *An Artist of the Floating World*, but it is still a display of the waning power that songs and stories like this could hold over time. Then there are those who avoid the genre entirely, because the war and its losses are still overwhelmingly present today. On his way home from the theater, Colin visits his older friend's mother, Mrs. Hennigan, and she expresses her incredulity at the genre's popularity:

> 'Beats me what people see in them.'
>
> 'It was packed.'
>
> 'Oh, it would be, I believe you. I still don't know what people see in it. It was bad enough having to live through it, without raking it up again every week.' (47)

Once again, Colin takes on a role similar to Eleanor Partiger by immediately ascribing Mrs. Hennigan's negative, seemingly atypical perspective of a memorial object to the loss of a family member: "Probably she didn't want to be reminded of Adrian's father, who'd been

killed in the war. *Really* killed, Colin thought. Unlike his own" (47). Mrs. Hennigan's criticism of the genre reminds Colin of the losses that cannot know or claim, since he is convinced that his father was not "*really* killed." Recognizing others' suffering leads to an inevitable reminder of the inadequacy of his own perspective, and that his own loss may well have been fabricated; so even though Colin did not like this particular film (as it showed a soldier feeling fear, and "he didn't want to be told about men being frightened. He wanted to be told about heroes" [33]), their mutual dissatisfaction does not create common ground—or if it does, it is still dominated by a sense of distance between the experiences and knowledge of Colin and Mrs. Hennigan.

As Colin rushes out of the theater, he is reminded of another medium that keeps World War II alive: schoolyard war reenactments waged by his classmates. Colin participates in these reenactments, sometimes even directing hazardous missions over abandoned bomb sites with a friend or by himself (122); but he differentiates the validity of some classmates' play and his own due to the source material that they frequently invoke. After describing the "relics" that remain in every house he enters, from photographs to "guns, knives, a swastika, ring, gold teeth sawn from a Japanese corpse" (32), Colin also reflects on how these objects and the stories that accompany them are interpreted by his classmates: "At school, too, the endless war between British and Germans was re-fought at every break, and the leaders of the opposing armies were always boys whose fathers had been in the war. Who could produce, when need arose, the ultimate authority: *My dad says*. Everything Colin knew about the war came from films" (32-33). Here again we see the playground hierarchy that was at work in Isherwood's postscript to *Kathleen and Frank*, though this time authority is ceded to the sons of men who survived the war. Other boys are allowed to participate, but the sons of

survivors control the story and settle debates. More important than the nation they represent in this game is the authority of firsthand experience; and again, a form of storytelling that could unite the students through a shared battle exposes rifts between them too.

In the end, it is not clear where the war film genre stands in Colin's eyes. When he tries to sleep off a severe fever, the films fail to comfort him:

> For a while, he tried to look at the pictures in his film annuals, but all the films were jumbled together in his head. He was tired of them anyway: the clipped, courageous voices, the thoroughly decent chaps, the British bombs that always landed on target, the British bombers that always managed to limp home. They told lies, he thought. They said it was easy to be brave. (151)

While the film that he sees at the beginning of the novel frightens him because it depicts a soldier's fear, the genre's lack of emotion or nuance (as Colin sees it) is a source of deceit, rather than one of inspiration or comfort. Even after this realization, though, Colin continues to compose a film script in his imagination that casts him and the people around him as spies in the French resistance—though none of them can be trusted. The novel's final words are "Colin, staring straight ahead, waited for the drone of the Lysander to fade. Then he gave a sharp, decisive little nod, and said, 'The End'" (158). This all-encompassing "the end" that concludes Colin's imagined film and the novel we are reading could indicate a rejection or a moving on from the genre; but it is equally likely that his changing expectations of the genre have salvaged this medium for Colin.

Briony is primarily concerned with representing complex mental states, showing "separate minds" that jar with "confusion and misunderstanding" (38), and "the conscious mind as a river through time" (265). When World War II intrudes into her life and her story,

it takes on an element of historical fiction; and with this change, some of Briony's audience expects that level of granular attention should be applied to the details of British military practice. As Briony details all that has happened from 1940 to the new narrative present of 1999, she also addresses inaccuracies that appeared in the novel's first drafts and in its final from that we have just read. These inaccuracies range from deviations from military minutiae, to fabricating a new ending. We learn that some details of Briony's own life were altered for the sake of narrative clarity; she calls her decision to meld the three hospitals at which she served into one "A convenient distortion, and the least of [her] offenses against veracity" (336). She also acknowledges a series of inadvertent errors in military dialogue and descriptions of dress, though some early readers did not see them as small errors. She recalls with resigned humor a retired colonel who took her to task for typos and military inaccuracies—the weight of a bomb, the type of cap worn by RAF service members. She calls his attention to such details a "pointillist approach to verisimilitude, the correction of detail;" she too "loves it," finding that it "cumulatively gives such satisfaction"—and indeed these errors are all corrected in the final draft that we have just read (339).[60] Still, Briony notes that this colonel's corrections are tinged with an increasing degree of misogyny, as when he underlines the word "Madam" three times before pointing out a typo where she used "ton" rather than "pound." She imagines him wondering, "What was our kind doing anyway, meddling in these affairs?" (339). Phrased in this way, with the implicit critique that is bound up with gender, there is a line between Robbie's critique of her moral character at eighteen and the colonel's increasingly hostile edits that represents the scrutiny that any narrative

[60] The satisfaction of this process may come from a similar place to young Briony's pleasure in writing stories, a genre which "gave her all the pleasure of miniaturization. A world could be made in five pages," and "an unruly world could be made just so" (7).

imagining someone else's perspective of war will likely elicit. From the moment Robbie critiques her for trying to imagine the experience of soldiers her age, to the proofreading stage of what may be Briony's last work of a successful literary career, she will be pursued by challenges to her right and her ability to pen a novel that describes the battlefields of France and the hospitals of Britain.

But it is not enough to Briony for her novel to reflect the historical truth—and she believes it will not be enough for her readers either. She notes that the letters exchanged by Cecilia and Robbie are preserved in the Imperial War Museum, but suggests that this archival preservation of their actual correspondence is not an adequate "ending" for their story. After suggesting that Robbie and Cecilia died before they could be reunited in this genre-bending, meta-fictional epilogue, Briony poses a series of questions that subtly align her "God-like" power as a novelist with the participation of the reader. Briony explains that although each draft before this ended with Robbie and Cecilia's separate deaths, "I can no longer think what purpose would be served" by concluding their story this way;" she asks, "What sense of hope or satisfaction could a reader draw from such an account? Who would want to believe that they never met again, never fulfilled their love? Who would want to believe that, except in the service of the bleakest realism?" (350). Though she insists that the mere act of committing this ending to paper in one version of the story ("a single copy, a solitary typescript of my final draft") will let Robbie and Cecilia "survive to love," this series of questions about what readers can gain from this story, what they believe or would want to believe, draws attention to the burden that readers inevitably place on authors, and the burden that they too take on as they choose which stories to read and allow to survive. Just as readers were left to decide whose tears "glistened" in the theater where Viv's lie was exposed to

Colin, we are left with a litany of questions to consider when evaluating the endings with which Briony has presented us, and what stories we should seek out next.

Of course, Briony writes with the knowledge of herself at 1999, rather than 1935 or even 1940. The anxieties of adolescence and the first stages of adulthood are compounded by the her recent dementia diagnosis, after which "The little failures of memory that dog us all beyond a certain point will become more noticeable, more debilitating, until the time will come when I won't notice them because I will have lost the ability to comprehend anything at all" (334). But after watching the children of her extended family perform the morality play of her childhood, she considers that the happy ending for Robbie and Cecilia may be evidence that she has "made a huge digression and doubled back to [her] starting place" (350). Her epilogue also echoes her perspective as a young writer, when she found that "her passion for tidiness was also satisfied" by writing stories, as "an unruly world could be made just so" (7); though she presents us with something of an unruly ending by presenting a new ending to Robbie and Briony's story, she also remarks on the satisfaction of wrapping up her research neatly, "mak[ing] a tidy finish," (334). The trajectory of her work as a writer is not linear, though like Isherwood's seemingly investigative turn to the "frank and factual" in *Christopher and His Kind*, her narrative spirit (like his) embraces what she once may have looked down upon: his lack of "patience with this arty talk" of "prefer[ing]" the fictional past he created after burning his diaries (41) resounds with Briony's claim that she "no longer possess[es] the courage of [her] pessimism" (350). If she implicitly asks us to evaluate our own desires and expectations as readers, she shows that she is willing to turn this critical eye on herself, even if she arrives at a different conclusion about the story that she should tell than some readers might have reached.

In the narrative choices and meta-fictional commentary of Colin and Briony, and in their reflections on their own lives, we see a position that corresponds with that of contemporary authors. When the new generation inherits the stories of those that came before them, they inherit genres and tropes of narrative as well; and as we have seen in the novels examined in this project, these narrative tropes can carry many traces of the war's legacy even before they address the war directly in their stories. While Ishiguro imagines World War II through the eyes of adults who watched it unfold, Barker and McEwan imagine the position of writers who see the war in their youth and must decide what to carry from it as they approach adulthood. Their novels offer yet another avenue for approaching war narratives in the contemporary moment, proposing new bridges between people who feel that they are on war's edge, those who feel at its center, and those who feel today that they are even further from it.

This project too has shared many of the concerns of contemporary writers and readers, and drawn on some related narrative approaches in response. Drawing together novels throughout twentieth century British literature, with an eye to the difficult chronology of novelists who write across years and decades, it too has marked time while recognizing the limits to its organizational powers as the careers of these authors overlap. And bringing together theories of memory and self construction from historical and literary trauma studies as well as the cognitive sciences, it has worked to strengthen the ties between approaches to understanding war's effect on memory. Finally, it has also aimed to recognize sites of connection without equating perspectives of war with nuanced differences, and without reducing one group's experience to metaphor.

Note on Appendices

While researching Christopher Isherwood and Kazuo Ishiguro's approaches to war and life writing, a number of previously unstudied family materials emerged from each author's archive. The first of these is Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood's assembled volumes that document her husband Frank's life and death as an officer in World War I, contained in the Christopher Isherwood Papers at the Huntington Library. The second is an uncompleted project by Kazuo Ishiguro that draws on stories from his mother and aunt about their experiences in the days after the bombing of Nagasaki, contained in the Kazuo Ishiguro Papers at the Harry Ransom Center. Both texts are noteworthy for contrasting the burden of knowing and remembering with the limits of the author or speaker's knowledge. Kathleen points to her limited ability to communicate with Frank while he serves abroad, implicitly critiquing military practices and pushing against expectations of women to serve as vessels of memory. When Ishiguro imagines a young girl's experience in the days and weeks after the bomb through the stories passed to him, he too focuses on what his character narrator could not see, speak of, or understand. And while few texts written by Ishiguro's family comment on the war, we can learn more about how his parents framed Japanese history and the risks and responsibilities of remembering through correspondence and family photographs.

These artifacts and images contextualize Isherwood and Ishiguro's approaches to life writing and war narratives. They also reveal connections between the narratives and self-perception of peripheral witness and family who witnessed war from the "home front" and the site of war's atrocities. However, because they are written by or from the perspective of people who might not have been seen by others as "peripheral" (though their narratives were marginalized in their own ways), these texts are examined in the following appendices.

Appendix 1: ["Very Annoying to Hear!"]: The War Widow's Narrative Interventions in Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood's Commemorative "Diaries" of World War I

After studying Isherwood's works of narrative and archival assemblage—especially *Christopher and His Kind* which refers to his mother Kathleen's diaries largely as a corrective source for the dates and chronology of his own work—it is only fitting to examine how Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood's diaries went beyond rote recording too. Isherwood draws on Kathleen's diaries as sources of information even more extensively in *Kathleen and Frank* (1971),[61] but even in this volume dedicated to presenting and framing his parents' writing to themselves and to each other, some of their more subversive narrative turns are not addressed in Isherwood's "autobiography of a family." Two volumes attributed to Kathleen, labeled "Diary, 1914-1915" and "Diary, 1915," representing a significant departure even from Kathleen's typical life writing. Despite the "diary" genre label under which these texts are catalogued, with implications of first person perspective and intimate personal reflection, these volumes are almost entirely composed of writing originally produced by others. Their primary contents are letters that Frank Isherwood wrote to Kathleen between August 22, 1914 and his death at the Second Battle of Ypres in May 1915, transcribed into the volume in Kathleen's hand. Words and media by others are included alongside these transcribed letters, from news articles and famous war poems to postcards and photographs; and there are very brief framing notes from Kathleen scattered throughout as well. These diaries are catalogued as "1914-1915" and "1915," but their contents stretch beyond this, including news clippings

[61] *Kathleen and Frank: The Autobiography of a Family* weaves an account from his parents' youth to his own through Kathleen's diary entries, letters from Frank, and interjections from narrating Isherwood. Isherwood's narrator interjects much more in this "autobiography" than Kathleen does in her "diary." Even as he sets apart his interjections by italicizing them, his voice occupies such a large portion of the finished work that the self-narrative aspect of the narrative "autobiography" is fulfilled.

of the Menin Gate which was not designed until 1921 and not dedicated until 1927. While Kathleen could have copied out these letters long before pasting in the print sources, the diaries were completed at a significant temporal remove in either case. Like Isherwood's autobiography-adjacent writings on World War II, Kathleen's volumes on World War I position their own author and narrator on the margins of the story that she tells about the war; they comment on their own gaps and uncertainties with the effect of implicitly labeling other perspectives and modes of communication inadequate or incomplete; and they even address the passing of time as they reflect on the events of the war years after it has taken place.

To reflect on how the "peripheral witness" may be entwined with other positions on the edge of war, I will compare Kathleen's "diaries" and her position as a grieving war widow during World War I to Isherwood's writing as a peripheral witness of World War II, and to his narrative interjections in *Kathleen and Frank* that come closest to addressing his experience after Frank's death. Though critics have generally attended more to Isherwood's relationship with his father and the role that he played in Isherwood's self-understanding, some have addressed his relationship with Kathleen as well. Isherwood himself notes in the first chapter of *Kathleen and Frank* that "Christopher grew up to be a recorder" like Kathleen, and that he regrets not reading her diaries until after her death because "she had grown so accustomed to hearing Frank's talents praised while hers were disregarded that she now thought little of them herself" (11). Even though one could categorize Kathleen's "diaries" as a source of inheritance or rebellion that explains Isherwood's life and work, this analysis instead examines Kathleen's play with genre and relationship to war as its own intervention in the genres of life writing and war narratives. When comparing Kathleen's "diaries" into the range of positions that authors take in this project, we can see that her

works bring together perspectives and methods deployed by Woolf and Isherwood: Woolf's interrogation of the positions of women as vessels of memory for their husbands' and sons' memories in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Isherwood's experiments with life writing assembled from multiple sources in *Christopher and His Kind*.

Though Frank Isherwood's voice is dominant in these "diaries," and they feature much more writing even by non-family members than by Kathleen, she does not omit her own voice from this multi-perspectival text. Scattered among the pages of preserved and transcribed materials are footnotes and bracketed statements from Kathleen's perspective, contextualizing and commenting on a small number of the diary's contents. Like Isherwood, she interjects her own voice into this assembled narrative to mark herself as the volume's creator and occasional character. But while Isherwood's narrative interjections in his own works are frequent and extensive, Kathleen's are much less common. This makes the moments when she chooses to intervene all the more striking, and makes her narrative focus all the more apparent: to chart the process of corresponding or receiving news, particularly potential inaccuracies or lapses in communication.

Kathleen reveals the unreliable and heavily censored practices of wartime correspondence between "home front" and war front when she discusses the letters and packages that she sent and received; but she reveals them in a matter-of-fact tone, with exclamations of irritation that seem comparatively mild in the context of the war that would eventually claim Frank's life. She writes "Very annoying to hear!" beneath Frank's statement that Colonel Cobbold received packages from home every day, explaining that this is vexing "even though I know the 'daily' parcels must be a fable of the Colonels, as Mrs. Cobbold only sends them weekly" (October 7-20, 1914). Later, Kathleen notes the first hints of

military intrusion into her personal correspondence by writing in a bracketed note, "[The above is the first letter received cut open by the censor]" (April 21, 1915). Unlike the sporadic package deliveries, this censorship is a direct muffling of their exchange. It is also one in which Frank participates. In *Kathleen and Frank*, Isherwood reveals that Frank's duties included censoring his own soldiers' letters as well; in one letter home, Frank remarks that his soldiers "evidently find the same difficulty that I do in writing when you know that your letter will be read" (411). Kathleen does not comment on how this censorship may have influenced her own writing or Frank's, or even point out its deleterious effects. Her sole aim is to catalogue the interventions of the military in their correspondence, revealing the extent to which her writing and Frank's would be scrutinized and the timeline of this scrutiny.

This ever-present censorship is also reflected in what seems like a rather unremarkable military-issued postcard, noteworthy only for being one of the few pieces "penned" by Frank himself (rather than copied into the volume in Kathleen's hand) that is included in the diary. This postcard, dated September 20, 1914, communicates the barest information by means of elimination. Other than Frank's signature at the bottom, he has only drawn lines that strike through a series of typed sentences on the standard issue card. The card's instructions note that "NOTHING is to be written on this except the date and signature of the sender;" so to communicate, Frank has crossed out sentences including "I have been admitted into hospital {sick / wounded} and am going on well / and hope to be discharged soon," indicating by elimination that he is well, he will write a letter soon, and that he has received no letters from them. The postcard thus reveals little noteworthy information, but it does reinforce two things we have already noticed about mid-war correspondence: the unreliability of mail delivery (as Frank indicates that he has not received the letters which

Kathleen regularly wrote), and the lack of privacy or freedom in mid-war communication from the battlefield. Kathleen's choice to include this mundane postcard, like the moments when she chooses to interject in the "diaries," speak to her mission to document the difficulty of communication, even more than to preserve information that Frank and others managed to communicate.[62] Her interjections do not simply mark her frustration, especially because she expresses it so rarely and subtly—they primarily foreground the distance between home and the battlefield, and the bureaucratic processes of transportation and censorship. By pointing to these delays and gaps, Kathleen reminds us of the difficult process of receiving the correspondence she records here (and sending her own), much as Isherwood's revels the process of remembering the past and assembling archives in his novelized autobiographies; but similar to Woolf's narrative perspective in *Three Guineas*, which opens by questioning Woolf's own familiarity with and influence over war, Kathleen addresses gaps in her perception in a manner that subtly critiques military operations.

Kathleen also brings up concerns of accuracy and perspective in the other sources she uses in these "diaries," especially in the photographs and visual images she includes. While Isherwood evokes photography through figurative language at the beginning and ending of *Goodbye to Berlin* (calling himself a camera and remarking that the surreally pleasant city of Berlin feels "like a very good photograph,") Kathleen incorporates visual material directly into her work.[63] Tucked between some pages and glued onto others, we find multiple

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[62] This postcard's vague language made its way into their letters, though it was used to bypass the censor rather than conform to his wishes: in *Kathleen and Frank*, Isherwood finds that "*there is a code, evidently worked out by Frank and Kathleen for use in his letters, which will tell her where he is without breaking the censorship rules: 'quite safe' means in England, 'safe' means abroad, 'safe up to date' means at the front*" (389, italics in original).

[63] Isherwood includes photographs in *Kathleen and Frank*, one of which (Frank's portrait in uniform from August 1914) is also found in Kathleen's "diary" as a news clipping.

snapshots on film, photographs printed in the newspaper and on postcards, and one hand drawn image. Many of these visual materials seem to have been supplied by Frank himself, from a series of photographs of damaged buildings that were used as housing while the army was on the move, to the illustration made by Frank that accompanies a letter addressed to Christopher. The drawing depicts a zeppelin flying over what otherwise appears to be a peaceful rural scene; it jarringly juxtaposes the advanced military technology that loomed in the minds of both soldiers and civilians with the personal medium of illustration and the romantic countryside setting. Most of these images contrast idyllic beauty with the destruction of war: sunbeams shining through a bombed-out home, a smiling man walking with a cane below a zeppelin, crowds at the unveiling of the Menin Gate practically as numerous as the names inscribed on the Gate's walls. Much like the contents and quality of Christopher's final memory in *Goodbye to Berlin* (the "very good photograph" in which the cheerful city masks atrocities of the Third Reich), these images are a reminder of pleasant everyday life and potentially traumatic destruction.

Where Isherwood somewhat skeptically invokes assumptions about photography—that its products are accurate, objective, and complete—Kathleen includes existing photographs alongside letters and news clippings. This juxtaposition that grants the photographs space alongside letters from frank initially seems to indicate Kathleen's belief in the photographs' accuracy. But when we consider the wide variety of images she incorporates, which differ in their subject, their creation, and even dimension—especially in the case of the newspaper photograph of the Menin Gate, which folds out to twice the size of the bound diary—we may find that Kathleen's diary hints at the subjectivity and limits of photography too. These images gain some of their meaning from the text of these letters, and

from the fact that they were either sent by Frank or they depict or commemorate him. Moreover, the variety of images included, from famous works of art and temporary shelters to the memorial and its crowds of visitors, suggests that photographers too bring a range of perspectives that are inherently limited—and her challenge to memorial organizers over including Frank's name on Menin Gate makes this critique of the memorializing process plain. But this sense of photography's inadequacy is buried within Kathleen's archival work, rather than simmering beneath the surface as it does in Isherwood's writings on war that state the medium's processes and imperfections. His metaphorical use of the camera and the photograph always invites critique of the medium (though as Isherwood points out in *Christopher and His Kind*, that critique has been mistakenly leveled at Isherwood as narrator and novelist himself); by contrast, Kathleen's literal use of the photograph may only evoke the limits of photography for readers who knew Frank, or who are already skeptical of the photograph's power.

Like the novels by Isherwood that this chapter has examined, Kathleen's diary attends in part to the distance between those at war and those on its edge. And like Isherwood's novels, Kathleen's work is nearly as focused on what she could not know or could not tell as it is on what she eventually learned. However, just as Isherwood's works illustrate networks that are forged between people dispersed by war (including the "crowd" of characters and selves held together in his mind in *Down There on a Visit*, or the accounts from others that he excerpts in *Christopher and His Kind*), Kathleen's "diaries" expose a network of communication between herself and other women on war's edge. In her footnote about parcels, and in her timeline of the events leading to Frank's death, Kathleen refers to a group of women that received and shared news about their husbands. They compare notes about the

postal system, and they exchange details of the army's movements from one town to the next, indicating that they are collectively tasked with piecing together news as it unfolds. Thus, Kathleen's diary exposes a relationship to news, memory, and memorializing that other wives of British officers and soldiers were expected to take on too.

Reading Kathleen's assembled documentation of World War I against Isherwood's novelized memories of World War II reveals some key distinctions between modes of remembering war from a distance—distinctions that are likely influenced by gender and generation. Kathleen was on the outside of World War I in a number of ways. She only saw as much of the physical conflict as the media and correspondence with her husband could reveal.[64] This is not to say that her knowledge of the war was absent or insignificant. Like Woolf, Kathleen would have shared many of Woolf's experiences of the "home front" during World War I, from seeing soldiers stationed nearby (*Kathleen and Frank* 443) to dealing with the rising price of groceries (403). In addition, she would have had her own unique experiences as an officer's wife. But as an upper class British citizen, Kathleen's experience of the "home front" would not have included the grueling labor of work in munitions factories.[65] And as a grieving war widow, Kathleen occupied an established position within the nation's official conceptions of World War I, though it had its own constraints.

[64] This is not to say that Kathleen's knowledge of the war was insignificant. Grayzel finds that World War I was unprecedented in its use of mass media and increased literacy of women and the "lower-middle/working class" (*Women's Identities at War*, 12, 244).
[65] Tammy Proctor notes that while women in belligerent countries performed an array of duties during World War I, these were determined by class (with upper-class women organizing charitable events, acting as nurses, or driving ambulances); so perhaps Kathleen's involvement was also partly limited by her age and occupation raising their children, as well as privilege afforded by her social standing. Proctor notes that gender, race, and ethnicity determined whether people were sorted into "combat" or "support" roles as well (68).

Like the bereaved mother seen in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* through Lady Bexborough and Mrs. Foxcroft, the war widow was looked to as a symbol of the nation's loss and its strength. Because widows like Kathleen were expected to mourn the deaths of their husbands while supporting the British cause, Kathleen's right and ability to assemble this record of the final months of Frank Isherwood's life might have been met with less skepticism than Isherwood's writing about World War II from abroad, when he could not reveal the nature of his relationship to Heinz, for example. As a mother, too, Kathleen would also have been expected to raise her sons to follow in the footsteps of their father, carrying on his legacy to support Britain. Susan Grayzel finds that women who were either mothers or capable of bearing children were prized in mid-WWI Britain and France for the physical labor of childbirth, seen as a risk of life and body not unlike that of active military service (*Women's Identities at War* 241). These forms of privilege carried over to a form of authority at memorial sites as well. Citing research by David Lloyd on "pilgrimages" to the battlefields and memorials of Europe, Grayzel states that "bereaved relatives—especially women—and veterans had particularly privileged roles" at these sites, "brought together by shared losses that transcended the alleged insurmountable divide between the 'fronts'" (241). This agency was tested when Kathleen fought to have Frank's name included on the Menin Gate (*Kathleen and Frank* 486).[66] Even though Kathleen had to fight various bureaucratic

[66] As Isherwood tells it in *Kathleen and Frank*, with some critique of both parties, "*The fact that [Frank] had* commanded *the First Battalion and died on its battleground was seemingly of no significance to these bureaucrats! (And besides, the Menin Gate was* the *memorial to be on; who cared bout unpronounceable Ploegsteert—these Flemish names were almost as hideous as the German ones!)*" (486, italics in original). Kathleen's personal diary from 1927 does not appear to mention this struggle, but an entry on "July 27" does describe the radio presentation of the dedication of New Menin Gate in such detail that it sounds at first as if she had been physically present at its unveiling.

branches of the military and government to ensure that Frank's name was inscribed at the Menin Gate, she ultimately succeeded in shaping this memorial; she may have drawn on a similar authority to create these volumes.

We must also consider differences between Isherwood and Kathleen's audiences and the authorial agency they "claim" in their works. Unlike war memorials or Isherwood's published texts, Kathleen's "diaries" seem to be more private documents. Because she seemed to assemble them for use within her family, and not to seek their publication, she did not risk public critique. She also does not limit the diary to her own voice, or even to Frank's; by focusing on his letters, but also including a number of poems composed on the war, memorial dedications, and news clippings detailing Frank's honors before and after his death, she folds a range of more public voices and perspectives into these "diaries." Isherwood's published works also quote and paraphrase the voices of others, but the narrating Isherwood usually comments on the sources or refracts them through his own perspective rather than copying them directly and without comment.

Where Isherwood plays with the question of whether he can reliably or usefully recount war, Kathleen's answer for herself is a simultaneous "yes" and "no." She assembles a thorough account of private and public discourses related to Frank's final months; but she must assemble it largely by refracting her perspective through the writing of Frank, of fellow military wives, and of journalists and poets. She makes creative, deceptively neutral interventions through her footnotes, prompting us to cast a critical eye at the rest of her sources and the authority they assume; but she gains much of her own authority as an author by appealing to the expectations of women and mothers during World War I. The very same familial ties that legitimize Kathleen's narrative of war could similarly legitimize Isherwood

as a war writer in the eyes of his detractors, if he were to write about World War I rather than World War II, or if his readers would accept his relationship with Heinz in the same way that they accept Kathleen and Frank's. Isherwood steps outside of the accepted framework of war writing in mid-twentieth century Britain by not only focusing on pre- and mid-war Germany during World War II, but also by all but erasing the death of his father at the hands of the Germans from most of his war narratives—and in doing both, he rejects the position of the grieving son against which he so clearly chafed (as evidenced in the story of his experience at school in 1915). This narrative absence of World War I in Isherwood's works is not surprising from the lens of trauma and repression, but it could be surprising if we assume Isherwood would have liked to silence his critics. This absence marks a final trait that weaves together Kathleen and Isherwood's writing: the absence of his father from his writing about war, and the absence of Kathleen's grief from her writing about war.

There is little indication that Kathleen has a project of rebellious self-definition in mind when she assembles her diaries. She rarely interjects or openly comments on herself, and does not seem to have sought a readership beyond the private circle of her family and friends. Nevertheless, these volumes are documentarian works that reveal and influence the identity that she crafted for herself. Just as Rebecca Gordon reads *Kathleen and Frank* as Isherwood's *Kunstlerroman*, we can read Kathleen's work as a means of reinforcing her position as a sensible British subject and a devoted war widow. Moreover, because her critique is subtle, we may also read her "diaries" as a means of addressing problems of communication that the military produced or could not remove during war. Recalling Susan Grayzel's study of women's representation in commemorative art after war (previously discussed in this project in relationship to *Mrs. Dalloway*), it is not difficult to see how these

"diaries" about the final months of Frank's life would help fulfill her role as a mourning woman, like the anonymous women depicted in statues representing the "duty […] to remember the dead" (*Women and the First World War* 113). What Kathleen has created is more unique than a rote memorial that the nation could take on as its own; at the same time, it is subtler than a rebellious project of rejecting the identity that she is given. Kathleen's focus on the process of sending and receiving news lends her work a unique perspective and a degree of self-definition—as a documentarian, a collector and interpreter of news, and a critic of the military's strategies and degree of control.

Reading Kathleen's "diaries" of 1914 and 1915 in the context of Isherwood's experiments with the diary form in the 1930s and beyond, is tempting to treat her works as an inspiration for his novelized autobiographies, or a form against which he rebelled. But if we attempt to categorize Kathleen's volume this way, we will produce simplistic readings of Kathleen's project (not to mention of Isherwood's relationship with her). As the peripheral witnesses that I study in this project experiment with the diary genre in order to express and work with a particular state of mind and memory, Kathleen's narrative experiments with states of witnessing and memory reveal another connection across groups—this time not between peripheral witnesses and soldiers, but between both groups and civilians with sanctioned memories of war and those who rankled under its pressure. British mourning practices gave Kathleen a clear position from which to write about the war, even though women in this category were primarily expected to attest to their experience by remaining silent. But Kathleen's narrative carries elements of the peripheral witness' mental and narrative state: a drive to document as much as possible (faithfully recording dates and times of things that she may not have witnessed), and an urge to acknowledge when her view of the

situation she attempts to record was disrupted (implied in her records about packages or letters that do not arrive and about the censorship of materials that she does receive). She has access to the raw material of correspondence from her husband, secondhand information from other wives, and the socially approved position of a woman mourning her lost husband after war; but she documents gaps in this access in a way that subtly suggests limits to her knowledge, and perhaps even her freedom to speak. Isherwood openly rebelled against the narrative of his father's death that were forced upon him by "Them;" but Kathleen rebelled in her own way by linking the loss and limited communication within the family to a larger network of imperfect but collaborative reception and commemoration of news about the war.

Appendix 2: "For the Others, It Was a Kind of Mercy:" Distance in Ishiguro's "Flight from Nagasaki" and Family Documents on Japan

In a collection of family snapshots housed in the Kazuo Ishiguro Papers at the Harry Ransom Center, there is a photograph of the author as a toddler in a formal room. Beneath him we can see the tatami floor, and behind him we can see scrolls on the wall that are identified by Ishiguro as the family crest and motto, as well as "the family swords—blades removed by American occupation" ("Personal/Professional: Photographs—Childhood in Japan & England"). An unidentified adult (likely a parent or grandparent) crouches within reach, an arm and leg blurred but visible on the photo's edge. Ishiguro's own face is blurred too. A clearer version of this photograph is duplicated in a 1995 edition of the *Sunday Times*; there are no traces of adults waiting in the wings, and Ishiguro's face in focus and smiling happily (Appleyard).

It seems fitting that Ishiguro's archive would include this imperfect version of a carefully composed photo. It weaves together a number of threads that appear in Ishiguro's published works, but also in the documented communication with his parents included in the Ransom Center archive, and in the unpublished works in which he grapples with his family's memories. The hollow swords condense decades of history into one fragmented object, their missing parts as revealing as the seemingly incomplete memories of Ishiguro's narrating protagonists. The figure that waits just off camera speaks to the shadowy family members that remain in the minds of his protagonists: Etsuko's love interest who died after the atomic bomb and her daughter who died decades later in England, Masuji Ono's lost wife and soldier son whose lives were both claimed by the war, and Steven's larger-than-life father and his all-but-unmentioned unmentioned brother Leonard. It may also speak to the influence

of Ishiguro's family on his works: both the limited exchanges of national and family history documented in the archive, and knowledge exchanged verbally and affectively that must exist beyond the bounds of this archive.

To continue examining how parents present war to children who grow up to write about it obliquely (first presented in my study of Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood's assembled diaries), and to understand how Ishiguro may use and depart from the perspective of firsthand witnesses in his family when he imagines the perspective of the peripheral witness, I will analyze two forms of writing found in the Kazuo Ishiguro Papers. I largely focus on a work by Ishiguro himself, an incomplete project titled "Flight from Nagasaki" based on his mother's experience of the immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb; and I study the comparatively sparse but significant documents that are written or assembled by Ishiguro's parents, as well as some photographs from Ishiguro's return to Japan after the success of his first novel. Collectively, these documents may come closer to a curated presentation of his parents' writing and lives than a survey of their firsthand experience of war, more similar to Christopher Isherwood's curated "autobiography of a family" *Kathleen and Frank* than the "diaries" that Kathleen compiled to document Frank's life and death and her own experience. And yet through these contents of the archive and Ishiguro's commentary on them, we see how Ishiguro imagines feelings of peripherality could be experienced even by those who witnessed the war firsthand, and some hints that both he and his family members were attuned to the burdens that narratives of war place on oneself and others.

It is impossible not to notice that Ishiguro's published works never describe the experience or immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb. All discussion of the event and fallout in his novels is limited to oblique statements about damage to property or landscapes

(as in Masuji Ono's neutral explanation, "The house had received its share of the war damage"), or to fleeting references to dead family members that only occur in passing, through dialogue on which the narrators do not reflect (frequently seen in Etsuko's conversations with family friends in Japan) or to contextualize another story that they deem more important to tell (as seen when a funeral for Ono's son Kenji becomes the background for a conversation with his son-in-law about the war's futility).[67] But the archives reveal that Ishiguro considered depicting the detonation or the immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb in a number of fictional and non-fictional works. In a set of documentary proposals penned in the 1980s, Ishiguro positions the bombing of Nagasaki as both a historical and psychological "turning point" for the city, and yet only one part of the city's history; he begins one summary of a documentary on Japanese ghosts by arguing that this work should "be a portrait of the city which attempts to show Nagasaki as more than a place where an atomic bomb was once dropped," but also concludes most drafts with the image of the bomb ("Unpublished: 'Ghosts Project'"). And in the realm of fiction, Ishiguro's archives contain an unfinished story set in the days after the bombing in Nagasaki. According to notes accompanying this draft, "Flight from Nagasaki" was largely based on the experience of his family members who survived the attacks, including his mother, Shizuko. Through the drafts and notes for this project, we can learn some aspects of her experience that Shizuko shared with her son, but perhaps more importantly, we can see that Ishiguro's decision to narrate from memory and the periphery continues even in stories set far closer to the war.

"Flight from Nagasaki," which Ishiguro notes was likely written after he had completed *An Artist of the Floating World*, brings into relief a narrative pattern in his first

[67] In *The Remains of the Day*, a similar narrative dynamic addresses the death of Stevens' brother Leonard, who has died in the Boer War.

three novels: that is, the amount of time that passes between the war or the "turning points" that his narrators regret and the present day setting from which they write (a span of anywhere from three to ten years). A note from Ishiguro explains that in this four-chapter draft of "Flight from Nagasaki," "Most interest for me was material in 'Chap One,' based on my mother's memories of the Nagasaki Bombing." There is little mention of the atomic bomb elsewhere in Ishiguro's archive, outside of press clippings that show how reviewers framed his early works. Even in a list of questions Ishiguro planned to ask his mother about life in post-war Japan while writing *An Artist of the Floating World*, he does not mention this attack, focusing on gender expectations and economic trends instead. This absence throughout the archive, and the incomplete and unpublished status of "Flight from Nagasaki," suggest that the experience of the bomb and its immediate effects could be entirely too familiar in the Ishiguro family, and either overly familiar or perhaps impossible to broach for Ishiguro. Perhaps because of this, or perhaps as a means of imagining ways in which contemporary perspectives of this event could resonate with views of it as it unfolded, the narrator in "Flight from Nagasaki" conveys more feelings of isolation and guilt than shock or terror.

The story of "Flight from Nagasaki" begins one day after Japan's surrender, an event that itself came nearly a week after Nagasaki was attacked. As the title implies, this story mainly takes place away from the city, when the narrator Mitsuko's parents decide she and her sister should live with their former tutor in a small village before the unpredictable and dangerous enemy troops arrive. In the first chapter, though, the narrator is still in Nagasaki with her family, recovering from a vague illness or injury while her parents and siblings help with relief efforts all day. This slight distance between the day of the bombing attacks and

the days in which the story takes place is echoed by a different form of distance that Mitsuko feels: separation between herself and the war's atrocities, and even separation between herself and the rest of her immediate family via their different experiences. She was present when the bombs fell on the city; she contends with the destruction of all but one room in their house, almost constantly feeling weak and ill; and later she witnesses the burning of dead bodies in the street when she is well enough to return outside. But even as she faces these potentially traumatizing experiences, Mitsuko thinks more about the experiences and responsibilities her family members must face than her own circumstances. While she remains housebound, she is unsettled by fact that her parents and siblings do not talk about the death and destruction outside, but she decides that "For the others […] it was a kind of mercy, that for those few hours each day—the time it took to eat and wash and prepare for sleep—they could escape the horrors they no doubt faced each hour as they tried to help in the death and chaos and pain in the streets" (chapter 1, pages 1-2). By describing her family as "the others," Mitsuko reinforces the difference she feels between herself and the rest of the family, and recognizes that the destruction of their home and her own illness are only one aspect of the horrors brought on by the bombs. When Mitsuko later describes the "private" nature of her family's experiences in Nagasaki, she points out a paradox: "all of us, my father, mother, brother and sister, were united in the knowledge we had each seen and experience moments of unforgettable horror or sadness, but such had been the pressures and perhaps the recoil of the experience, that we had not told each other of these experiences in any detail" (chapter 4, pages 1-2). This distance continues to manifest when Mitsuko notes that she and her sister Noriko no longer spoke at night as they had throughout their childhood (chapter 4, page 1).

Though this distance may be observed most jarringly within Mitsuko's immediate family, it is present far beyond their home. Even when Mitsuko joins the recovery efforts later, she has a pattern of observing the people that she encounters in terms of the distance between them and herself, rather than any common suffering or even shock that could unite their experience. Once, when Mitsuko debates approaching a woman who seems to be burning a loved one, she decides that the woman's decorous manner appears to be free of grief, suggesting to Mitsuko that the woman would prefer to be alone. Later, when she assists another girl in changing her bandages that hide a painful, festering wound, she thinks about the number of times this girl has undergone this painful process already, and the suffering and weeping that she manages to hide in her presence and (she imagines) will break to the surface once she has left the room (chapter 4, pages 5-6). Whether she is confined to the family home or actively helping others to recover, Mitsuko constantly attends to what the people around her may not want her to witness, to the routine horrors that she is only partially witnessing, and to what she cannot feel. But Mitsuko is hardly alone in experiencing a disconnect between herself and others; when she turns her attention to reactions to the war across the city, she reveals even greater gaps in experience or communication. From the opening line, "It was the day after the surrender, and there was still confusion about what the emperor had said," the story portrays a city that is not entirely united (1). Whether their arguments about the true political state of Japan comes from a true misunderstanding of the emperor's orders, or from each citizen's choice in interpreting his words, their discord marks a breakdown in communication or unification, over what to believe and how to we respond.

But while the speaker thinks about the things she has not seen, the actions she has not taken, and the scenes she may not have a right to see, she also thinks about what she will

remember, what she will "take with her" beyond the site of the bomb's destruction. Once she has begun to leave the house for brief periods, to aid relief efforts, she says, "But it was the last body I saw burning that night which will remain in my memory, and which I took with me the next day up to the hills of …. overlooking Nagasaki" (chapter 1, page 6, ellipses in original). Her phrasing indicates that some traces of the war—the graphic funeral pyre, the composed reverence of the woman, her own paralysis from indecision—not only live on in her mind, but also will be carried beyond the city through her. Whether our narrator is in the city center or sequestered in a village in the hills, she is constantly aware of the limits to her own perception, and alert to the possibility that her desire to witness, help, or remember could become a burden to others as much as to herself.

Ishiguro's notes alongside this draft indicate that he may have abandoned the project in part because he was concerned with similar questions about what this story would carry into the present moment. His notes suggest that he perceived that this story could reduce Nagasaki to a decontextualized, ahistorical site of atrocity, and that it was difficult at the time to offer an alternative purpose. In one note, he warns himself, "We have to get the theme; say something pretty large, not just…the bomb's a bad thing…but to put it into a large context." But even in its unfinished state, "Flight from Nagasaki" is more than reflection of the bomb, or even of his mother and aunt's experiences of it—and the characters' hesitation to share experiences within the story should warn us that we cannot infer that any particular character represents Ishiguro's mother. The thread of distance (physical, temporal, or psychological) resonates with Ishiguro's experience as a member of "the generation of postmemory," perhaps as much as it does with his mother's experience as a survivor who eventually left Japan, and who may well have faced the problem of not knowing others' experiences

(explored theoretically by Briony Tallis in the opening chapters of *Atonement*, and thrown into sharper relief when rape and then war make their way into the novel). Once again, distance paradoxically may serve as a site of connection between one generation and the next; but as always, we are left with the sense that there are still gaps that cannot be ignored.

In the materials written by Ishiguro's parents that are preserved at the Ransom Center, there are few direct references to World War II. Most texts written by his father, Shizuo Ishiguro, are focused on broader topics, from an annotated chart of Japanese place-names as Ishiguro was writing *An Artist of the Floating World* to a sheaf of large pages photocopied from a library book on Shanghai while Ishiguro was refining *When We Were Orphans* ("*An Artist of the Floating World*: 'Penultimate Draft'—Notes (3 of 3)"). Though a number of family letters are preserved in the Ransom Center archive, only one refers directly to World War II and its destruction, when Shizuo explains that a relative in Japan would like to meet him during his 2001 book tour. This letter primarily uses footnotes to address the war, an intriguing connection between the form of this letter and Kathleen Bradshaw-Isherwood's scrapbook "diaries" where her reflections are relegated to footnotes as well. In the case of Shizuo's letter, though, the footnotes make up the bulk of the letter itself. The first footnote explains their relationship to one person that Ishiguro may meet during his trip who had a particularly traumatic experience during war. Shizuo's footnote ends with the direction, "I suggest you not to mention this background […] including the War itself." While this is the most direct mention of World War II by any of Ishiguro's relatives in the archive, we cannot assume that the war was not discussed within his immediate family. What it does suggest, though, is that Ishiguro's family, with a view similar to that of the narrator of "Flight from Nagasaki," instilled attentiveness to the burden that speaking of war could inflict on others.

To gain more insight into how Shizuo and Shizuko Ishiguro preserved family memories of Nagasaki, and to study Ishiguro's use of these materials and memory practices in his published writing, we can turn once again to the photograph, and the framing notes that Ishiguro seems to have added himself to the back of these snapshots. Many of his childhood photos from Japan and England attest to the fragile, illusory, yet significant nature of memory and self-understanding. A photo of young Ishiguro in front of a large globe bears a label on the back that indicates the time and place it captures ("circa 1960, Nagasaki"), and below this label Ishiguro offers an interpretation of the image: "This may be one of the last pictures taken of me before I left Japan. It's even possible the significant posing in front of the globe at Japan was deliberately conceived for this reason ("Personal/Professional: Photographs—Childhood in Japan & England")." The same rich symbolism of the setting of his photos as an infant is present in this photo at five years old. His commentary on these photographs draws attention to the purposeful construction of this scene, and still takes it to be a faithful account of that point in his life.[68]

Ishiguro's two trips returning to Japan (one in 1989, and another in 2001) are also documented through photographs, some of which show the difficulty of recapturing the past. A number of photos in the 1990 album show Ishiguro and his family in what appears to be an empty field, save for a stone lantern. This is the former site of his family's home in Nagasaki, destroyed after the death of his grandfather. Still, the group of family and friends in the

[68] There are only a handful of photos from his youth in England, and it is therefore curious that one is represented twice: a large photo labeled by Ishiguro "Being made Head Chorister during church service at Emmanuel Church, Guildford circa 1965," and a smaller photo of a newspaper article (attributed to *The Surrey Advertiser*), with a headline above it that reads "Japanese boy is Surrey choir's Head Chorister." At eleven years old, in this photo he has already spent about half of his life in England, but the newspaper introduces him with the same preamble about his nationality that is echoed over and over in the press clippings collected for his first published novel, *A Pale View of Hills*.

photograph appears cheerful, making it more than a record of loss. Other photographs from this trip display more public memorials, including the statue described in *A Pale View of Hills*, with comments on the margin of this paper that echo Etsuko's own critiques. Ishiguro writes, "This statue is famous: built to commemorate to victims of the atomic bomb, & hold back future warfare (that's what his left hand's doing: the right points in direction of bombs. Eyes are closed in prayer). Sceptics thought he looked like a traffic cop at time of unveiling" ("Personal/Professional: Travel—Japan (1989) (1 of 3)"). Of course, Ishiguro will not have remembered this criticism firsthand, as the Peace Park was unveiled in April 1955, only months after Ishiguro's birth ("Nagasaki Peace Statue"). Whether Ishiguro heard this critique from his family or discovered it in his research for *A Pale View of Hills* (where this same critique is echoed) is unclear, but it does demonstrate that even these firsthand notes on Ishiguro's trip contain traces of multiple perspectives.

Later in the archive of personal photos, in which professional photographers work to represent his life as an author in England, Ishiguro uses his notes to draw attention to the gap between representation and reality when others represent him. A snapshot of him shoveling in his backyard is affixed with a label that admits, "I never did any gardening; this pose was for the photographer" ("Personal/Professional: Photographs—Ishiguro at Sydenmham, London home"). Ishiguro has heavily annotated the entire archive of his papers at the Ransom Center, but his interjections in the photography section are apart from his notes in the rest of the archive by his attention to the constructed nature of the photographs. Sometimes this construction is noteworthy because of its symbolism, as in the case of his photo in front of the globe in Japan and in his reading of the (perhaps inadequate) symbolism of the statue. Other times this construction is noteworthy because it so clearly does not reflect

his life (as in this case of the publicity photographs). In these notes and in the novels that seem influenced by the same objects or events, we see threads that connect to other characters and authors examined in this project: the skepticism of a statue's symbolism and ability to unite echoes Peggy in *The Years*, and this attention to the constructed, multilayered process of photography echoes Isherwood's narrator in *Goodbye to Berlin*.

In interviews that touch on critical reception of his works, Ishiguro has expressed concern with readings of his novels that treat them as historical novels whose relevance is limited to specific to the concerns of the era that he depicts ("An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro" 149, 139). It is easy to imagine that analysis of these works and of the archive that is limited to detailing Ishiguro's biography and that of his family members could seem myopic for the same reasons. Instead of connecting details and plot points from his novels to the materials crafted by and about his family, then, in this appendix I have aimed to trace the pervasive use of narrative distancing and self-awareness, commonly found in peripheral witness narratives, but also present in these biographical and autobiographical texts. As Marianne Hirsch has argued the previous generation's memories can seem to be carried into the future through detailed stories and affective echoes, so too it seems from the materials examined here that narrative concerns about what is known, remembered, and passed down can also be shared between generations; or perhaps more accurately, the "generation of postmemory" may imbue stories of the past with narrative approaches that resonate with them.

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