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Contents

The Importance of Music to Anders Behring Breivik

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Abstract: *This article considers the significance of popular music to the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik, particularly the people he names in his manifesto: Helene Bøksle, Clint Mansell and Saga. Breivik saw these musicians, operating outwith the mainstream music industry, as conforming to his ideology, therefore playing a crucial role in making him feel part of a community during his period of isolation in preparation for his attack. This music also helped to motivate Breivik and maintain his morale. This article considers why this music in particular appealed to Breivik, and what he saw in it to confirm his ideology.*

Introduction

On 22 July 2011, Anders Behring Breivik became one of the world's most notorious perpetrators of lone-wolf terrorism, killing eight people with a car-bomb in central Oslo, then moving to the island of Utøya, where he shot dead 69 attendees—mostly teenagers—at the summer camp of the Workers' Youth League (the youth wing of the Norwegian Labour party). While Breivik conducted these actions alone, (BBC, 2011) he was motivated by an ideology that had been acquired and influenced by a community of like-minded individuals connected through a variety of media. One medium of particular significance to Breivik was music. This article considers the various significances of music for Breivik, particularly in allowing him to visualise his attacks, in making him feel part of a community, and in being sufficiently malleable to be adapted to his ideology. More fundamentally, these functions fed into a broader role of music for Breivik, in motivating him and in maintaining his morale.

Lone-wolf Terrorism and Community

Lone-wolf terrorism is increasingly recognised as a rising phenomenon by scholars and governments. (Barnes, 2012) In the classification scheme proposed by Bates (2012), Breivik was a "chaos lone wolf"—in that his focus was on a single event. This is as opposed to a "career lone wolf" who aims to conduct a series of violent acts.

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Breivik also conforms to one of Brym's criteria for individually executed terrorist attacks (albeit Brym's specific focus is on the characteristics of suicide bombers), (Brym, 2012) in that he was politically rather than religiously motivated (despite his stated target being Islam). (Brym Another of Brym's assertions, that "suicide bombers are not crazy" was supported by the Norwegian court judging Breivik to be sane. As this article argues, Breivik's interpretation of the music he cites is generally appropriate, and far from symptomatic of a deranged mind.

While Breivik conforms to these traits of lone-wolf terrorism, his designation as "lone-wolf" does not mean that he operated in total isolation. While Bates cites self-radicalization as a significant feature of lone-wolves, the process of this radicalization—through, for example, books writings, manifestos and music—is dependent on the existence of communities and channels of dissemination, and in particular on the ability of the lone-wolf to access these channels. In an article in a previous edition of this journal, Gabriel Weimann makes the point that lone-wolves "are not indeed so lonely: they are motivated, taught, recruited, incited or even trained by external sources; they display a degree of commitment to and identification with extremist movements; in other words, their solitary actions do not take place in a vacuum." (Weimann, 2012) Jonathan Rae similarly points out that ethno-nationalists "are intertwined into an interdependent close-knit community which requires high levels of trust and mutual commitment, far from the notions of psychosis or other pathological disorders." (Rae, 2012) Breivik was wary of declaring his political allegiance publicly, but music allowed him to imagine himself as part of a community, both political and aesthetic.

Perhaps the most conspicuous evidence of Breivik's outside influence can be seen in the composition of his manifesto, which Breivik himself admits is "60% cut and paste," with the remainder original writings. (Siddique and Pidd, 2012) Breivik's plagiarism demonstrates the existence of a network in which he developed ideology and his reliance on the work of others. While Breivik's fondness for music is perhaps not so tangible as his dependence on the literature used in his manifesto (particularly the writings of Koenraad Elst and Robert Spencer), it still played a meaningful role in the preparation of his attacks. Music allowed Breivik to feel part of a community, even when his preparations required solitude. Through music, Breivik variously saw his ideology confirmed, enacted and espoused, even when his interpretation conflicted with the intention of the musicians. Music also afforded him the opportunity to visualise and romanticise his

attacks, while maintaining his motivation and morale throughout the preparation process.

Music in Everyday Life

Breivik's writing on music (under the anglicised pseudonym Andrew Berwick) is mainly included in subsection 3.29 of his manifesto, "How to stay motivated for longer periods—perform a daily mental check." Here, he notes that the style of operation he is advocating requires isolation and self-sufficiency which can be psychologically challenging:

> Becoming and maintaining the position as a self sufficient Justiciar Knight sleeper cell involves the capability to motivate/indoctrinate yourself over a prolonged period of time. Self-financed and self-indoctrinated single individual attack cells, is [sic] the backbone of the Knights Templar Europe. The importance of the ability for single cell commanders to be able to keep their spirits and morale up through self-indoctrination and motivation by using specific motivational techniques has been stressed on multiple occasions. (Breivik, 2011: 846)

Breivik advocates the use of ritual to prepare for "martyrdom," and to maintain morale and motivation:

> I do a mental check almost every day through meditation and philosophising. I simulate/meditate while I go for a walk, playing my Ipod [sic] in my neighbourhood. This consists of a daily 40 minute walk while at the same time philosophising ideologically/performing self indoctrination and the mental simulation of the operation while listening to motivational and inspiring music. I simulate various future scenarios relating to resistance efforts, confrontations with police, future interrogation scenarios, future court appearances, future media interviews etc. or I philosophise about certain articles in the book. This daily mental exercise or ritual keeps me fully motivated and charges my batteries. And I'm sure it can work for other people as well. (Breivik, 2011: 845-6)

Music clearly played a fundamental role in Breivik's ritualistic preparation, and was an important tool in maintaining his enthusiasm. Breivik goes on to cite three particular musicians as especially significant to him: Helene Bøksle, Clint Mansell and Saga. Each of these examples, while serving overlapping functions, demonstrate the various roles that music fulfilled for Breivik.

Visualisation and *Age of Conan*

The above quote suggests that visualisation was a significant part of Breivik's preparation process, and his use of music helped him

to imagine himself in various roles and situations, notably carrying out the attack and the aftermath of it. Breivik's reference to himself as being a "Justiciar Knight Commander for Knights Templar Europe" and his use of a crusader-like cross on the manifesto cover unambiguously asserts his self-identification as a modern day knight, fighting against multiculturalism (which he sees as manifested particularly by Islam). Music is not the only non-literary medium which Breivik endorsed. Much has been made of his infatuation with computer games, particularly his claim that he used the first-person shooter game *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* (bought in February 2010) as a simulator in order to prepare for his attacks, (Breivik, 2011: 1418) stating in court that he used a "holographic aiming device" in the game to develop "target acquisition." (Pidd, 2012)

While this revelation received much attention, with some British MPs calling for a ban on such games, (Williams, 2012) Breivik himself was far more interested in fantasy games. He referred to the year between the summers of 2006 and 2007—during which he lived in his mother's home and played the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft* for up to 16 hours a day—as a "sabbatical," a reward for his years of hard work from 2002 and an indulgence before embarking on the preparation of his attacks. While *World of Warcraft* received the most attention, Breivik was also familiar with *Age of Conan*, another online role-playing game. *Age of Conan* was developed by a Norwegian company and is based on the 'Conan the Barbarian' character created by Robert E. Howard, with players taking on the roles of warriors and wizards in a fantasy setting. The soundtrack of *Age of Conan*, composed by Knut Avenstroup Haugen, incorporates various ethnic influences and themes to reflect the different races in the game. Despite the soundtrack's cosmopolitanism, it has a distinctly Norwegian flavour; along with Haugen, the Norwegian vocalist Helen Bøksle is prominent, and the lyrics on the soundtrack are in Old Norwegian, taken from the Poetic Edda.

While Haugen as composer is most responsible for the *Age of Conan* soundtrack, Breivik explicitly identifies it with Bøksle. The section in his manifesto in which *Age of Conan* music is referred to is headed "Motivational music tracks, artists: Helene Bøksle." Breivik refers to four tracks, including YouTube links to the songs: "The Dreaming – Ere the World Crumbles," "Nighttime journey through the Eiglophian Mountains," "The Dreaming Anew – Memories of Cimmeria" and "The Awakening – Hyborian Adventures." Of these, the first three contain vocals by Bøksle, and are referred to by Breivik as "surpass[ing] almost

anything I've ever heard before." By contrast, the lack of vocals in "The Awakening" is noted specifically by Breivik, seen by him as "a decent track for maintaining a high morale during a limited battle confrontation." Bøksle's songs are also stated to be "worthy of playing during a martyrdom operation," and the following quote shows how Breivik imagines this music as a soundtrack for his own planned attack:

> Imagine the following; at the end of your mission, when you have completed your primary objectives - imagine fighting for your life against a pursuing pack of system protectors (or as I like to call them: armed defenders of the multiculturalist system, also referred to as the police). You try to avoid confrontation but they eventually manage to surround you. You hear this song as you push forward to annihilate one of their flanks, head shotting [sic] two of your foes in bloody fervor trying to survive. This angelic voice sings to you from the heavens, strengthening your resolve in a hopeless battle. Your last desperate thrust kills another two of your enemies. But it isn't enough as you are now completely surrounded; your time is now. This voice is all you hear as your light turns to darkness and you enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This must surely be the most glorious way to claim the honour of martyrdom in battle. (Breivik, 2011: 849)

It is clear that the use of music such as this allowed Breivik to envisage himself as a knight or crusader, fighting off the enemies of Europe. It is difficult to conceive of Breivik being able to visualise this scenario through any medium other than music, due to its indeterminate nature. It is also significant that Breivik—with his plan to use his iPod during his attack—was able to assume this music could indeed provide the soundtrack to his "martyrdom."

As well as his written manifesto, Breivik uploaded a video version to YouTube six hours before beginning his attack. This video compresses the arguments of his manifesto into a twelve-minute collection of images and quotes in four parts: "The Rise of Cultural Marxism," "Islamic Colonization," "Hope" and "New Beginning." As well as including images of Breivik armed and in uniform, the video calls on conservatives to embrace martyrdom, with Breivik apparently seeing himself as the spark that would rally a new generation of crusaders. While the content does not differ significantly from that of the written manifesto, the video affords Breivik the potential for soundtracking his material. He turns to *Age of Conan* to do so, using the three Bøksle tracks he cites in his manifesto, as well as "Akhet – Portal to Stygia" for the section "Islamic Colonization." The latter is clearly presented as a contrast to Bøksle, with a male singer and the use of the Arabic Hijaz scale. The contrast of the video is clear; Bøksle's music presents the familiarity of the West, while "Akhet" presents an unfamiliar and threatening 'other'. The use of music from *Age of Conan* is suggestive.

It may seem strange that Breivik does not cite the game as significant—much preferring *World of Warcraft*—but there is obvious relevance. First, the music itself is very well regarded and of high quality, with the composer winning awards for his score. Second, its Norwegian context chimes perfectly with Breivik's ideology; the use of Old Norwegian especially evokes a period which many on the extreme right see as a purer time. (Gardell, 2003) Third, the music is designed to be dramatic and increase adrenaline—a background for the game's combat situations—signalled most plainly by the prominent use of drums. Breivik declared that this music was appropriate to play during his "martyrdom operation," suggesting that he considered it appropriate accompaniment for his crusade.

"Lux Aeterna": Battle Anthem

Similarly drawn from a fantasy source, Breivik also refers to a work by Clint Mansell which was originally recorded as the soundtrack for the film *Requiem for a Dream*, though he identifies it with *Lord of The Rings* in his manifesto:

> I love this work. Lux Aeterna means "eternal light" and it really is an appropriate title. I've listened to this track several hundred times and I never seem to get tired of it. The track is very inspiring and invokes a type of passionate rage within you. In Lord of the Rings – a good version of this track (Requiem for a Tower version which I think is the best) is performed during the most intense fighting of one of the central battles. Since it has worked for me, it is likely that it will work for you. An invigorating piece of art. (Breivik, 2011: 849)

In fact, "Requiem for a Tower" - an adaptation of Mansell's "Lux Aeterna" - was only used in a trailer for *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, but this does not detract from the significance of Breivik's appropriation. In *Lord of the Rings*, the forces of good overcome overwhelming odds to defeat the forces of evil. Just as with the *Age of Conan* music, Breivik could use "Requiem for a Tower" to imagine himself in the role of hero, fighting the forces of darkness. It is possible that the contrast between the white-skinned forces of good and the dark-skinned forces of evil in these films added another level of compatibility with Breivik's ideology.

Breivik's conception of Mansell's work as battle music is shown by his reference to it later in his manifesto:

> I will put my iPod on max volume as a tool to suppress fear if needed. I might just put Lux Aeterna by Clint Mansell on repeat as it is an incredibly powerful song. The combination of these factors (when added on top of intense training, simulation, superior armour and weaponry) basically turns you into an extremely focused and deadly force, a one-man-army. (Breivik, 2011: 1344)

His regard for the piece in general is also demonstrated by a recommendation to the future creators of an imagined European Federation, which Breivik foresees as providing the bulwark against Muslim and Marxist encroachment:

> The formalisation of a new and powerful cultural conservative "European Federation" should have a new anthem. The anthem could be a vocal variation of: Lux Aeterna by Clint Mansell, and could be made available on [sic] all European languages. The vocal theme of the song should underline European unity against Jihad and the Islamic Caliphates in the past and our struggle against Marxism. (Breivik, 2011: 1205)

Breivik clearly imagines that the European Federation's main function will be to wage war against Islam, and the use of "Lux Aeterna" as an anthem reinforces the violent preoccupation of this vision.

Breivik's desire for an anthem, even if it is martial, reveals a desire to unite Europe against its enemies through music. Benedict Anderson, addressing the role of music in the imagining of communities, emphasises the uniting power of anthems:

> No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in the experience a feeling of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing … provides occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realisation of the imagined community.... How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound. (Anderson, 1991: 145)

Breivik's vision of "Lux Aeterna" as a European anthem imagines the people of a continent united through song, although this utopian vision seems all the more fanciful when one considers the difficulties which have dogged the anthem of the European Union. (Fornäs, 2011)

Saga: Ideological Confirmation and Aesthetic Satisfaction

While Mansell and Bøksle represent the most mainstream of Breivik's musical inspirations—albeit in the relatively unusual realms of film and computer game soundtracks—the musician given the most space in his manifesto is the Swedish singer known as Saga, a high-profile figure in the extreme-right music scene which promotes the ideology of white nationalism and supremacism. The extreme-

right music scene originated in Britain in the late 1970s, with the punk band Skrewdriver being a notable part of this first wave of extremist music. During the 1980s and 1990s extreme-right musical culture established itself internationally, with particularly significant national scenes in Britain, Germany, Sweden and the United States. While it has a few associations with democratic groups, such as the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands in Germany, it also has a history of violent activism. This is particularly clear in the United States: Tom Metzger, founder of White Aryan Resistance (WAR) and an important figure in the establishment of extreme-right music in the USA, was a strong early advocate of lone-wolf terrorism (ADL); David Lane, a founding member of the terrorist group The Order, disseminated a number of writings from prison which included his views on music, while acting as a mentor figure to the notorious teen duo Prussian Blue (Quinn, 2007); and William Luther Pierce, leader of the National Alliance and owner of Resistance Records until his death (during which time it became a multi-million-dollar business), authored *The Turner Diaries* which depicts the revolutionary overthrow of the United States government and a race war to exterminate "impure" groups. *The Turner Diaries* is said to have inspired a number of terrorist groups and individuals, including The Order, David Copeland, and Timothy McVeigh. (SPLC, 2000)

Saga first came to prominence in the extreme-right scene with her covers of Skrewdriver songs released over the course of three albums. More recently, she released an album consisting of original material and covers of other canonic extreme-right songs. What distinguishes Saga, other than being a female in an overwhelmingly masculine realm, is the style of her music:

> Saga is a courageous, Swedish, female nationalist-oriented musician who creates pop-music with patriotic texts. She is, as far as I know, the best and most talented patriotic musician in the English speaking world. And for those of you, like myself, who hates [sic] "metal", Saga is one of the few sources available that offers quality patriotic pop-music with brilliant texts. (Breivik, 2011: 847)

It seems likely that Breivik uses the term "metal" as a catch-all descriptor of the heavy guitar-based forms which characterise much extreme-right music. This suggests that Saga was particularly valuable to Breivik as, out of all the music which might be considered politically sympathetic to his ideology, hers was the most accessible given his aesthetic preferences. This point is worth emphasising; there is a vast amount of music—particularly from the extreme right—which Breivik could have used, but he had aesthetic preferences as well as

ideological ones.

The importance of Saga to Breivik is demonstrated by the amount of space he devotes to her; not only does he write more on her than on Bøksle and Mansell combined, he also includes lyric transcriptions of his preferred songs. "Ode to a Dying People," a cover of a RaHoWa[1] song which Breivik cites as Saga's most popular work, makes clear that Saga's prime concern is with race.

> It's all over except for the crying;
> With a whimper instead of the roar of a lion;
> The greatest race to ever walk the earth, walk the earth;
> Dying a slow death with insane mirth;
> The tomb has been prepared, our race betrayed, our race betrayed;
> White man, fight the flight towards the grave;
> [chorus]
> If this is the way it ends, if this is the way my race ends;
> If this is the way it ends, I can't bear to witness…
> (Saga, "Ode to a Dying People")

Breivik himself tends to speak of multiculturalism and particularly Islam rather than race, but racial beliefs are evident in his reference to low average IQ in sub-Saharan Africa, and his statement that a stable and prosperous country must be ethnically homogenous. (Breivik, 2011) Just like many in the extreme-right music scene, Breivik turns accusations of racism back on to "the multiculturalists," claiming to be anti-racist, while also claiming that under multiculturalism whites have been major victims of other ethnic groups. (Breivik, 2011: 1357 & 1389) Breivik was a huge fan of hip-hop in his youth, but now views it as essentially black and a destructive "ethnic industry," damaging to the fabric of European society. (Breivik, 2011: 1206-9)

However, there are differences between Saga's and Breivik's ideologies. Saga's grew from post-war neo-Nazism, while Breivik's prime concern is with Muslim occupation of Europe. Breivik, who consistently refers to himself as a "conservative," has a fairly low opinion of the ideology he refers to as National Socialist (NS), although he does see the potential for collaboration:

> It will be extremely hard to cooperate with anyone who views our primary ally (the Jews/Israel) as their primary enemy. Their Jew obsession and support to Islamic regimes will severely hinder any direct cooperation. They are blinded by their Jew hate to a degree where they fail to see the imminent threat to Europe represented by Islam.… However, we have certain things in common that shouldn't be underestimated. We share the same anti -EU, -UN and –immigration/multiculturalism (Muslim immigration

1 *RaHoWa is an abbreviation of the phrase "Racial Holy War."*

> at least) sentiments and the goal of "preserving European traditions, culture etc" which is the primary reason why more and more ex-NS people are conforming and joining the new "European right". As a message to those hardcore NS's who are simply unable to compromise; Conform and join our armed struggle against the European cultural Marxists/multiculturalists (the enablers of the Islamisation of Europe), or continue to be sidelined and marginalised.... The cultural conservatives of Western Europe will seize power by 2080, if you want to be a part of this you will have no choice but to compromise. I would imagine that a continued Judeo Christian Europe would be considerably better than a European Caliphate even for the most hardcore NS. (Breivik, 2011: 1373-4)

Breivik therefore sees commonalities between his brand of conservatism and the ostensibly neo-Nazi extreme right, although he views Saga in particular as having sympathy with his ideology.

> Marxist and multiculturalist character-assassins will claim that Saga is an evil, national-socialist monsterband from hell, due to her success. However, this characteristic couldn't be anywhere further from the truth. Although the environment surrounding Saga, the former NSF – National Sosialistisk Forening (a former Swedish Indigenous Rights Movement demonised as "evil Nazi monsters"), used to be self-proclaimed national socialists; it has become evident that most of them now has [sic] embraced a more national conservative ideological denomination of conservatism, very similar to that of Knights Templar Europe. Saga has created several pop-tracks with nationalist-oriented texts that will appeal to all conservatives, and especially revolutionary conservatives of all conservative ideological denominations. (Breivik, 2011: 847)

While Breivik's claiming of Saga for conservatism is somewhat tenuous, the ambiguous lyrical content of her songs allows for its appropriation by Breivik and his ideology.

For her part, Saga has disavowed any association between her music and terrorism, releasing the following statement in the wake of Breivik's attacks:

> It has come to my attention that my music has been cited ... as going some way to inspiring one of the most vile and criminal acts in recent history. I cannot begin to describe how saddened I am to hear that and wanted to inform you all of my shock and utter horror at such an atrocity. My music is conceived to be a positive step towards celebrating our identity and bringing about positive cultural and political change. Like a great many artists and musicians, my music is designed to give hope to those who otherwise would have little. Change is brought about through political and cultural means by like-minds working together for a greater cause not brought about by warped loners acting out their murderous intentions. I have never sought to encourage or promote violence and I never shall. (Saga, 2011)

Yet, Saga's statement is undermined by her position as a leading

figure in the extreme-right music scene. Extreme-right music tends to espouse lyrical themes of anti-Semitism, racism, anti-communism, white supremacism and white nationalism, often framing these themes in the language of conflict and struggle. Like Breivik, extreme-right music often has a preoccupation with myth and fantasy; it is common to find those involved in the extreme right making reference to historical figures like the crusaders or the Vikings and imagining themselves as modern-day counterparts. For instance, the album artwork for No Remorse's *This Time the World* (Rebelles Européens, 1988) shows a skinhead as part of a continuum from the Viking age, through the Nazis, to the present day. Racial interpretations of fantasy stories, particularly those of J.R.R. Tolkien, place the extreme right as the representatives of good and light, fighting off the evil of other races. (Resistance, 2003) Clearly, these interpretations parallel Breivik's ideology and allow him to claim Saga's music for the conservative ideology of his Knights Templar Europe.

While Breivik obviously values the ideological confirmation he finds in Saga's music, he also makes strong claims for its ability to spur him on, at the same time making clear his personal admiration for Saga and her career:

> Saga has the credibility to use the texts presented vocally as she has been a Swedish and European conservative resistance fighter for more than 10 years, working for the political and cultural interests of Sweden and the interests of all Swedes, Scandinavians and Europeans. Saga and similar patriotic heroes and heroines of Scandinavia, who unlike individuals like myself who has yet to come out of the "revolutionary conservative closet", has had to face political persecution and demonisation for years. Yet they continue their brave struggle to prevent the demographical and cultural genocide of the Scandinavian and European tribes. Instead of "physical" revolutionary or democratic resistance, she fights through her music by inspiring the best in us.
>
> I discovered Sagas music relatively late, in 2008, but have enjoyed it ever since. I have listened to many of the tracks several hundred times and I don't seem to get tired of them. I would HIGHLY recommend that all Justiciar Knights of Europe and other revolutionary conservatives use these tracks for self-motivating purposes. Don't just listen to the tracks but learn the texts as well. It has worked brilliantly for me and it will likely work just as well for you. ((Breivik, 2011: 847)

This passage reveals the extent to which Breivik found comfort in the music and the life-story of Saga, which suggests an importance beyond keeping him motivated. Saga's politics (and persecution) allowed Breivik to perceive her as a kindred spirit fighting for the same cause. Saga's popularity - albeit limited to the extreme-right music scene -

Original Swedish lyrics to "Drömmarnas Stig":

Tvungen att vandra i pinande motvind; Dömd att leva i samhällets skugga; Ständigt förljugen av maktens språkrör;
Och föraktad av gemene man; Vore det inte simpelt att bara blunda;
Att avvika från våra drömmars stig?;
Vore det inte en befrielse att glömma; Att avsvära sig folksjälens plikt?;
…
Detta skall ses som en prövningarnas fas; Ödets verktyg att sålla bort veklingar;
Kampens styrka kommer av offervilja; Vår urgrund står på övertygelse;
…
Känner du dig då manad till strid?;
Låt dig själv aldrig tvivla på seger!

also suggests a community of like-minded individuals united, as with his hopes for an anthem, through music.

Conclusion

It is no surprise that Breivik's favourite Saga song is "Drömmarnas Stig", a collaboration with musicians known as Midgård on *Pro Patria III*. The song is one of the few Saga songs in Swedish rather than English, thus appealing to Breivik's inclination towards Nordicism. It also highlights the difficulties faced by those who work for the "cause," and the ultimate victory that awaits them:

Forced to walk against the wind;
Doomed to live in the shadow;
Constantly lied to by the mouthpiece of power;
And despised by ordinary people.
[chorus]
Wouldn't it be easier to just close our eyes;
To leave the path of our dreams?
Wouldn't it be a relief to forget;
To decline the duty of the folksoul?
…
This should be seen as a phase of tribulation;
The tool of destiny which will weed out the weak;
The strength of the cause comes from self-sacrifice;
Our foundation stands upon conviction;
…
Do you feel the need to fight?
Never let yourself doubt victory!
(Saga, "Drömmarnas Stig")

Even if Breivik felt unable to make contact with potential ideological comrades for fear of compromising himself, music such as this allowed him to perceive himself as part of a community who share his convictions, particularly that there is a fight to be fought, and victory to be achieved.

Perhaps the best evidence of Breivik's belief in community is in the manifesto itself; not only did he adopt the writings of others, but the very act of composing a manifesto and releasing it strongly suggests that he believed it would have an audience. While this audience may turn out to be mainly

journalists and academics, Breivik did not write it as a confessional work. Rather, it documented his experiences in preparation for his attack and his advice for potential emulators, implying that Breivik believed that he would serve as a pioneer to be emulated, with successors who would have similar goals and tastes. Beyond this, music allowed Breivik to visualise himself in various roles in preparation for his attack. Through stimulating music such as Mansell's "Lux Aeterna" he sought to imagine the detail of his attack and work on suppressing his fear, while through Bøksle and Saga's work Breivik envisaged himself as a martyr and hero, sacrificing himself for his noble cause. It is significant that in these interpretations, Breivik can hardly be accused of misunderstanding the material: Mansell's and Bøksle's work was used to soundtrack media with violence and heroism as core components, while Saga's racial politics were easily adapted to Breivik's Islamophobia. So while Breivik's musical choices may be unexpected - and abhorrent to its creators - he could easily understand them as compatible with his ideology, and, by extension, it was possible for him to consider himself as part of a wider ideological community partly predicated upon shared musical taste.

While it is impossible to know whether the absence of this music would have made any significant difference to Breivik's attack, there can be little doubt that he valued it extremely highly. This is evident from the important part that music played in his motivational ritual, and the inspiration he drew from the musicians themselves, particularly Saga who, at least to Breivik, was charting a similar path in the face of persecution. The role of music in this case also conforms to ideas about terrorists not necessarily displaying overt psychological instability - in this case, Breivik's interpretation of the music - and lone-wolves not necessarily operating in isolation, with music providing a channel for Breivik to feel part of a community. Perhaps most significantly, Breivik considered music to be an element of violent acts themselves; not only did Breivik - as demonstrated in his writings - use music to visualise aspects of the attack, but he also clearly stated his intent to listen to "invigorating" music during the attack itself.

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Contemporary Art and Political Violence: The Role of Art in the Rehabilitation and Healing of Communities Affected by Political Violence

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Abstract: *This paper will investigate how contemporary artists who use political violence as a subject matter in their work explain the relationship between art and that form of violence. Referring to interviews with Anita Glesta and George Gittoes, the potential of art as a means of healing communities and individuals affected by terrorism will be explored, alongside related issues of voyeurism, sensationalism and commercialism in art. The study will refer to the ideas of Collingwood and Tolstoy, chosen so as to represent two main schools of thought regarding artistic responsibility & morality and the appropriate intentions of artists. I will explain that both theories can be applied harmoniously to contemporary practise, to the understanding of the role and responsibility of contemporary artists, and discourse around the wider social value of contemporary art.*

Introduction

Contemporary art is used as a means for rehabilitating and healing communities affected by political violence in various ways, from the use of art therapy in the rehabilitation of prisoners and victims, to the wider use of art as a communal experience that enables shared memory and compassion in particular groups of people. The idea of art as useful for this rehabilitation and healing of communities has its roots in the notion of 'moral art' (Tolstoy, 1996: 223 – 224), or art that is socially responsible. In aesthetics and the philosophy of art, there are two broad schools of thought regarding how art can be socially valuable. The first, represented in this paper by Tolstoy, takes the position that art can only be moral if it is based on an existing morality, and that art practise therefore should be aligned with personal ethics. This idea has roots in Platonism[1] (Murdoch, 1977: 2), and the idea that art should reinforce morality rather than distract from it.

1 *Though Plato mistrusted the visual arts and poetry, there was some allowance for approved, moral literature, or that which could: "honour the gods and their parents" and encourage people to love one another (Plato, 2003: 76) He approved of work that was: "severe rather than amusing" and which "portrays the style of the good man." (Plato, 2003: 92)*

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The contrasting view is that art can be valuable whether or not it is aligned to a moral structure, regardless of whether it is intended to be moral. Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy,* even argues that rather than expect art to be justified by life and its moral structures, art itself justifies life: "Only as an aesthetic phenomenon are existence and the world justified." (Nietzsche, 1999: 33; Nussbaum, 2002: 59) Art can be decadent, but is no less important for being so, according to philosophers of art at this extreme of the spectrum. Oscar Wilde, in perhaps a slightly provocative tone, stated that "all art is quite useless" (Wilde, 1908: 1) and espoused the decadent ideas of the time – that art could be escapist, indulgent, and have nothing to do with the society it came from – but that it could not be called 'immoral' on that count. Art, he wrote, could only be judged by aesthetic standards, not moral standards. (Wilde, 1908: 1) Though Collingwood was no decadent, his view that art can be valuable to society without being specifically engaged with a particular moral structure (outside of the art itself) goes some way to defend this broad school of thought in the sense that he defends art as intrinsically valuable rather than dependent on an existing moral structure (or the morality of the artist).

Given the long history of this debate (which I have only skimmed over) in aesthetics, the philosophy of art, and to a lesser degree, the social sciences, why focus on Tolstoy and Collingwood in particular? Though Tolstoy is predominantly famous as a novelist, his views on art and morality, and essays on those thoughts, are significant even if less well known than his fiction. His ideas on the social value of art are well articulated and insightful, and though original in many respects, also represent an essentially Platonic view of art's value lying in truth and life itself, rather than escape from it:

> Tolstoy's view of art is discussed in most courses in aesthetics, particularly his main text *What is Art?* He believed that the importance of art lies not in its purely aesthetic qualities but in its connection with life, and that art becomes decadent where this connection is lost. This view has often been misconceived and its strength overlooked. (Mounce, 2001: vii)

That Tolstoy was a writer as well as a theorist is particularly interesting, granting him insight into the creative process and connection of art to community, having been in the centre of this process himself. His views are valuable on both counts: as a writer explaining the responsibilities and role of the artist in society, and as a theorist, able to detach from his own situation to consider the wider implications of his own thoughts. Collingwood, while not an artist himself, had strong connections with T.S. Eliot's work which is uniquely grounded in creative practice and connection to community. (Eliot, 2012: 505) Collingwood's views represent the established idea of art as intrinsically socially valuable, even if not intentionally so. An artist need not go out of his or her way to remedy a community's problems, for it is fundamentally social, and valuable on that count:

> Collingwood is anxious to show this does not entail aesthetic solipsism, as if the artist need not ever concern himself with others. Quite the opposite: necessarily the artistic achievement is collaborative, involving the audience and other artists. (Kemp, 2012)

Art is not new, and neither is political violence. There is much to learn from Tolstoy and Collingwood's thoughts on the matter, with potential applications to the relationship between contemporary art practice and political issues for a new perspective on the role and responsibilities of art in these settings. This should establish some foundation for a wider study, looking at additional arts forms not considered here as well as related research into the reception of these artistic efforts by the communities in question. If art can heal communities affected by political violence then it is worth investigating in-depth how this works (particularly what is required of the artist) and why. Another aim of the study is to look at the distinction between socially valuable art, compared to other art, and forms of media (including television and mainstream commercial films) that seem to sensationalize political violence, or be used as propaganda for one political viewpoint or another. That is not to say that no mainstream films are capable of rehabilitating communities, nor are valuable in some way, only that many films tend to sensationalise violence when it is the subject, rather than seriously deal with those themes. (Montgomery, 1942: 423 – 427) Although I would agree that art does not have to be intentional or sincere to have a positive affect on its audience – pure escapism can also heal and help people – I am more concerned with art that confronts social problems directly, and how it justifies this role.[2] The hypothesis of this study then is that contemporary art can be a means of rehabilitating and healing communities affected by political violence and does so distinctly from other forms of media whose purpose is sensationalistic and propagandistic.

By looking at how the theoretical ideas about the moral responsibility of art offered by Tolstoy and Collingwood apply to the modern art practice of Anita Glesta and George Gittoes who explore themes of political violence in their work, it is possible to test this hypothesis. In particular, this study will illuminate (a) distinctions between

2 *Though a study into the effects of other media on communities affected by political violence would be an interesting area for further, related research. The benefits of comedy, especially, may be intriguing.*

their art practice and other forms of mass media, and (b) how they explain their work being healing and rehabilitative to communities engaged with it. The testing of the hypotheses offered here is limited to two case studies, so will serve as an initial illustrative study of the potential role of art in rehabilitating communities affected by political violence. I hope that further research can be built on this initial investigation, particularly regarding the use of more case studies, and a focus on the reception of these ideas and art practise on communities themselves, as well as the perceptions of the artists and theorists. This paper is the first step in that wider investigation.

Literature

In considering the potential for art to be used to heal communities affected by political violence, the ideas of Tolstoy and Collingwood are particularly interesting, as they both believe that art can be healing, though in two quite different ways. Tolstoy, in *What is Art?* encourages the idea that the artist must be intentionally socially responsible and resist all work that could be decadent. Collingwood, in *The Principles of Art* – believes that even art that is not overtly socially responsible can nevertheless be of great value to a community. I will briefly outline these two perspectives, before discussing further literature relating to these thinkers and to the wider subject of art and political violence. Before giving an overview of both key texts, I will mention relevant secondary literature.

Leo Tolstoy's *What is Art?*

The main theme that emerges from the essays of Tolstoy, according to Vincent Tomas, is that his opposition to indulgent or decadent art, and its "dehumanization… the divorce of art from life". (Tomas, 1996: vii) He argues that art is essentially the communication of feeling, and that that should be used to bring people together rather than simply for uses such as enjoyment or entertainment. The point and use of art is to communicate thought and emotion to others:

> Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced or is producing the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression. (Tolstoy, 1996: 120)

The social value of art, according to Tolstoy, lies in its ability to communicate in a way that brings people together and encourages a true sense of community, a reiteration his previous point that well-being is rooted in relationships between people, and empathy therein:

> The consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among all men – in their loving harmony with one another. (Tolstoy, 1996: 33)

Art that Tolstoy considers valuable, then, is that which communicates feelings, and in turn 'unites mankind in brotherhood'. Art is valuable when it fulfils its potential to bring people together in harmony. (Tolstoy, 1996: 33, 120)

> Is it really possible, to tell someone else what one feels? (Tolstoy, 1995: 760)

> As every man… may know all that has been done for him in the realms of though by all humanity before his day, and can in the present, thanks to his capacity to understand the thought of others, become a sharer in their activity and also himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others as well as those that have arisen in himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others. If people lacked the capacity to receive the thoughts conceived by men who preceded them and to pass on to others their own thoughts, men would be like wild beasts… And if men lacked this other capacity of being infected by art, people might be almost more savage still, and above all more separated from, and more hostile to, one another. And therefore the activity of art is an important one, as important as the activity of speech itself and as generally diffused. (Tolstoy, 1996: 223 – 224)

Tolstoy considers art to be essential to communities and key in encouraging the kind of empathy and understanding between people that is intrinsically healing and valuable for a community. As we will discuss in more depth later, with reference to the art practise of George Gittoes and Anita Glesta, when applied specifically to issues of political violence and experience of shared trauma, the role of the artist is especially valuable and necessary in developing a community's sense of camaraderie and support. Art that Tolstoy does not approve of, meanwhile, is that which fails to do these things, including "art for the sake of art", or decadent art, (Tolstoy, 1996, 14), which is not "justified by its social utility." (Mounce, 2001: 16)

> It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness. (Tolstoy, 1997: 100)

> [Art] flourishes when it has its roots in beliefs that are fundamental to the life of a people, these being religious in the sense that they give expression to what for that people is the meaning of life. It becomes decadent when it is cut off from those roots… Decadent art appeals

> only to a small section of society, such as the wealthy or leisured… It has a narrow range of themes, the chief being flattery of the wealthy or powerful, sexual attraction and that boredom or discontent with life which is characteristic of the leisured class… It cultivates obscurity and complexity of style. (Mounce, 2001: 40)

Tolstoy associated, to some extent, the status of the audience and intended audience of an artist with that artist's own moral basis, and the moral value of the art work. There is some underlying political assumption here that art which only appeals to the elite is not socially useful because it is not relevant to most people in society.

> To say that a work of art is good, but incomprehensible to the majority of men, is the same as saying of some kind of food that is very good but that most people can't eat it. (Tolstoy, 1996, 95)

As Tolstoy was writing from nineteenth century Russia, and working from essentially socialist principles, it is interesting to consider how that perspective could be applied to the modern world, and specifically art practise in the West. Though there are many people who are not wealthy, and who work often, there is nevertheless a culture of hedonism and capitalism that makes the decadence he speaks of the norm, rather than elitist exception. Either we can speculate that if most people are 'decadent' and find some social benefit in sharing experience of that kind of life, and its problems, then perhaps even work that depicts decadence can nevertheless be valuable to those people. Another option is that capitalism and decadence have a negative effect on art practise as well as society at large, which is an idea we will discuss later, in Anita Glesta's discussion of the commercialism of contemporary art as well as George Gittoes' condemnation of work by Damien Hirst, for example, whom he sees as representative of a decadent, overly commercial art practice.

So there are many interesting discussion points that Tolstoy's ideas provoke, especially in regard to the role and responsibilities of art (and artists) working contemporarily. Though Tolstoy's ideas about art, community and morality have been discussed by Vincent Tomas (1996), H. O. Mounce (2001) and John Dewey (1934), there has been no comprehensive work that looks at the beneficial aspects of the application of Tolstoy's ideas to issues of political violence and communal trauma, the particular benefit that art may have in those situations or the problems with such applications.

R G Collingwood's *The Principles of Art*

Collingwood argues, in the chapter *Art and the Community*

in *The Principles of Art* that, "the artistic achievement is collaborative, involving the audience and other artists." (Kemp, 2012) Art (including poetry as well as the visual arts) is language, and its value lies in the way it can communicate feelings between the artist and his / her community. He argues that the artist is inevitably collaborative, in the sense that he / she learns from other artists, and is inspired by his / her community. The audience (or community)'s experience of art practise is also collaborative, because they hold the same kind of feelings and experiences as the artist and rest of the audience, and it is that shared experience of art that brings people together. As Collingwood puts it:

> The artist… as spokesman for his community, the secrets he must utter are theirs. The reason why they need him is that no community altogether knows its own heart… For the evils which come from that ignorance, the poet as prophet suggests no remedy, because he has already given one. The remedy is the poem itself. Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of the mind, the corruption of consciousness. (Collingwood, 1938, 317)

As art is naturally collaborative, it provides the ideal means to share experience and to bring people together. It is precisely that collaborative nature of art that makes is 'good', according to Collingwood, and 'community's medicine' for a lack of unity or communal understanding. (Kemp, 2012)

The work of Collingwood has been explored by various authors in relation to the meaning and point of art, notable examples including Kemp's *The Croce-Collingwood Theory as Theory* (2003) and Davies' introduction to Collingwood's *Performance Theory of Art* (2008). These recent studies explore theoretical inconsistencies and relationships to other art theory, but there is little analysis on the relation of Collingwood's ideas to actual works of art and literature or any social application of his theory. This problem is true of the secondary literature relating to Tolstoy's work as well. There is no substantial study of these ideas, which are fundamental to the understanding of artistic responsibility and morality, to any contemporary instances of socially responsible art. (Mounce, 2001) There is also no study that links these ideas specifically to the use of art to understand and recover from political violence. This is despite Collingwood's admiration of T. S. Elliot's *The Waste Land,* (Collingwood, 1938: 333) written in reaction to the devastation of the First World War and related crisis in London at the time. The poem is concerned with the resultant communal trauma:

> The decay of our civilisation, as depicted in *The Waste Land,* is not an affair of violence or wrong-doing. It is not exhibited in the persecution of the virtuous and in the flourishing of the wicked like a green bay tree. It

> is not even a triumph of the meaner sins, avarice and lust. The drowned Phoenician sailor has forgotten the profit and loss; the rape of Philomel by the barbarous king is only a carved picture, a withered stump of time. These things are for remembrance… There is no question here of expressing private emotions; the picture to be painted is not the picture of any individual shadow… It is the picture of a whole world of men. (Collingwood, 1938: 334)

Collingwood was particularly interested in the way in which *The Waste Land* was borne out of the artist's own experience and feelings, and how the connection between artist experience and audience empathy/relief were intrinsic:

> The whole poem may be seen as arising out of the speaker's experience of suffering and despair, related to the moment of illumination resulting from 'What the Thunder Said.' … The main voice in *The Waste Land* has had an overwhelming spiritual experience of a mystical kind, the result of a nightmarish vision of the society to which he belongs. His approach is that of the visionary who speaks in riddles and uses images and allegory rather than the language of reason. He speaks as one who has been initiated into the mysteries which he has been allowed to see in his vision. At the same time he, the poet/speaker, is prophetic in Collingwood's sense of the word: "The artist must prophesy not in the sense that he foretells things to come, but in the sense that he tells his audience, at the risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own hearts." Again the role of the main voice as spokesman is clear. It expresses the general waste land condition as well as the universal need for redemption. (Hartveit, 1975: 11)

Tolstoy was also influenced by social problems when he wrote *What is Art?*(Mounce, 2001: 5) and it is interesting to relate those essays to contemporary instances of political violence and social problems similar to those they were initially written in an attempt to resolve. In art theory there is a general lack of research about how these significant and potentially useful ideas relate to contemporary problems and art. There is a need to update discourse around the quite abstract ideas of theorists such as Collingwood & Tolstoy and their application to contemporary art practice to better understand the connection between art and communities and how the former can be of value to the latter.

Other Literature

That is not to say that the use of contemporary art to affect social change and healing of communities has not been written about, just that it is often discussed without reference to these specific ideas. Various authors have discussed the connection between art and violence, as well as the ways in which contemporary art can be used

to help communities. (Bishop, 2012; Cleveland, 2008; Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2005; Thompson, 2012) Of the recent literature focussing on the use of art to effect social change regarding the rehabilitation and healing of communities affected by political violence, Cleveland's *Art and Upheaval: Artists on the World's Frontlines*, which investigates art practise in the context of social upheaval, provided interesting case studies of art being used to heal and rehabilitate communities affected by political violence, as well as other social problems. Also *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011*, edited by N Thompson collects a series of case studies relevant to the topic of art and political violence, but as with Cleveland's study, it is merely descriptive and lacks any substantial theoretical engagement. Another relevant study is Bishop's *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship,* which draws upon historical and theoretical background of socially engaged art. This tends to focus explicitly on group-focused participatory art practice, leaving out individual artists who are socially-engaged and art that is not intentionally communal or participatory, but which is nevertheless socially aware and responsible.

Considering Tolstoy and Collingwood's ideas again, this is problematic, because both agree that an individual artist can bring about social collaboration and 'brotherhood' without necessarily inviting his or her community to be overtly involved in art creation. So, although there is material describing various patterns and instances of artists and communities working together to bring about social change, there is little work on the philosophical origin of this tendency, twinned with a testing of these original ideas using contemporary examples. With that in mind, this study is an initial explanation of the reasons behind art being used as a means of healing communities, and an exploration of the contemporary application of these ideas.

Methodology

To provide evidence for the hypothesis that contemporary art can be a means of rehabilitating and healing communities affected by political violence, this study will draw upon interviews with two important contemporary artists who approach the subject of political violence in very different ways.

Participant 1: Anita Glesta

Anita Glesta is a New York City-based artist who witnessed the

9/11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers precipitating her questioning of the role of the artist in the twenty-first century. She chose to explore Picasso's iconic work, *Guernica* (1937), and having already worked with 9/11 survivors, consulted survivors of the Guernica massacre to find a parallel experience between those two events and the effects on the communities involved. (Koziol, 2007: 3) Glesta chose to use Guernica as a parallel subject, partly due to personal circumstance – her family had lived in the Basque Country in the 1970s, exposing her to its history, and she had returned frequently after the 9/11 attacks, leading her to compare the two instances of traumatic political violence and its effect on people living in those communities. (Koziol, 2007: 8) The detachment, according to Basque locals from actual community life at the time (citing images of a horse and bull in the painting, which was out of place in a painting of a Basque town, where donkeys would have been more appropriate) also fuelled Glesta's interest in *Guernica*. Glesta's reaction to this experience, not to mention her own experience of 9/11, can be seen in her desire to represent the community's experience as truthfully as possible, using oral testimonies rather than images. (Koziol, 2007: 10)

Glesta's other recent work includes *The Census Project* (2010), which was commissioned by the United States General Services Administration's Art & Architecture Program for instillation at the United States Census Bureau Headquarters in Suitland. The installation was, "an exploration of the diverse population of the United States," (Petty, 2010) – not only an artistic representation of the American population, but also a physical space for the 10,000 Census employees working there. (Petty, 2010) Meanwhile, *Echo of Faraday Wood* (1997) was situated in the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney and examined ideas of growth and decay, and the convergence of urban and natural life. (McGillick, 1999) The overriding theme in all of her work is, "the dynamic of how people interact with their environment." This often manifests in works that require the physical participation and interaction with the viewers. Her interest is twofold – firstly, re-examining the role of the artist and the artist's contribution to development of critical thought, and secondly of the contribution that artists can make in developing awareness of this landscape. This makes their role a political one, by breaking down the walls of the gallery and freeing artists to integrate ideas with actual situations." (MacGowan, 1999) Glesta's work on 9/11 and Guernica develops these interests and themes, and shows how this approach to making art can be intrinsically political and provocative without using especially political/violent imagery or explicit political declarations. Instead the politics of her work reside in encouraging people to think

for themselves. Rather than prescribing particular ideas, her work encourages a liberation of individual thought and experience, existing as a free-flowing process of communal communication and shared memory.

Participant 2: George Gittoes

George Gittoes is an artist who has worked in many war zones over the past forty years, including Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, South Africa, Southern Lebanon, and most recently Iraq and Afghanistan. His paintings are usually large canvases depicting a variety of horrors he has observed or which have been relayed to him in the war zones he has visited. (McKenzie, 2010) He has also made films about artists in various areas of conflict, (Bendel, 2011) and is interested in the use of art to escape one's situation (notably through comedy and story-telling). His work looks to expose political violence and "the futility and madness of war." (McKenzie, 2010) Gittoes' work is particularly important and successful for its re-appropriation of journalistic activities (going to the front line himself, filming combatants and victims) while retaining his artistic freedom, independent interpretation and access to a unique platform for the communication of his work to a different audience. He is able to cover wars and stories that mainstream media would tend to ignore, "for issues of political and economic expenditure." (Dillon, 2011)

Gittoes has used films, notably *The Bullets of the Poets* (1987) and (most recently) *The Miscreants of Taliwood* (2011) as well as large figurative canvases, installations, graphic novels, and journals that include drawings, cartoons, collage and writing. *Rwanda Maconde* (1995) for example, details a massacre at the Kibeho refugee camp, and includes drawings of a mother and child in a mass grave, and a boy staring into space, traumatised. His recent series of paintings, related to a graphic novel of the same title, *Night Visions* (2010), depicts United States soldiers, and their experiences in a ficionalised war zone, based on Gittoes' own experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan during the recent 'War on Terror'. (Dillon, 2011) His body of work is expansive and varied, but the subject of political violence and war, and its human effects persists throughout.

Rationale

The reason these two artists were chosen for interview is that although they are both interested in political violence as a subject

matter, they approach it in quite different ways. Where there are similarities, they are in the subject matter approached, rather than in approach taken: both artists have responded to aspects of the War on Terror – Glesta by dealing with the attack on the Twin Towers and the issues of communal trauma due to political violence in her work, Gittoes by covering various war zones and acts of political violence, including the effects of the War on Terror on civillians & soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. But while Glesta uses installations and writing in her artworks, distancing herself from the use of visual depictions of violence (as explored later in the study), George Gittoes seeks out violent imagery, seeing this as a necessary part of his exposition of the atrocities of war. By interviewing them both about their views on violence and art I hoped to elicit an explanation of the difference between socially responsible contemporary art, and sensationalistic art/media.

By interviewing artists that are, in these ways, so different, I hope to uncover the common reasons that make much contemporary art socially responsible, and in doing so come to some conclusions about what characteristics point to art being socially responsible, across the board of contemporary practice. I conducted these interviews by email, which was a beneficial approach. Both artists were given the same questions, so that I could compare their answers more succinctly. Participants were able to answer at a time most suitable to them for thinking about the issues in a relaxed, free environment. The respondents were also given open-ended questions, meaning that they could provide as much detail as they liked, allowing previously unconsidered insights and ideas about the subject to come through. Using these email interviews also built in the possibility for follow-up questions and clarification if necessary. (Meho, 2006)

Theoretical Framework

I will consider the insights of Collingwood and Tolstoy, and the interviews with Anita Glesta and George Gittoes, from a post-positivist constructivist theoretical point of view. The paper will focus on the way in which social interaction and shared ideas, particularly through art practice, are significant in communities' understanding of political violence, (as influenced by depiction of them through art) and therefore their effects and 'reality' to those people. (Nicholson 2002: 122 – 123; Wendt, 1999) Considering how art has been used with intent for healing and rehabilitating communities, the ideas purported by constructivism can be said to go some way to explain how we might understand contemporary art as a means of social change with

relevance in broader community and international relations. It is how political violence is interpreted which potentially makes the difference between a community being chronically traumatised and problematic, and a community able to find meaning in this political violence in order to move forward. Since locating meaning of "things and events" (Nicholson 2002:123) in social interaction is central to constructivism, it is appropriate to apply that theoretical perspective to a study of art and community. In terms of methodology, this theoretical background is consistent with using the qualitative method of interviewing two artists about their subjective experience of art practice and its relation to community. The questions therefore focussed on their experience of the link between artistic expression and audience as well as the wider nature of art (the articulation of subjective emotion and experience) as a means of changing social reality.

Results

By thematically analysing these interviews, the study aimed to highlight particular insights, challenges and possible problems in the intention and use of art to rehabilitate and heal communities, as well as gain insight into the difference between contemporary art's use of subject matter of political violence (from the perception of these artists), compared to mass media coverage. It explored the specific ways that contemporary art can be healing and rehabilitative, by referring to the participants' art practice. The key insights that emerged were in the areas of (a) artists' work and social responsibility, (b) community, and (c) depiction of violence, which are discussed first with reference to the interview with Anita Glesta, and secondly with that of George Gittoes.

Anita Glesta

Artists' Work & Social Responsibility

The key insights to emerge were that Glesta is "mistrustful of the violent / political image and its inherent propagandistic aspect"… She believes that there are, "more interesting ways of being subversive or activist as an artist without an overt political narrative." On the question of whether or not art should be intentionally political or rehabilitative, Glesta answers that she has: "No belief that art should or should not function in any prescribed way." She believes in art for art's sake, but sees that art can have healing capacities and sees this as a positive effect. She believes that art can be moral, and that as an artist she has

a, "moral responsibility to give back to the world" through art, which she considers a gift she's grateful to have.

> I am deeply grateful and fortunate to be able to do what I love. I feel that I must share this and rise to the occasion of using it as much for myself as to benefit others if I can. It does not preclude doing the work I love to satisfy myself but more often than not, that intersects with this broader interest of being able to consider humanity into the work either through including people into interactive participation as a public artist or through the concepts I am engaging with my work in the studio. (Glesta, 2012)

Her personal drive, in the Guernica work especially, is: "to demonstrate the universality of human survival in the face of needless violence and destruction." (Glesta, 2012) So Glesta believes that art is valuable in its intrinsic artistic beauty and goodness, as well as an ability to show the universality of human experience (particularly survival when relating to political violence).

Community

Glesta is open to working with the community, but does not mind if people like or dislike her work, hoping rather to "get people thinking" and communicating. She bears in mind when making installations that affect community the practical concerns and desires of the community to some extent, however:

> How people respond to my work, my viewers or audience, is never a driving force for me at all. In a personal way, individual's response never informs my work. However, on a larger level both in terms of the circumstance for or in which I am creating a work for a site, I am always considering who is there living now and who might have been there at another time. Those are always my concerns. (Glesta, 2012)

In terms of whether or not it matters that her art is healing or rehabilitative, Glesta says that while, "it's nice if it happens," it is not her intention:

> I consider my relationship with my viewers to be much more akin or analogous to the relationship of the author with his reader rather than the visual artist with the object that is just a visual experience. (Glesta, 2012)

Art is a dialogue, and Glesta considers that worthwhile in itself, rather than an intentional remedy for societal problems. However, the two effects are often interrelated, and she considers that a positive outcome of her art practice.

Depiction of Violence

Glesta is suspicious of violent imagery because of the way "it is more likely to end up over the sofa of a wealthy person… than in a place where the violent activity may have occurred". So the violence, whether intended or not, ends up glamorized or sensationalized because of the commercial nature of the art world. If it is accessible to a wider audience or community, however, then there is more potential for the art to be useful and to have integrity, she says:

> If violent subject matter is not necessarily limited to visual imagery or is sited in a more accessible way for those who might really benefit from the awareness that it is trying to evoke, than I believe it can be socially responsible. That being said, those who are experiencing the violence of the book's content might not read a book that is about violence. Will the reader benefit and become active from what he or she may have read? Then the answer would be yes. (Glesta, 2012)

Glesta herself prefers to use "oral narratives, symbols or text rather than overt imagery," (Glesta, 2012) partly because she thinks our society has been "bombarded" with violent imagery and that people are "numb" to it, so it has less effect in terms of making people think or be compassionate.

> We saw this beginning to happen in the sixties with the Vietnam War on TV and much more with the Gulf War… I have used the words of survivors of the bombing of Gernika and Holocaust survivors in my ten-year project of interviews with the survivors. I believe that the spoken words from these people had more power and depth than any imagery that I could make. (Glesta, 2012)

Another interesting point she made, in terms of the attempt to communicate horror and trauma in art, was that she didn't feel that visual art could work as well as written and oral communication. In her experience:

> Having been in the middle of the bombing and as a witness to this violent destruction I knew that no image I could make could possibly match the tragedy of this indescribable event. However, the spoken words of those who have had some time and distance from a like experience might be able to offer a sense of continuity and humanity with how we all survive this unspeakable violence. (Glesta, 2012)

George Gittoes

Artists' Work & Social Responsibility

Compassion is a central drive in making art, and Gittoes is, "highly influenced by the reactions of viewers to my work." (Gittoes, 2012) Gittoes believes that by being compassionate in this way, art can be morally and socially responsible and useful, despite the art world often being commercially driven:

> The vast majority of artists do art to either sell, so it usually has to be pleasant and decorative, or to make their names in the art world. Neither of these aims interest me. War is barbaric and I describe my life work as a "war on war". I want to see humans evolve socially beyond the need for violent physical aggression. My art has developed through trial and error." (Gittoes, 2012)

Being comic, he says, is a way of relieving people from shocking aspects of war, and central to his role as an artist. He has managed to combine this humour with a generally sincere attitude to his work, believing it necessary for there to be some respite, and to include the efforts of some individuals in war zones to rise above their situations.

> Humour has become a bigger and bigger factor. When serious subjects have humour inserted into their structure it is a huge relief and assists people to absorb the impact of the more shocking aspects. (Beldel, 2011)

His perceived role as an artist is deeply political, too. He believes that:

> Art and film which propagates the myth of the Patriotic Killer Hero ultimately propagates war… I want my art to be like Perseus mirror-shield to reflect the worlds horror back on itself. Perhaps if more artists thought this way we would have a better chance of disempowering the Medusa. (Gittoes, 2012)

Community

Gittoes emphasises that he has always been involved practically as well as artistically in the communities he has used as subject matter. Helping (practically) is key: "When the horror of the events were over I was able to live with the memories not because of the art I had created but because the memory of those I had helped." (Gittoes, 2012) Having worked as an art therapist in a mental institution, he believes art is very useful in rehabilitating individuals as well as the wider community:

> I believe this function should not be underestimated as an alternative to harsh medications. In the wider sense, when art is combined with love it can do miracles to heal both humanity and the planet. (Gittoes, 2012)

Other examples of Gittoes using art to benefit community are his film about "artists in Jalalabad using their skills to effect social change and work to a better and more equal Afghanistan by artistic means," and the "cinema circus" which he took around remote areas of Afghanistan to encourage children to be creative:

> These raggedy children have never been to school or known modern medicine or warm clothing against the cold – so imagine the delight I feel to bring them film, art, acting and music. After the show most of the kids tell us they want to discover how to be artists rather than soldiers for the Taliban. (Gittoes, 2012)

Depiction of Violence

Gittoes himself uses violent images in his work, but doesn't consider it gratuitous. He considers it important to expose the true horror of war and violence. For example, in a film about the Taliban's execution of a child and the use of films to desensitise and 'shut down' other film industry in Afghanistan, he depicts violence. But he does so with the intention of exposing these violent films [of the Taliban] and the political structure behind them. Likewise he uses violent imagery in paintings to expose the pain people are put through during war. Gittoes disapproves of and dislikes Hollywood blockbusters that are gratuitously violent, as well as contemporary artists such as Damian Hirst, who use depictions of violence simply for shock value and to sell paintings.

> In art I find much of Damien Hirst's work designed to shock and I suspect this is for nothing more than sensationalism in a formula that has worked to make him internationally rich and famous. I recently saw a piece of his where two bodies are lying on hospital style metal stretchers. Their entire bodies are covered except for their genital area. A dark skinned man has his penis and testicals revealed through a jagged hole in the blue sheet – same with the white skinned woman. I see this as pure sensationalism - a crude shock, [and] horror gimmick. (Gittoes, 2012)

Gittoes is very clear that his own work resists such sensationalism and is distinct from not only other artists who use violence irresponsibly, but also the wider media:

> I can not think of any example in my art where I have used violence gratuitously. It has only ever been depicted as a means to either alert the world to atrocities or to make an important point as with the decapitation. This is not like the commercial film industry where gratuitous violence is used as a form of entertainment and movies like SAW and Texas Chainsaw massacre exploit the outer limits of what is shocking. Personally, I can not watch this type of film and do not believe that just

> because they are made within the fiction film genre they are justifiable. (Gittoes, 2012)

Discussion

The implications of thematic analysis of the interviews will now be discussed, referring to the two initial areas of investigation: (a) The distinctions between socially responsible, moral art practise, and other forms of mass media and (b) examples of [the artists'] work healing and rehabilitative communities engaged with it. Firstly, while both artists think that there is a clear distinction between socially responsible, moral art practise, and other forms of mass media, they disagree on the ways in which this distinction can be drawn. While Glesta thinks that it is better to steer away from the visual depiction of violence in contemporary art, because other media is full of these images and that 'bombardment' has desensitized the public, Gittoes disagrees, and has used violently imagery in his own painting and film work. Gittoes explains that his work is violent because it is a way of exposing the horror of war and violence, and says that this kind of work is distinct from other media use of violent imagery because of its intention and context. Gittoes says that his violent imagery is never gratuitous, because he ensures that these images are explained by text and photographs that show his personal connection to the subject, as well as the real-life context and severity of the work. Thus this cannot be compared to the use of sensationalistic violence in Hollywood blockbusters, or even Damien Hirst's work, Gittoes argues. He says that his work is sincere and political, and in that context is justified and socially responsible, whilst these other uses of violence are clearly without sincerity or social context. When justified thus, Gittoes' experience and opinion about the use of violent imagery in his work harmonise with Tolstoy's own explanation of such art:

> To take the simplest example: a boy having experienced, let us say, fear on encountering a wolf, relates that encounter, and in order to evoke in others the feeling he has experienced, he describes himself, his condition before the encounter, the surroundings, the wood, his own lightheartedness, and then the wolf's appearance, its movements, the distance between himself and the wolf, and so forth. All this, if only the boy when telling the story again experiences the feelings he had lived through, and infects the hearers and compels them to feel what he had experienced – is art. (Tolstoy, 1996: 122)

Gittoes' use of emotionally provocative images and narratives, in painting and film, is an instance of the communication of feeling and experience that Tolstoy promotes in his distinction between socially justified and decadent art. It is clearly a fine line, in some cases people may feel the same emotion watching a gratuitously violent horror film as they do experiencing one of Gittoes' paintings. Tolstoy, however, argues that there is a distinction in the sincerity of the communication, the truth of the experience shared, and the worth of the intention of the art practise itself. (Tolstoy, 1996: 223 – 224) So in noting the genuine experience drawn upon by Gittoes, it becomes easier to understand the art practice that Tolstoy encourages in *What is Art?* – and to see the subtle distinction between socially justified art and that which is decadent. (Mounce, 2001: 40)

A deeper point suggested by both artists is that there is a real challenge in making art that deals with issues such as political violence, in the sense that both artists admit to having trouble doing justice to the real-life pain and severity of their subjects. Both said that it was difficult to express how bad or wrong certain situations were (9/11 and Guernica for Glesta, and various wars and instances, including a woman being facially wounded and a child being decapitated by the Taliban, for Gittoes). This seems particularly interesting in the context of Collingwood's discussion about art being the remedy of community, just by communicating its problems and feelings. (Collingwood, 1938) Another important point that emerged from the interviews with Glesta and Gittoes is that there are different ways and levels of collaboration between artist and community, and this very much depends on the artist's particular sense of purpose and possibly his / her personality. While Glesta is interested in how the community reacts to her work, to a point, it is not her driving force. Rather it is a sort of welcome side effect of her work. She is more interested in the inherent value of art as art, which she thinks is her duty as an artist to produce. She does not think that art needs to have a social responsibility *per se*. This is clearly in conflict with Tolstoy's objection to 'art for art's sake', or art without clear social engagement. Glesta's perception is more in line with Collingwood's idea that art just needs to be in tune with society's problems, rather than actively engaged with them to be socially helpful.

Gittoes, meanwhile, thinks that art should be actively socially responsible and political, and is very open about his work being a means of protest against war and violence. He points to his own history of practical aid and anti-war activism, concurrent with his artistic practice, and suggests that art should be a part of political activism in a wider sense, when it is engaged with those issues. This suggests that he thinks that although art is valuable to society, it is not enough to 'just' be an artist. This is the main point on which Glesta and Gittoes diverge: Glesta thinks that being an artist is enough to contribute

positively to society even when it is not actively socially engaged. Gittoes, meanwhile, thinks that art not only should be socially engaged and active in the community, but also combined with other community work:

> When the horror of the events were over I was able to live with the memories not because of the art I had created but because the memory of those I had helped and the sense that if I had not been there these people would have died or not been treated by doctors. (Gittoes, 2012.)

Gittoes and Glesta have different intentions when it comes to their art practise's relation to social responsibility, despite similar interests regarding subject matter, and compassion regarding those subjects. This is itself relevant: art being healing and rehabilitative is not necessarily determined by artistic intentions or philosophy. As we have seen with Glesta, an artist does not have to be particularly socially active or overtly political to make art that heals and rehabilitates, and provokes people to be political. This is in line with Collingwood's insights into the role of art as a 'remedy' for society, simply in being accurate and sincere. Gittoes, meanwhile, sees his activism and art as combined, which influences the effects his work has on his audience, while Glesta sees it as a welcome side-effect, rather than an intended one:

> People from places where there has been long suffering under violent regimes or war always welcome my work and see me as an advocate. The Kurdish people who ran the apartments where I lived in Baghdad would always great me with: '… We love you being here because you are always creating while everyone else who comes here is destroying.' (Gittoes, 2012)

> The employees really took ownership of the work. I think everyone was surprised about that. It was not my intention to make the employees happy about that though I did think about giving them more places to 'be' throughout the seven-acre landscape by creating oversized number benches. They were happy with that and I was thinking of their physical comfort and how they navigated this space in my design for that… I have been really pleasantly surprised that I have rock star moments there because of the content of the work, not just the sculptural or more formal design aspect of this work. (Glesta, 2012.)

The main insights that have emerged from these interviews and consequential analysis are: (a) Whether an artist uses visual depictions of violence or not, there are convincing ways to distinguish socially valuable from other forms of media; (b) There is a real challenge in accurately and sensitively dealing with the subject of political violence in art, in doing it justice, and both artists emphasised that challenge; (c) There are different ways and levels of collaboration between artist and community, and (d) This very much depends on the artist's particular

sense of purpose and possibly personality. The important point here is that no matter the particular artist's intentions or philosophy regarding how socially engaged art should be, art can be healing and rehabilitative. Intention does not determine effect.

So the results and analysis of the interviews with Glesta and Gittoes have confirmed the hypothesis in the sense that both artists agreed that socially valuable contemporary art can be distinct from other forms of media that is sensationalistic or exploitative, though again, they had slightly different ideas about how that distinction can be made. The results also supported the idea that contemporary art can be a means of healing and rehabilitating communities. There were examples of both artists' work having healing and rehabilitative effects on the communities they were concerned with despite very different ideas about depiction of violence, and actual interaction with communities. This reinforces the idea that art can be healing and useful even if it is not intentionally so, which is more in line with Collingwood than Tolstoy's theory.

Conclusion

That art is distinct from other forms of mass media in being helpful and healing to communities was established in this study. The ideas of Tolstoy and Collingwood have been explored using contemporary examples. Different levels of social engagement were also discussed, pointing ultimately to the conclusion that intention of the artist, and actual social engagement, does not necessarily determine social value and effect on community, supporting Collingwood's theory of art and social responsibility more than that of Tolstoy. The interviews with George Gittoes and Anita Glesta illuminated contemporary art practice engaged with social problems and political violence in particular, and how those artists explain their motives, intentions and ideas about the relationship between artists and the wider community. Through those discussions, insights about the various ways that contemporary art can be socially valuable, whether intentionally or not, and whether alongside other political activism or not, illustrated the possibilities open to contemporary artists engaged with issues of political violence, and concerned about the value of art in that context.

Further research that would deepen and expand this study might be best focussed on investigating how members of communities affected by political violence view the importance and healing

possibilities (and realities) of art, as well as a more quantitative measure of how well contemporary art heals and rehabilitates communities affected by political violence. It would also be useful to interview a wider selection of contemporary artists, possibly including writers and musicians as well as visual artists, in order to expand the understanding of the relationship between art and the community, and the potential rehabilitative and healing qualities therein.

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Irish Accents, Foreign Voices: Mediated Agency and Authenticity in In the Name of the Father *and* Fifty Dead Men Walking

Nicole Ives-Allison*

Abstract: *Given the intensity of narrative contestation over the public history of and discourse around the modern period of Northern Irish civil conflict known locally as 'the Troubles', for filmmakers from outside of Northern Ireland to be seen as making a legitimate contribution to existing debates, there is a pressure for their film texts to be read as 'authentic'. This desire for authenticity fundamentally shapes the narrative approach taken by these filmmakers. Various filmmaking strategies have been employed in the pursuit of authenticity, but both Jim Sheridan's* In the Name of the Father *(1993) and Kari Skogland's* Fifty Dead Men Walking *(2008) have taken a distinctly narrative approach, relying upon local written autobiographical material. However, the way in which Sheridan and Skogland have sought to deploy the authenticity embedded in locally grounded source material flirts with self-defeatism as both films problematically obscure the limitations on agency imposed by the filmmakers on the local voices upon who claims of authenticity, and thus the films' legitimacy, depend.*

Both *In the Name of the Father* (Jim Sheridan, 1993), based on Gerry Conlon's 1991 autobiography *Proved Innocent: The Story of Gerry Conlon, and the Guildford Four* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* (Kari Skogland, 2008), based on Martin McGartland's 1997 eponymous memoir, provide interesting case studies for how authenticity and agency are negotiated and managed in the creation of films dealing with Northern Ireland's recent troubled past.[1] The central argument of this paper is that by grounding their films in the autobiographies of individuals directly involved in the Troubles-related events depicted on screen, both Sheridan and Skogland effectively tap into the

1 *Over the course of thirty years, between 1968 and 1998, Northern Ireland experienced a period of low-intensity civil conflict with political violence, specifically that committed by the Provisional IRA (an illegal paramilitary organisation which was committed to pursuing the reunification of Ireland through violent means), emanating outwards and affecting the British mainland and the Republic of Ireland. A strong selection of some of the most concise and comprehensive overviews of the conflict include: Bew, Gibbon, and Patterson, 2002; Bew and Gillespie, 1999; McKittrick and McVea, 2012; Mulholland, 2003; Tonge, 2006; Whyte, 1991.*

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proximiity-based authenticity of the local written narratives as a means of strengthening the perceived authenticity of their respective films. However, in doing so these two films problematically obscure the process of mediation all written material undergoes as it is translated from page to screen, whether it be a book as source material or even the final version of a film script. With the filmmaker as chief mediator, this process necessarily limits the exercise of agency by those local voices who underpin each film's claims of authenticity. Though the mediation process which is common of, if not essential to, narrative filmmaking is not problematic in and of itself, that *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, render its presence largely invisible is quite worrisome. In concealing the hand of the filmmaker these films risk seriously undermining the authenticity that gives their narratives legitimacy within a contested narrative terrain. Furthermore, it is only through an understanding of how agency is mediated in the creation of each filmic narrative that it becomes possible to discern how the filmmaker's understanding of (1) the events on screen, (2) the film's social and political context, and (3) broader aesthetic and/or philosophical concerns, shape what is seen by audiences as the finished product.

Narratives are first and foremost battlegrounds. From esteemed historical tombs to contemporary romantic comedies, it is in narratives that our individual and collective perceptions of reality are forced to confront events as they may have materially occurred. Along narrative front lines various versions of the truth compete for the dominance that lies in the sheer act of being recorded and presented to the world, with the dissemination of one's own version of events reinforcing the perceived legitimacy of that particular understanding. In "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," Hayden White argues, 'If we view narration as the instrument by which the conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in a discourse, we begin to comprehend both the appeal of the narrative and the grounds for refusing it." (White, 1980: 8-9) For those narrative forms aspiring to realism, as is the case with both films under study here, the battle becomes even more intense as notions of 'authenticity' are bound up with ideas about 'truth' and 'reality'. More intense still are the battles around those narratives surrounding 'contested' or 'controversial' events where internal struggles for self-consistency take place within a full-scale war for legitimacy among competing, and frequently irreconcilable overarching narratives. Where the rewards for being the 'prevailing truth' among a range of divergent narratives are particularly high, it is the links between narrative consistency,

truth, reality and authenticity that carry paramount importance. For those filmmakers who have found narrative inspiration in the Troubles of Northern Ireland, the war for narrative truth in which they have enmeshed themselves is particularly intense. With the initial seeds of conflict dating back variously from the twelfth century 'invasion' of Ireland (O'Leary, 1896: 78) to the seventeenth century plantation of Ulster,[2] (Darby, 1995: 16; Mulholland, 2002) continued tensions between the region's two main ethnic, religious, and political communities have lent weight to the impression that conflict in Northern Ireland is intractable. (Coleman, 2003: 28) Thus, it is unsurprising that there are numerous antagonistic overarching narratives of the conflict. While there are often many factual details shared between the versions of events offered by the majority (religiously Protestant, politically largely unionist/loyalist) and minority (religiously Catholic, politically largely nationalist/republican) communities in Northern Ireland, such as date, time, number of persons affected, interpretations of the intent and significance of events commonly verge on the mutually exclusive.[3] Frequently these narratives also come into conflict with the 'official' record of events provided by the government, with official records forming a narrative of their own that runs the risk of being re-appropriated by either (or both communities) as leverage in their own zero-sum game for political control. (Smithey, 2009: 86-87)

This puts filmmakers dealing with Northern Ireland in a rather difficult position, for the numerousness of existing narratives and the resoluteness of the positions of the two main communities means that

2 *Ulster is one of the four historic provinces of Northern Ireland, originally consisting of nine counties. When the island was partitioned under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 in the run up to independence for southern Ireland, the six counties of Ulster in which there was a Protestant majority became Northern Ireland and remained as part of the United Kingdom. Contemporarily, the terms Ulster and Northern Ireland are used interchangeably by the majority unionist community, with the minority nationalist communitiy commonly referring to the region as "the north" or "the six counties". The 'plantation of Ulster,' refers to the large-scale settlement of the province by British Protestants and is offered as historic root of the modern Northern Irish conflict by scholars John Darby, Marc Mulholland, and David Smith & Gerald Chambers. (Darby, 1995: 16; Mulholland, 2002; Smith and Chambers, 1991)*

3 *Perhaps nowhere is this penchant for contradictory narratives more strongly seen than in discussions around Bloody Sunday, with the Protestant community initially adopting the original official (government) version of events as its truth and the Catholic community constructing a radically different counter narrative. Since the end of the Troubles, there has been a noticeable shift in the government's official narrative of the events of that day as the decade-long Bloody Sunday Inquiry (also known as the Saville Inquiry) exposed major holes in the original official record. By the release of the Inquiry's report in 2010, the official record accepted much of the Catholic community's version of events, including that all fourteen of those killed by the British Parachute Regiment on the day of 30 January 1972 were unarmed and not engaged in offensive action at the time of their deaths. (Conway, 2003: 305-320; Dawson, 2007: 87-205; Saville, 2010)*

even before any film dealing with Northern Ireland opens in cinemas, it risks alienating a sizeable portion of the local population on the basis of perceived sympathies alone. Yet, rather than shying away from producing films about Northern Ireland, filmmakers have found the Troubles to be a fertile narrative terrain from which melodramas,[4] comedies,[5] thrillers[6] and action films[7] have sprung. Where making films capable of securing strong support from both political communities remains a near impossible quest, filmmakers have instead sought to create their own narratives of the conflict which, while drawing upon existing personal and community narratives, can also be considered to exist independently from the main narrative camps. While in theory, given the number of films using the Troubles as subject matter, this should mean that narratives from both communities are well represented, in practice Protestant narratives have largely been ignored. (Barton, 2004: 159; Donnelly, 2000: 390; Hill, 2006: 197; McIlroy, 2001: 11, 199-200; McLoone, 2000: 79-83; Pettitt, 2000: 261) The reasons offered for what can be seen to be a nationalist focus bias are both numerous and varied, ranging from the political sympathies of filmmakers and a lack of Protestant filmmakers to a belated realisation on the part of the part of the unionist community of its need to communicate beyond its own community. (McIlroy, 2001: 18-27) As a result, rather than remaining above the narrative politics of the conflict filmmakers have embedded themselves within them, albeit with varying degrees of pro-activeness. In doing so, filmmakers enter into a competition with existent community and official narratives over both legitimacy and supremacy.

'Troubles film' filmmakers, like all those working in the area of historical film, face considerable pressure to create films which are both realistic and truthful. (Higashi 1995, 200; Rosenstone, 2006: 20) Because of its entanglements with both realism and truth, authenticity becomes the key to their achievement. JP Roos has argued that, "An authentic story is authentic because it refers to something: it stands in authentic relation to actions, events and social reality." (Roos, 2003: 34) But how does a narrative stand in authentic relation to on-screen events? Karen Golden-Biddle and Karen Locke argue that proximity is the key marker of authenticity, with the ability to stand in 'authentic relation' derived from having 'been there', a perspective echoed by Roos himself. (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993: 598-600; Roos, 2003: 34-

4 *For example* In the Name of the Father *(Jim Sheridan, 1993) and* Some Mother's Son *(Terry George, 1996)*.

5 *Such as* An Everlasting Piece *(Barry Levinson, 2000)*.

6 *For example* Shadow Dancer *(James Marsh, 2012) and* Fifty Dead Men Walking *(Kari Skogland, 2008)*.

7 *Such as* A Prayer for the Dying *(Mike Hodges, 1987)*.

35) However, the proximity privilege that underlies this understanding of authenticity presents a problem for those filmmakers seeking to engage with the Troubles who, coming from outside Northern Ireland, lack first-hand experience of the events they are representing. Some filmmakers have actively sought to overcome this barrier by peopling their cast with local and/or 'non-professional' actors, as has been the case with *Sunday* (Charles McDougall, 2002), *Bloody Sunday* (Paul Greengrass, 2002), and *Omagh* (Pete Travis, 2004). (Sutherland, 2010: 267-281) In *Bloody Sunday,* Greengrass also employed a documentary aesthetic and hand-held camera techniques in his pursuit of realism and authenticity. (Blaney, 2007: 113-138) However, with *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, Jim Sheridan and Kari Skogland instead work to imbue their films with authenticity through their use of local autobiography as source material.

Mediated Agency: The Limits of Representational Self-Control

Before it is possible to illustrate how exactly these two films work to conceal the mediation of agency, it is worth outlining 'mediated agency' as a concept in its own right.[8] For our purposes mediated agency can be defined as the process in which a dominant author grants (or gives the impression of granting) the represented negotiating power over their representation, with the actual expression of this power constrained and limited by the dependence of the represented on the author as the intermediary between their narrative voice and the audience. The dominance of the filmmaker referred to in this definition is not in related to his/her broader social, political or economic positioning and applies only to the limited confines of the production of the film text. The filmmaker, or director, is in a position of dominance *vis-à-vis* the represented in a fictional narrative film because, to use a rather auteurist idea of authorship,[9] it is the filmmaker who bears ultimate responsibility for the finished film and, by extension, the construction and dissemination of a 'final' representation. Mediated agency operates whether or not the filmmaker is consciously aware of its existence, and while its effects may be more or less keenly felt,

8 *Which should not be confused with the concept of mediated agency put forth for use in developmental psychology by James V Wertsch and Leslie J Rupert. (Wertsch and Rupert, 1993).*

9 *Underpinning auteur theory is the idea that it is the filmmaker, generally defined as the director in the case of narrative fiction filmmaking, who is the author of a film text and who bears both responsibility for and control over the film production. Though the applicability of auteur theory to a Hollywood filmmaking context requires substantial adaptation due to the prominence of the studio system, as both films under examination here were produced outside of Hollywood, applying auteur theory to a reading of these film texts does not carry the same difficulties. (Caughie, 1981; Corrigan, 2003; Hess, 1974)*

its presence can be seen even in those works which attempt to grant the represented a high degree of control over their representation. Because of its subtlety it can often go unrecognised by the filmmaker and its existence is independent of any aesthetic or political ideology or agenda. In and of itself mediated agency is benign, but where its existence is concealed the power dynamics between filmmaker and represented are denied, undermining the voice of the represented and rendering 'agency' largely illusory, though not destroying it entirely. Where agency is a but an illusion, the validity of the author's claims of authenticity, and in turn truthfulness and realism, are eroded. Thus, it is not the existence of mediated agency, but how it is handled by each individual filmmaker within the context of each individual film text that can present problems for a film's ability to present itself as authentic, truthful and real.

It is tempting to argue that where the mediation process is effectively concealed, the viewer could perceive the voices of the represented as carrying something near total legitimacy, but such a counter-argument would depend on an understanding of the audience as passive and uncritical audience, accepting each image, sound and movement as undeniably true. However, this conception of the passive audience is so extreme that it is unlikely to find much favour beyond the most radical advocates of the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, interpretations of these writings themselves dismissed for their simplicity and inherent elitism. (Hills, 2002: 31; Hollows, 1995: 221-222; Moore 2010: 203-204) More tenable a view is that put forth by Jeffrey Richards who argues that, "the relationship between film and audience is reciprocal. An audience does not passively accept every message that is put across in a film. For one thing, it can choose which films to see and which to avoid. Even within films it can accept elements that it likes and reject unpalatable ones." (Richards, 1996: 399)

So much as an audience may enter into agreement with the filmmaker to cede the inclination to immediately scrutinize every trace of presented reality for the sake of full immersion into the narrative, even the willing suspension of disbelief has its limits. (Ferri, 2007: 35-46) With the audience fully cognizant that what they are consuming is a film as opposed to unfiltered reality, regardless of whether this is a fact explicitly discussed within the filmic text, reflexivity (including self-reflexivity) and realism need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, "Rather than strictly opposed polarities, realism and reflexivity as interpenetrating tendencies are quite capable of coexisting within the

same text." (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 1992: 206) In this light it becomes possible to argue that the obfuscation of mediated agency is not necessary for a film to succeed on an immersive level. Furthermore, given the problems for authenticity created by such concealment, acknowledgement of the mediation which occurs in bringing 'authentic' voices to the screen can be seen as a key to enduring narrative legitimacy.

Framing and Fidelity in *In the Name of the Father*

Turning to the case studies at hand, in addition to rooting their claims to authenticity in their autobiographical source material, *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* are examples of critically and commercially successful Troubles films directed by filmmakers from outside of Northern Ireland. Rare among those dealing with the Troubles, both films were able to secure a strong international audience, though of the two it is the multiple Academy Award-nominated *In the Name of the Father* that stands alongside Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1992) as the most globally successful film treatment of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The work of Dublin filmmaker Jim Sheridan, *In the Name the Father* is a compelling melodrama which explores the wrongful convictions of the Guildford Four and Maguire Seven in relation to the bombings of two pubs in Guildford, Surrey, England by the Provisional Irish Republican Army in October 1974. *In the Name of the Father* foregrounds its claim to authenticity through its explicit expression in the form of a title card in the film's opening credits reading, "Based on the Autobiographical Book PROVED INNOCENT by Gerry Conlon." Yet, it is the implicit claim to authenticity embedded in the framing of the film which proves to be most powerful. Utilising a frame story in which the fictional Conlon serves as the film's narrator, the events of *In the Name of the Father* span fifteen years from the summer of 1974 leading up to the Guildford bombings until the 19th of October 1989 when the convictions of the Guildford Four were overturned.

The use of a frame story, sometimes referred to as a 'frame narrative' is significant for, as argued by Winifred Morgan, "The frame's primary purpose is to vouch for the veracity of the events or narrator of the inner story." (Morgan, 2002: 282) Given the complexities in directly transposing literary narrative modes with filmic ones, it is possible to argue that in the case of *In the Name of the Father*, the use of a frame story means that Conlon is both outer and inner narrator. This leaves the diegetic Conlon responsible for establishing the credibility of his own

narrative of events in a film text where self-reflexivity is suppressed and the hand of Sheridan as filmmaker is hidden. Additionally, because of Conlon's position as both outer and inner narrator, he also takes on the role of diegetic mediator. It is through him that all other voices must pass, from his father and Paul Hill through to the police officers who mistreat him, even where he is not directly privy to conversations and events.

Covering the whole fifteen-year period depicted in the film, the inner story takes the form of Gerry Conlon recounting his tale of how he came to be convicted of, and imprisoned for, crimes he did not commit to his lawyer Gareth Pierce via audio-tape. He begins his version of events with a description of his life in Belfast as it was before he fatefully left for England to try his fortune in the autumn of 1974. He describes how his life of petty crime led to a serious run-in with the Provisional IRA who had taken upon themselves the role of 'community police' in his West Belfast neighbourhood. Fearing for his safety, Conlon's family implores him to move to England to pursue a legitimate career. The story carries through the time he spends living in a North London squat, followed by a night in a hotel and a return home funded by the break and enter robbery of a prostitute's boudoir. Quickly after his return, Conlon is arrested and held under the newly passed *Prevention of Terrorism Act, 1974*, which extended the acceptable length of detention without trial from two to seven days. (Nunes, 2009: 917) After being flown to England for interrogation, he is tortured into signing the confession which will serve as the only evidence linking him to the Guildford bombings for which he and his friend Paul Hill are swiftly convicted (along with acquaintances Paddy Armstrong and Carole Richardson).

As a result of questionable information provided under duress several members of Conlon's extended family, including his father Guiseppe, are also arrested, detained and wrongfully convicted for the possession of the explosive materials allegedly used to make the bombs. This group becomes collectively known as the Maguire Seven, derived from the surname of Conlon's aunt, uncle and young cousins. Much of the film is focused on the time Colon spends in prison rebuilding his relationship with the eternally optimistic Guiseppe who refuses to passively accept what, for him at least, will be a life sentence. Despite failing health, Guiseppe dedicates much of his energy to a letter writing campaign which, following his death in 1980, is taken up by Gerry. After his father is no longer able to take the stairs required to attend meetings, it is Conlon who also begins to meet with Pierce

to discuss the possibilities for launching a new appeal. It is at this point where the events of the story frame catch up with those of the diegetic frame which forms the film's 'present day', focusing on the preparation of the appeal which will lead to the quashing of the original verdict.

It is essential when discussing film adaptations to avoid the temptation to assess a film text by its fidelity to the source text alone. A film is not a book and must not be judged according to the standards applied to written texts. In addition to being a medium which is both auditory and visual, film is a medium of motion that tasks the filmmaker with filling an ever-present and shifting field of vision with only those objects which will serve to maintain the illusion of reality. (Herlihy, 1988: 1189; Metz, 1974: 7) But when, like with *In the Name of the Father*, the film under consideration is one whose legitimacy is dependent upon its maintenance of a perception of authenticity underpinned by its use of written autobiographical source material, fidelity is perhaps a fairer grounds for appraisal than would otherwise be the case. At the same time, the grounding of *In the Name of the Father* in the 'real' Conlon's *Proved Innocent* means that the film presents 'Conlon' not only as diegetic mediator and inner/outer narrator but external narrator as well. As all voices must ultimately pass through various versions of 'Conlon' at four different levels in addition to passing through Sheridan as filmmaker, the capacity of *In the Name of the Father* to engage in the type of credible complex historical, social and political analysis of the events depicted on screen that is the substance of traditional academic debate is severely limited. Where the film has attempted to deal with events of which Conlon lacks first hand knowledge, such as in the brief scenes depicting the Provisional IRA unit's final preparations for the Guildford pub bombing, these explorations can be seen as mounting a challenge not just to the historical record, but to the film's authenticity as well. Of the two preparation scenes, the second (and most substantial) presents the attack as being an impulsive response to the breakdown of a Provisional IRA ceasefire and a subsequent heavy handed incursion into to the Catholic Ardoyne area of north Belfast. That this is wholly inaccurate given the absence of a ceasefire at the time of the events depicted is less of a concern than the way in which these scenes, and the film as a whole, detaches the Guildford pub bombing from the larger Provisional IRA mainland bombing campaign waged throughout 1973-1974, including the pub bombings in Woolwich and Birmingham. (Bew and Gillespie, 1999: 47-109; Gillespie 2010: 64; McKitrick et al, 2001: 480; Oppenheimer, 2009: 75-81)

With two of the Guildford Four, Paul Hill and Paddy Armstrong,

also held responsible for the Woolwich bombing and the wrongful convictions of six men for the Birmingham bombings representing an additional gross miscarriage of justice, such complete detachment is quite worrisome given the power that Sheridan's film text has wielded in public discourse around the Guildford pub bombings. While it has been argued that this series of attacks was, in some ways, the Provisional IRA's response to being put on the defensive by Operation Mortarman and the strong military response to Bloody Friday, (Oppenheimer, 2009: 76) the timing of the bombings means that it is perhaps more appropriate to see them as part of a strategic offensive with the goal of arousing English public opinion. (English, 2003: 169; Oppenheimer, 2009: 75-76) While the simplicity with which Sheridan depicts the planning process is not entirely surprising given the larger inconsistencies between the film and the historical record, it does serve as an example of how mediated agency is able to manipulate, consciously or unconsciously, the public history of events by embedding shaky claims to truth and authenticity within broader more palatable ones. Because of the inaccuracy and, arguably, misrepresentation here, one must wonder whether it is possible to place any trust at all in those details which lie outside of the experiential scope of 'Conlon' as inner, outer and external narrator, despite the reality that it is Sheridan, who lacks proximity to any of the events depicted, who holds ultimate control over the film text.

Where the planning scenes deviate from historical record, there are also major discrepancies between the narratives of *In the Name of the Father* and *Proved Innocent*. *In the Name of the Father*'s framing and authenticity claims hinge on the film narrative being perceived as authentic to the experiences of Gerry Conlon the real man who has had to live with the enduring trauma of being caught up in one of the greatest miscarriages of British justice in the twentieth century. Yet it can not be readily forgotten that the Gerry Conlon on screen is in all actuality a fictional character, a creation of Sheridan's cinematic imagination and expressed through the body of Daniel Day-Lewis. Any traces of reality that the film contains have been filtered not only through this fictional Conlon, but also through Conlon as he perceives and expresses himself through his written autobiography. Despite the way in which the film's claims of authenticity suppress the acknowledgement of these multiple versions of Conlon, each has lived a rather different experience. Of the narrative inconsistencies between autobiography and film, perhaps the most glaring is that where *In the Name of the Father* uses the months immediately preceding the Guildford pub bombing as its temporal origin point, the first several

chapters of *Proved Innocent*, which amount to approximately 10% of the total book, are dedicated to exploring Conlon's early life in West Belfast. It is in Conlon's description of his childhood and adolescence where key aspects of his character and disposition are openly explored, from his street hustler attitude to work to his penchant for drug-taking, his distrust of violent politics and his strong but troubled commitment to his family. It is the book's early passages which detail Conlon's relationship with the local Provisional IRA that reveal the true preposterousness of the idea that he would be accepted as a Volunteer at any level of the organisation, let alone as part of a group entrusted with carrying out a high-profile and strategically important attack. Though the opening scenes of *In the Name of the Father* do touch on this relationship, the film seriously underplays its acrimoniousness. Conlon's appetite for mischief meant that from early adolescence he faced numerous run-ins with the group, including close calls with the punishment squads who considered themselves responsible for meting out the 'tough justice' of the Provisional IRA's 'community policing' programme. (McGartland, 2009: 49-52) It even got to the point that Conlon was compelled to join the movement's youth wing in the hopes that it would instil some discipline, but his continued anti-social behaviour meant that he was quickly expelled. (Conlon, 1993: 37) By eliminating Conlon's early years, *In the Name of the Father* neglects one of the most captivating, even if not entirely legally sound, arguments in support of his innocence: If when the stakes were high he had a proven track record of being less than co-operative with the organization, it is highly unlikely that in relatively low-stakes England the largely apolitical Conlon would be willing to plant bombs on behalf of the organisation which had caused him nothing but bother.

This being said, the film does make attempts to discuss Conlon's childhood through the lens of his relationship with his father Guiseppe while in prison. The strongest and most emotional of these scenes is that following Guiseppe's placement in the same remand cell as Conlon, itself a factual inaccuracy. In this scene Conlon releases his pent-up childhood frustrations and chastises his father for following him to England in an expression of his guilt over what has become a shared tribulation. However, by constraining this discussion within the theme of parental sacrifice, (Farley, 2001: 203-211) *In the Name of the Father* does not give itself the narrative space to explore Conlon's roots in any more broadly meaningful way. By largely focusing on Conlon's time spent in the hands of the British 'justice' system, the film severely limits its ability to explore his relationship with other significant figures in his

life. Though he avails himself of the 'closed' visits offered for Category A (maximum security) prisoners, these brief opportunities to speak to his mother and sisters are very closely monitored by prison staff. (Conlon, 1993: 160-163) Even privacy with regards to his post can not be expected. Thus, within the diegetic world of *In the Name of the Father*, the only other person with experiential knowledge of Conlon's early life with whom he can communicate openly is his father.

Yet the conditions put forward by the film are anything but natural and represent a rather significant deviation from Conlon's own account of events as provided in *Proved Innocent*. Firstly, the diegetic Gerry Conlon enjoys far greater access to his father than that enjoyed by his real-life counterpart. As Conlon frequently reminds the reader throughout his book, nearly every movement and moment of Category A prisoners are controlled by the prison authorities. While it is possible for one to have glimpses of shreds of freedom, there are mere glimpses - barely tangible and always fleeting. Further Conlon and his father were very rarely in the same prison and indeed never enjoyed the privilege of sharing a cell, a detail which in itself poses a serious challenge to the film's claims of truthfulness and realism. (Conlon, 1993: 160; Barton, 2004: 169) Thus, in spite of the surface level appearance of events and conditions as 'naturally occurring', the circumstances by which the audience comes to learn of Conlon's early life are both artificial and deliberately manufactured. They reflect the spatio-temporal constraints around the diegesis set by Sheridan in accordance with his individual narrative focus, one which privileges the exploration of a melodramatic father-son relationship at the expense of historical accuracy, fidelity to the source material or a serious exploration of the broader social and political issues at play. (Barton, 2004: 170-171; Farley, 2001: 205-206) This in turn serves to highlight the way in which the perceptual diminishment of the role of the filmmaker can serve to undermine the film's claims to authenticity and, by extension, truthfulness and realism.

Questions of Truth and Authenticity in *Fifty Dead Men Walking*

As complicated as the relationship between voice, agency and authenticity is in *In the Name of the Father*, this relationship in *Fifty Dead Men Walking* is even more complex. This can be seen as a result of the more intensely contestable nature of the relationship between authenticity, truth and realism within the voice of the protagonist/narrator than is the case with the earlier film. *Fifty Dead Men Walking,* the work of Ottawa, Canada's Kari Skogland, had a successful film festival run during the 2008 season which helped it to secure both

international distribution in 2009 and critical recognition in the form of seven Genie Award nominations (including two wins).[10] Both the film and the eponymous book which it claims as inspiration chart the career of Martin McGartand, a young working-class Catholic from West Belfast, as a police informant over the course of four years. Beginning in 1987 with his recruitment by the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Branch[11] at the age of 17 (though in the film he is presented as of legal age) to provide occasional photographic identification intelligence, the film follows McGartland as he infiltrates and rises through the ranks of the Provisional IRA,[12] continuing to feed key operational information back to the police. (McGartland, 2009: 71) *Fifty Dead Men Walking* also covers his 1991 exposure which leads to his capture, torture and narrow escape from death at the hands of an infuriated Provisional IRA. Though brief, the film makes a foray into his subsequent life on the run where secrecy and movement is an absolute necessity as he is at constant risk of being found and killed by the organisation, a risk which becomes very real when he narrowly survives an additional assassination attempt while living in hiding. Where four years may be considered an extremely short career in most lines of work, the level of risk involved in being an informant (one which increases significantly the closer one moves to the pinnacle of the organisation) means that in-context McGartland's career was both notably lengthy and significant. (McGartland, 2009: 115-116)

In his investigation of the modern American biography, Timothy Dow Adams argues, "a promise to tell the truth is one of autobiography's earliest promises." (Adams, 1990: 9) However, promises are things which can be and easily are broken, a reality which runs throughout not only the remainder of Adams' work, but everyday life. In relation, J.P. Roos argues that, as far as authenticity is indissoluble from truthfulness and realism, "There is only one small

10 The Canadian equivalent of the Academy Awards (United States) or BAFTAs (United Kingdom). Fifty Dead Men Walking *was awarded the 2010 Genie Awards in the 'Best Achievement in Art Direction/Production Design' and 'Best Screenplay, Adapted', while it was nominated for five additional awards including 'Best Motion Picture' and 'Best Direction'.*

11 The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was the official police force of Northern Ireland from 1922 to 2000 when it was significantly reformed and renamed the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as part of the peace process which followed the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the end of hostilities among the major combatants in the Troubles. Special Branch was the part of the organisation which was focused on intelligence and the subvention of threats to the state. (Ellison and Smith, 2000; Mulchay, 2006)

12 The Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provisional IRA, PIRA, Provos) was the largest separatist republican paramilitary group in the modern Northern Ireland conflict, responsible for more deaths than any other group in the conflict. (English, 2003: 379)

problem: we cannot be sure whether the story is really authentic, that is, not only constructed as authentic but actually a true reflection of what the author has experienced and lived." (Roos, 2003: 34) It is largely impossible to know how accurate a work of autobiography is to personal experience insofar as inner thoughts and emotions are concerned. On the other hand, given that not all autobiographical material is related to these deep internal concerns, there is much of an autobiography which can be verified externally - dates of key events, names of parties involved etc. - with the understanding that the presentation of an autobiography to the world carries with it the likelihood that external verification of these details will be sought. This is a view adopted by Phillipe Lejeune who writes, "As opposed to all forms of fiction, biography and autobiography are *referential* texts: exactly like scientific or historical discourse, they claim to provide information about a 'reality' exterior to the text, and so to submit to a test of verification." (Lejeune, 1989: 22)

For both *In the Name of the Father* and the autobiographical text on which it was based, many of the details contained within are easily verifiable. With a core concern being the legal battles faced by the Guildford Four, the mountains of paperwork generated by the case provide a source of verification rarely found for other autobiographical material, a state of affairs that has meant the lambasting of the film from some critics for its many inaccuracies in its depiction of the legal case. (McIlroy, 2001: 76) Yet, the availability of such rich historical material allows the trust generated by those elements of the film for which external verification can be sought to generate trust for those parts of the film, such as the planning scenes for the attack discussed above, which lack an 'official' record. Thus, albeit highly problematically, there is the sense that if Conlon (as inner, outer and external narrator) must at least be perceived to be telling 'the truth' about a large number of things, for he otherwise risks being exposed and discredited, in all likelihood he must be consistently truthful (or presenting events as he understands them to be true).

However, this is not a path to legitimacy that can easily be tread by *Fifty Dead Men Walking* as there is very little detail that can be externally verified. This means that the ability of the film to read as authentic, realistic and truthful resides in how much trust audiences are willing to invest in the McGartlands of both page and screen. Despite the existence of numerous archives and other efforts devoted to making publicly available a wealth of intelligence information about the Troubles, that McGartland was involved in what can be considered

to be the later part of the conflict means that much information about the period in which he was active has yet to be released. Still, when and **if** any significant official information about McGartland's career were to enter the public domain, this information would only lead to a new verifiability for a very small number of the claims made by McGartland in his memoir or Skogland in her film. Because of the covert nature of his work, even if the British government were to suddenly allow unfettered access to all of its records relating to McGartland, this would still not go far enough given that much information, for the safety of all involved, likely went formally unrecorded. Given the embarrassment to the organization caused by a high-level infiltration, the Provisional IRA is even more unlikely to be forthright in providing information about McGartland, a man who must continue to live life on the run despite the organisation formally standing down in 2005. With substantial external verification of details provided by McGartland in his autobiography unlikely, the authenticity (and truthfulness in particular) of Skogland's film text rests upon how well the 'real' McGartland is able to convince that his autobiography is both truthful and forthright. More abstractly put, assertions that *Fifty Dead Men Walking* is rooted in a 'true story' hinge upon the reliability of its protagonist's real-life counterpart. This is a reliability which can, in turn, exclusively be established through this counterpart's own autobiographical writings, creating a situation of near paradoxical self-verification. While through *Proved Innocent*, Gerry Conlon is responsible for the verification of a number of the claims made by *In the Name of the Father,* the existence of opportunities for external verification means that this film is able to escape such paradoxical exclusivity.

As has already been discussed, McGartland is no 'ordinary' narrator (or protagonist). The authenticity of his narrative depends on experiential knowledge of largely unverifiable events, yet at the same time his involvement in the events described in his memoir is precipitated by his ability to act disingenuously. As a result, the decision of whether McGarland's autobiography can be trusted rests with each individual reader, a conundrum for Skogland's audience as well. Difficult to make at the level of the autobiography where events and details are only filtered through McGartland who is able to exercise a level of agency which nears the unmediated, this decision becomes even more difficult when one considers the meditational role played by the filmmaker in adapting this life for screen. *Fifty Dead Men Walking* is thus asking its audience to put their faith in a Martin McGartland who is a representation of a Martin McGartland who is a representation of the Martin McGartland. One cannot help but be

more than a little suspicious of how much of what is 'true' is stripped away from as one moves farther and farther away from the man who successfully managed a double life for years before being forced into life in hiding. It would be difficult to argue that Skogland is unaware of the challenge she faces in making strong enough claims to authenticity to lend her film legitimacy as a public narrative of the Troubles. Instead, Skogland displays a keen ability to match balance the need for her film to engage in an authentic discourse of events with avoidance of the full force of the burden of reliability that comes with the questionable truthfulness of the source narrative, by subtly claiming *Fifty Dead Men Walking* to be 'inspired by' as opposed to 'based on' McGartland's memoir. Whereas *In the Name of the Father*'s authenticity claims take on something more akin to absolutism through the combination of Sheridan's explicit use of 'based upon' and a frame story, Skogland actively minimises her claims to the bare minimum required for viable legitimacy as strong claims of authenticity and truthfulness risks the loss of the audience trust in the narrative needed for the narrative to work.

With two simple words, 'inspired by', Skogland grants herself as director, and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* as film text, greater artistic license than would have been possible with the use of 'based on'. Thus there is more acceptable room for creativity, invention, and deviation from 'fact' in *Fifty Dead Men Walking* than with a film such as *In the Name of the Father* where claims of authenticity are less subtle. How can such a slight semantic shift mean so much? As Stephen N Lipkin explains:

> To codify the issue of proximity, the industry recognizes two basic categories of material: docudramas "based on" their referents and those "inspired by" actual people and occurrences. Stories 'based on' true events have closer proximity to their subjects and are governed by stricter legal guidelines than stories that are 'inspired by' their sources. (Lipkin, 2002: 57)

Where those film narratives which employ 'based upon' are bound by the conditions of the 'life rights' agreed to between the subject of a biographical film and the filmmaker, for those filmmakers who use 'inspired by' this adherence is looser, if not often optional. (Lipkin, 2002: 57) That in changing two words on a title card, a film's legal standing and responsibilities can be altered is an exemplification of the ultimate power over the final film product held by the author of the film text. Skogland choice of 'inspired by' to cover the relationship of her film with its source text also illustrates the degree to which McGartland's agency can be expected to be mediated within *Fifty Dead Men Walking* the film.

Conclusion

There are numerous similarities between Irish filmmaker Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* by Canadian filmmaker Kari Skogland. At a surface level, both films seek to develop an understanding of key events in the period of Northern Irish history known as the Troubles, engaging seriously with the political violence within and stemming from the region. By the standards of films dealing with the Troubles, both also achieved a considerable degree of success. At the narrative level, *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* also share a reliance on the written autobiographical material of their protagonists to fuel their claims of authenticity. This use of local autobiographical material is of particular importance as neither Sheridan nor Skogland, by virtue of being outsiders in the context of the Troubles, carry the proximity to events that would allow their narratives to carry an embedded (or automatic) authenticity.

The authenticity claims made by these films are wrapped up in the film texts' claims of truthfulness and the realism of their interpretations of events. Yet, with both films the local voices which underpin their claims to authenticity, truth and reality (essential to the legitimacy of narrative engagement with the Troubles) have their agency limited and controlled by the filmmakers who depend upon them. Where representation is collaborative and the represented have what they perceive as an active role in their representation, there is a recognition that in exchange for the opportunity to have their voice reach a larger audience there must be a ceding of ultimate authority over their representation to the filmmaker. with an acknowledgement of the risk that they may be misrepresented. However, in the films examined here, the adaptation of autobiography material to the screen can be seen as an inactive representation where collaboration is much more limited than in other modes of Troubles filmmaking. While both Gerry Conlon and Marting McGartland have had the capacity to shape and define their self-representation as manifested in their written autobiographies, these works exist as 'complete' representations and do not represent an ongoing engagement with their representations as their autobiographical selves are translate to screen.

Though the mediation of agency discussed here is not intrinsically negative, the way in which *In the Name of the Father* and *Fifty Dead Men Walking* obscure the process can be seen to weaken the overall strength of these films' claims to authenticity, truth and reality. At the same time, this does not necessarily mean that these

films will not overtake 'official' or alternative narratives as the public history of the events, as there is a case to be made that it is the fictional Gerry Conlon as embodied in Daniel Day-Lewis and presented in *In the Name of the Father* who has become the definitive 'Gerry Conlon' at the expense of his real-life counterpart. Yet, to argue that a fictional narrative such as that presented in *In the Name of the Father* can dominate public discourse of events is rather different from arguing that it does so with any degree of legitimacy. As is the case with both films, weakened authenticity undermines their ability to resist the type of strong criticisms that could prevent these narratives from retaining an enduring legitimacy.

The claims made by *In the Name of the Father* are more resolute than those made by *Fifty Dead Men Walking*. As a result, major inconsistencies between the film narrative and the autobiography on which it is based prevent the audience from developing a full understanding of Gerry Conlon's experience of injustice, challenging and ultimately undermining its authenticity claims. With *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, the claims to authenticity made by Skogland are not undermined by the contents of the film so much as they are deliberately limited by Skogland at its outset. This serves as a recognition of the complexity of asking one's audience to trust in a narrative which claims to be a representation of another narrative which in turn claims to be based on real events. Though in other circumstances, the relationship between real events and the first link in this narrative chain is considered to be an authentic one, the unverifiability of the events concerned and the potential unreliability of McGartland as autobiographical author mean that in fact quite a lot of blind trust is being requested of *Fifty Dead Men Walking*'s audience. But blind trust is difficult to come by, and it becomes necessary for Skogland to avail herself of a lower level of claim to authenticity and truth. It is in making the intricacies of the frequently flawed working relationship between authorship, authenticity and agency visible that it becomes possible to understand how not only these two films but also the entire body of Troubles-related films have privileged certain understandings of truth and reality. Perhaps most importantly of all, in bringing the power relationship between authors and those that they represent out from behind the cinema screen, an understanding of the limitations of agency, authenticity and 'realism' in narrative cinema can be developed more generally.

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How to Transform a 'Place of Violence' into a 'Space of Collective Remembering': Italy and its Traumatic Past

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to analyse cultural trauma theories and their consequences as well as their potential applicability to cases of collective trauma where access to the legal arena in the rehabilitation process is not possible. When 'state terror' occurs, such as in Latin America, or, more arguably Italy, access to the legal arena is systematically denied through a variety of criminal strategies. In these cases, the cultural working through of trauma takes place on the aesthetic level. What are the consequences of this process both for the inscription of the crucial event in public discourse and for its relationship with justice? Moreover, how do aesthetic codes affect the public definition of justice and a collective understanding of what happened?*

Introduction[1]

A new wave of international terrorism has emerged in the wake of the attacks of September 11, March 11 and July 7 affecting our common perceptions of risk, justice and everyday life. These attacks challenged existing ideas about the state, war, torture, prison, human rights and presented a host of new questions for intellectuals, social scientists, artists, politicians and common citizens to consider. The question of how to locate terror in the public space is a complex question but it can be analysed by considering the nature itself of the aesthetic codes used to transform a place of violence into a space of collective remembering. This process of transforming place is shaped by the performative nature of the narratives used in the different national contexts. The sensitive nature of these places can

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be analysed by looking at the social and public trajectories of the commemorative sites planned and constructed where the terror attack occurred. Cultural symbols and artistic codes become resources for articulating the struggles over the past that help shape national and collective identities, as Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz's study on Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington (1991) has documented. In contemporary societies cultural codes are often asked to actively intervene in the public definition of "crucial events", such as wars, terrorist attacks, disasters. These events characteristically impact the social collective and usually requires a length period of public recuperation following such traumatic events. The cultural codes shape both the contemporary representation of a crucial event and its future public memory.

This article analyses cultural theories such as those offered by Alexander et al (2004). It will examine the consequences of these theories and their applicability to those cases where the access to the legal arena is not available for working through cultural trauma. Where there have been claims of "state terror", such as in Latin America and Italy, access to the legal arena is systematically denied through a variety of criminal strategies. In Italy, for example, there is a long history of state collusion between part of the government and criminal groups like the mafia and the camorra. This collusion has deeply affected the functioning of the legal system that normally represents the most important arena for the expression of collective trauma. When this mode of expression is denied, the expression of trauma is pushed outside the formal legal and political system and into an anti-system, historically artistic/cultural productions. In these cases, cultural elaboration of the trauma takes place on the aesthetic level and the memories culturally produced are very often counter-memories. What are the consequences of this process both for the inscription of the crucial event in the public discourse and its relation with justice? And moreover, how do the aesthetic codes affect the public definition of justice and the collective understanding of what happened?

Cultural Trauma in Theory

Over the course of the last two decades, the relationship between trauma and memory has been analysed by several scholars. (Caruth 1995, 1996; Laub 1995; Felman 1995)[2] *Cultural Trauma and*

2 *The critique provided here of Alexander's cultural trauma model and the description of his theory provided here have previously been published in slightly amended from in: A L Tota, "Review Essay – Public Memory and Cultural Trauma,"* Javanost – The Public *13, no 3 (2006): 84-86.*

Collective Memory edited by Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser and Sztompka (Alexander et al, 2004) represents one of the most successful attempts to draw a systematic theory that further investigates the relationship between memory, identity and public discourse. This work analyses the ways in which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic memories seek to serve as constitutive bases for the collective identity formation as well as the extent to which they succeed in doing so. Alternatively put, the cultural trauma model essentially concerns itself with how a traumatic past acquires meaning in the public discourse and can become a semantic resource for the definition of collective identities. Under what circumstances does this process occur? When and how does a traumatic event (such as a terrorist attack) forever mark collective memories and identities?

Along with *Cultural Trauma and Collective Memory*, Eyerman's 2001 study on the cultural trauma caused by slavery documents cultural trauma theories' relevance. It is Smelser, in his contribution to Alexander et al's work, who provides a useful formal definition of cultural trauma:

> ...a memory accepted and publicly given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation that is a) laden with negative affect, b) represented as indelible, and c) regarded as threatening a society's existence or violating one or more of its fundamental cultural presuppositions. (Smelser, 2004: 44)

Alexander, along similar lines, argues that, "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways." (Alexander, 2004: 1) When one examines *Cultural Trauma and Collective* Memory as a whole, two key hypotheses emerge. Firstly, there is the idea that collective trauma is a historical construct and not a naturally occurring phenomenon. The second hypothesis purports that there is a great difference between individual and social trauma. This latter point is something which is directly addressed by Smelser:

> … a cultural trauma differs greatly from a psychological trauma in terms of the mechanisms that establish and sustain it. The mechanisms associated with psychological trauma are the intra-psychic dynamics of defence, adaptation, coping, and working through; the mechanisms at the cultural level are mainly those of social agents and contending groups. (Smelser, 2004: 38-39)

When it is argued that trauma is cultural, what does this truly

mean? There exists a gap between an event and its subsequent representation, a discrepancy or empty space, which can be conceived of as *the trauma process.* For trauma to grow beyond the individual level and emerge at a cultural one, a new 'master narrative' must be established successfully by a carrier group that, "projects the trauma claim to the audience-public." (Alexander, 2004,:12) There are four questions which must be addressed by a successful process of collective representation of the traumatic event: (1) The nature of the pain; (2) The nature of the victim; (3) The relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience and; (4) Attribution of responsibility. The cultural trauma model also identifies and describes six institutional arenas where the meanings of trauma are socially constructed: religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, mass media, and state bureaucracy.

In short, the trauma process links to the creation of public memory from trauma. It is argued here that the trauma process influences collective memories and national identities, especially to the extent that the trauma is inscribed in public discourse. The analytical categories devised to analyse the functioning of the trauma process can also usefully investigate the formation of a public discourse around a traumatic past. Still, the cultural trauma theory also raises questions warranting further investigation. In some national contexts access to one or more key institutional arenas may be systematically denied leaving aesthetic codes are the only ones available to represent traumatic events (as we will see in the empirical studies mentioned in this article). What might be the consequences of such systematic exclusion of, for example, the legal or the media arena for the public sphere? What role does power play in this model? For Alexander, different social networks offer different levels of distributional access to material and symbolic resources. He argues, "the constraints imposed by institutional arenas are mediated by the uneven distribution of material resources and the social networks that provide differential access to them." (Alexander, 2004: 21)

Critiquing and Applying the Cultural Trauma Model to Italian Terror

One key remaining question is the extent to which the theory can be generalised for, "it would be a serious misunderstanding if trauma theory were restricted in its reference to Western social life." (Alexander, 2004: 24) Alexander offers the example of the rape of Nanking as a case where the collective memories never fully extended beyond China. The lack of recognition of traumas and the subsequent failure to inscribe their lessons in the public sphere depend in these

cases on:

> an inability to carry through…the trauma process. In Japan and China, just as in Rwanda, Cambodia and Guatemala, claims have certainly been made for the central relevance of these 'distant sufferings' … But for both social structural and cultural reasons, carrier groups have not emerged with the resources, authority, or interpretive competence to powerfully disseminate these trauma claims. (Alexander, 2004: 27)

But is it useful to analyse the lack of public discourse in relation to the rape of Nanking in such a way? Though Alexander describes his theory as 'middle-range,' his conclusion seems to contradict this claim:

> Collective traumas have no geographical or cultural limitations. The theory of cultural trauma applies, without prejudice, to any and all instances when societies have, or have not, constructed and experienced cultural traumatic events, and to their efforts to draw, or not to draw, the moral lessons that can be said to emanate from them. (Alexander, 2004: 27)

The potential for application of this theory to non-Western societies remains uncertain. When looking at non-Western societies, and even some Western ones (such as South Italy), it may be misleading to speak of, "*The inability to carry through the trauma process.*" (Tota, 2006: 86) In order for the trauma process to emerge a carrier group needs also to have national and/or collective will in the public arena to deal with the public meaning of that trauma. For example, in some African societies the destiny of the entire population is decided outside the national context and depends on the international exploitation of the national resources. Would it be possible in this type of context for a carrier group of collective memory to emerge and successfully compete with the instigated amnesia provoked by the perpetrators of the trauma?

A useful example is the case of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian writer arrested and hanged in 1995 by the military government of general Sani Abacha. The collective work on this case documents the extent to which, and under what circumstances, civil society can (or cannot) intervene in Nigerian national public discourse. In 1996, Jenny Green, a lawyer at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York brought forth a lawsuit against Shell to demonstrate the involvement of the multinational oil company in the execution of Saro-Wiwa. In 2009 Shell agreed, in an out-of-court settlement, to pay $15.5 million (11.1 million euro) in compensation to victims' families. International solidarity facilitated collective work in this case. To summarise in other words, civil society cannot fully affect the public discourse in countries where violence and injustice prevail and citizens risk their life if they stand in

opposition to existing sources of power.

For a victim to become an active interpreter in the process of constructing public memory of trauma (taken to mean his/her discursive construction *within the public sphere*), he or she must first to stop being a victim. In other words, the specific trauma must be terminated, and the condition of victimhood must cease. Nevertheless, in some national contexts the level of violence is such that the victims of a particular cultural trauma continue endlessly to be victims. This happens not only in African countries, but also in the city of Naples. The violence has never stopped. In such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine that the victims can be usefully analysed by applying the concept of 'carrier group.'

According to Alexander this concept is one of the elements of the trauma process, the others being the audience and the situation. (Alexander, 2004: 12) The carrier group is the speaker in the trauma process and its main goal is "to project the trauma claim to the audience public," by using, "the particularities of the historical situation, the symbolic resources at hand, and the constraints and opportunities provided by institutional structures." (Alexander, 2004: 12) The fact that the theory falters when applied to these cases is a cause for reflection: it seems that the 'carrier group' can rarely emerge in such circumstances. This perhaps means that we are using a concept whose explanatory capacity varies according to the context in which it is applied. The effective processing of a cultural trauma entails the possibility of constructing public knowledge on that traumatic past. Public memory is the memory of the public sphere. But, is the concept of public sphere useful for analysis of the genocide in Rwanda or for the analysis of the relation between camorra and citizens in Naples? Only to the extent that we can say that democracy does not freely exist in there, that its civil society has been annihilated and its intellectuals exterminated. In short, a Habermasian public sphere is not only of little help in understanding what has happened in Rwanda, but also what has happened when mafia (or 'cosa nostra') and camorra are at work in South Italy.

The mafia is a criminal organization originating in Sicily to indicate an organised criminal network sharing a common code of conduct and organizational. In the 80s Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, two Italian magistrates who would both be murdered by mafia some years later, started a campaign against 'cosa nostra,' arresting Tommasso Buscetta, a mafioso who became an informant in

exchange for protection. Thanks to Buscetta' statements it was possible to document the infiltration of the mafia in the state and the Italian judiciary. In a second phase, 'mafia' has become a generic term for any organised criminal network with similarities in structure, methods and interests to the original Sicilian organisations. The camorra, on the other hand, is a criminal organization, very similar to 'cosa nostra' that originated in the region of Campania in South Italy. Naples, the capital of the region, serves as a hub of its activity. It is among the largest and oldest criminal organizations in Italy, dating back to the 18th century. Compared to the mafia, whose structure is pyramidal, the camorra's organization structure is more horizontal than vertical, with individual clans acting largely autonomously.

One of the main criminal strategies of the camorra consists of becoming the preferred interlocutors of local politicians and public officials. The camorra clans assist and protect their clients against the local authorities. Infiltration, especially within local government, is very deep. Due to the complexity of this context, civil society in Sicily or in Naples cannot intervene effectively in the public discourse because citizens are under threat. In intervention they risk their own life and that of their family. In very specific sub-national contexts such as urban Naples, which is dominated by the camorra, it is difficult to apply the cultural trauma models and the concept of 'carrier group' as pointed out in Alexander's theory. As a matter of fact, in this case violence needs to stop and victims need to stop of being victims in order to work through the trauma process. But here the camorra does not allow it and the consequences are the public denial of a collective trauma. In Naples the citizens who decide to engage in this public discourse of the past risk camorra retaliations. The cultural trauma theories in all other cases instead prove efficacious. In light of these considerations, a reasonable proposal seems to be that of having cultural trauma theory converse with part of the post-colonial debate, so as to avoid generalizations that, far from confirming this important theory, instead weaken it.

Terrorism in Italy

Since 1994 the inscription of cultural trauma in the Italian public discourse has been extensively studied in several pieces of qualitative research. (Tota, 2005a; Tota, 2005b; Tota 2010) In relation to the specific theoretical case proposed at the very beginning of this text, the inscription in the public discourse of a cultural trauma in cases where access to the legal and the political arenas is denied, two different

cases will be here considered: (1) State terror; and (2) Imperfect silence and the public denial of a terrorist attack. These cultural traumas have a direct impact on democracy, especially for terrorist attacks where the state is somehow considered guilty.

In earlier research I have offered a classification scheme for terrorist attacks which complements that of Tilly (2005). (Tota, 2005a) It is, on one hand, it based on the degree to which public representation of the state changes as a side effect of terrorist attacks. On the other hand it is based on the number and diversity of the contrasting versions of the event recounted by the public:

> … the first variable may vary along the following public perceptions of the role of the state: a) state as guilty of not being able to defend its citizens; b) state as guilty of not being able to prosecute terrorists; c) state as guilty of having no political and institutional willingness to pursue the terrorists; d) state as mandatory of the terror attacks." (Tota, 2005a: 57).

The term terrorism can refer to a range very different situations, from September 11 to cases of State Terror in Italy (Tota, 2003) and Latin America. (Oliverio and Lauderdale, 2005) This highlights the fact, something stressed by Tilly, that models based in the 9/11 attacks cannot be considered inherently generalisable, for the bulk of attacks the world over do not share key characteristics with those particular attacks. (Tilly, 2005)

> The second variable, instead, varies along this continuum: a) low conflict over the public version of the past (the case of September 11 2001); b) medium conflict (Madrid 11 March, first attributed to the Basque separatist terrorists (ETA) and secondly to Al Qaeda); c) high conflict over the public version of the past (the Italian attacks in 1980). The first variable makes us focus on the potential counter-memories (i.e. public memories constructed by and in society and contrasting with the "official version" provided by the state). The second one, instead, introduces the problem of the time perspective. (Tota 2005a, 57).

Here the focus is on the processes that can, and have, lead to the more or less official attribution of an attack to an identified group of terrorists.

The First Case: 'State Terror' in Italy (1969-1993) and the Hypothesis of CIA Involvement

The period of modern Italian history extending from 1969 to 1993 is characterised by a perception of the state as unable to defend its citizens, lacking the political and institutional willingness to pursue terrorists and, in some cases, as the instigating terror attacks. Violence

and terror were used during this period as political strategies with which to obtain political consensus in a process commonly referred to as 'the strategy of tension'. Access to the legal arena has been frequently denied and numerous terrorists have not yet been prosecuted. In many cases even after decades there have not been any convictions. Terrorist attacks have entered the public discourse only through their cultural depictions (films, theatre productions, exhibitions, public concerts). In light of Alexander's model (2004) it can be argued that the cultural process has been enacted in the artistic arena.

Terrorist organizations have been very active in Italy since 1970, with numerous attacks resulting in many deaths including mass casualties caused by bombings in railway stations, in the central squares of cities. There is a long list of such terrorist attacks, but most Italian citizens have forgotten this chapter in Italy's past. As Dickie and Foot emphasise:

> The extent and duration of the period of the *stragi* in postwar Italy have no real precedent in contemporary Europe. The series of peacetime outrages that marked the 1969-84 period cannot be compared with the effects of various coups or civil wars in other southern European countries. Only in Italy did the "strategy of tension" last for so long and cause so much damage within a democratic system. Only in Italy do many of these outrages remain a mystery to this day. Few of the protagonists of the postwar stragi … have ever been convicted. Many were not even tried. (Dickie and Foot, 2002: 46)

In the Italian case, 'strategy of tension' has come to denote the past three decades of internal terrorist attacks in Italy. Yet, as alluded to above, behind this veneer lies a strategy of terror and violence pursued by an extremist part of the 'democratic' state and secret services in order to gain and maintain a political consensus unobtainable through democratic elections. Surprisingly, despite the frequency of terrorist attacks, there has been a forgetting of this recent past. Numerous Italian citizens, especially younger ones, cannot remember key details of these tragedies – dates, victims, location. *Cuore*, a satrical magazine, published a series of student essays on the massacre in Piazza Fontana (Milan, December 12 1969) in 1992. It was evident that the majority of these students had no idea of what happened only twenty-three years previously (Foot, 2002).

Yet the real problem is not forgetfulness, because as Foot argues in his study on the explosion in Piazza Fontana, "you cannot forget something you have never learned." (Foot, 2002: 276) The Italian public lacks understanding of the country's recent history. Since 1970 these deaths and massacres have not been included in the nation's public

discourse. This absence of collective awareness has been the 'natural' consequence of various forms of amnesia instigated in the past and today. It is interesting to note that at the international level there is also a lack of awareness of there being any terrorism of this kind in Italy. In the international public debate on contemporary Italian history only the crimes of Red Brigades and mafia have been properly inscribed. Why is this the case? One hyphotesis, often drawn but never proven, is that the 'strategy of tension' has been made possible in the Italian context due to a degree of cooperation between a deviant part of the Italian secret service and the activities of the international secret services, especially a deviant part of the American secret services (CIA). There would be an analogy between what happened in the 70s years in South America (for example, the case Salvador Allende in Chile) and Italy, even if in the Italian case the democratic state has been mantained. During the second term of office of Democratic President Bill Clinton, the CIA acknowledged having played a role in Chilean politics prior to the coup, but its degree of involvement is still debated. Perhaps in the future the CIA will also acknowledge having played a role in Italian politics during the strategy of tension.

Aldo Moro, Prime Minister of Italy from 1963 to 1968, was kidnapped from Red Brigades on March 16 1968 and assassinated after 55 days of captivity. In an extract from the report of the Red Brigades on their interrogation during Moro's imprisonment, he underlines the role of associate countries in the strategy of tension:

> The so-called strategy of tension had the purpose, although fortunately not attained, to put Italy in the tracks of the" normality "after the events of '68 and the so-called 'hot autumn'. It can be assumed that the associated countries interested in various ways to our policy and therefore interested in sponsoring a certain political address were somehow involved through their services. (Commissione Stragi, Memoriale Aldo Moro, 2, 360).

On November 14, 1974 Pier Paolo Pasolini, an Italian intellectual, writer, filmmaker and poet published a long article under the headline, "What is this Golpe? I know" in *Corriere della Sera*, one of Italy's leading newspaper in Italy. It has been considered his death sentence. Pasolini was beaten to death on November 2, 1975 on the beach at Ostia, near Rome. Giuseppe Pelosi, a seventeen-year-old hustler, was arrested. He confessed to Pasolini's murder. On May 7, 2005 Giuseppe Pelosi retracted his confession, which he said was made under the threat of violence to his family. This is the part of Pasolini's article, where he mentions the role of CIA in the Italian strategy of tension:

> I know. I know the names of those responsible for what has been called a coup (and what was in fact a series of coups set up as a power protection system). I know the names of those responsible for the bloodbath of Milan on December 12th 1969. I know the names of those responsible for the atrocities of Brescia and Bologna in the early months of 1974. I know the names of the group of powerful people who, thanks to the CIA's help … have first created (besides failing miserably) an anti-Communist crusade, to buffer the '68 and later, again with the help and inspiration of the CIA, have recovered a fascist virginity to reverse the disaster of the 'referendum' … I know the names of those who, between one church Mass and another, have given orders to, and guaranteed the political protection of, old Generals (kept in reserve, ready for a coup d'état), of young neo-fascists, or rather neo-nazis (to create a real base of anti-Communist tension) and lastly of common criminals … I know all the names and I know what they are guilty of (attacks on institutions and public bloodbaths). I know. But I have no proof. I have not one clue. Probably - if American power will allow it - maybe deciding 'diplomatically' to grant to another democracy the same that American democracy has granted about Nixon - these names sooner or later will be revealed. I know because I am an intellectual, a writer who tries to follow what is happening, to read everything that is written, to imagine things nobody admits to knowing or things that are left unsaid. I link distant facts, I put together the shattered and scrambled pieces of a whole, coherent political picture that puts logic back where arbitrariness, madness and mystery seem to reign … After all, it is not that difficult to reconstruct the truth about what has been happening in Italy since 1968… (Pier Paolo Pasolini, "What is this coup? I know," *Corriere della Sera*, November 14, 1974).

During the trial for Pasolini's murder Guido Calvi, layer of the prosecution, said:

> Why did Pasolini cease to exist? Indeed, one does not need to be an intellectual or a storyteller to acquire the awareness that drove Pasolini's pen that day. Millions of Italians "know", and every day in city squares, factories, schools, everywhere, they express their dissent, fruit of their knowledge. In the same way, we know who are the real instigators and the "ideal" perpetrators of the assassination of Pasolini, as they stand behind the scenes of this apologue. And the crowd of romans full of anguish and rage who came to say their last goodbye in Campo de' Fiori, they knew. That crowd, so heterogeneous, so "roman", so popular and therefore so "unreliable", they knew and they know. But like us, they have no proof. Only a few clues. (part of the discourse held by Guido Calvi during the trial on April 24, 1976, published by www.pasolini.net)

Boschetti and Ciammitti (2010) in their book on the Bologna terrorist attack explicitly propose the hypothesis of there being a direct involvement of international secret services, mainly CIA. According to the authors, during the strategy of tension in Italy the NAR (Nuclei Armati Revolutionari), a neo-fascist terroristic group found guilty for many attacks (including that in Bologna railway station on August 2, 1980 which killed 85 persons) have played a central role as point of connection between the Italian secret services, the CIA and a group of Italian politicians who wanted to prevail in Italy's right-wing political

parties, even through a coup.

On December 7 1970 there was a failed coup d'état in Italy known as the Golpe Borghese, derived from the name of the fascist Prince Junio Valerio Borghese who was its main organizer. It took until March 18 1971 for the coup attempt to became public knowledge, thanks an article in the left-wing journal *Paese sera* entitled: "Subversive plan against the Republic: far-right plot discovered." It has to be noted that December 7 is the anniversary of the Pearl Harbour attack. (December 7, 1941) Probably the plan of the coup in its final phase envisaged the involvement of US and NATO warships on alert in the Mediterranean sea, but this remains a hypothesis.

The most detailed study on the role of NATO's secret armies and terrorism in Western Europe comes courtesy of Daniele Ganser, a Swiss historian who has investigated the role of a 'stay-behind' paramilitary organization with the official aim of countering a possible Soviet invasion of Europe. (Ganser, 2005) This organization has been called 'Gladio' and its origin can be traced in the alleged 'anti-communist NATO protocols' committing the various secret services of NATO member states to prevent communist parties from coming to power in Western Europe by any means. According to Ganser, CIA director Allen Dulles was one of the key people instituting Gladio with the CIA having financed most Gladio operationss. During the Cold War era this paramilitary organization was charged with limiting Soviet influence within Europe.

In Italy the existence and the activities of Gladio were firstly revealed on October 24 1980 by Giulio Andreotti, an Italian politician of the Christian Democracy party. Andreotti, who died in 2013, served seven times as Prime Minister including during Aldo Moro's kidnapping and assassination by the Red Brigades. He also served eight times as Minister of Defense. On that occasion he defined Gladio as a structure of defense, information and safety. On his very controversial life a film has been devoted: "Il Divo" directed by Paolo Sorrentino (2008). This film documents the deep influence of Giulio Andreotti on the Italian recent past with a special focus on the strategy of tension and the relation between mafia and state. However, the existence of Gladio in Europe had been already revealed by William Colby (1978), CIA director from 1973 to 1975, in a volume dedicated to his life in CIA. This is the very complex national and international context that can be useful to better understand the terrorist attacks in Italy from 1969 until 1993. There are no direct proofs, but several clues that make

the hypothesis of CIA's involvement plausible. Perhaps the day of an official acknowledgement by CIA in relation to its role in Italy during the strategy of tension will soon arrive. American and European citizens deserve to know the truth.

In the following table the terrorist attacks of the strategy of tension period are listed. However, in this list the names of the perpetrators are missing. This is because in most cases they are still unknown.

Table 1: Terrorist attacks in Italy during the "Strategy of Tension " period, 1969- 1993

Date	Place	Number of Victims
12 Dec 1969	Milan (piazza Fontana)	16 dead, 84 injured
22 July 1970	Gioia Taura (train)	6 dead, 72 injured
31 May 1972	Peteano di Sagrado	3 dead, 1 injured
17 May 1973	Milan	4 dead, 76 injured
28 May 1974	Brescia (piazza della Loggia)	8 dead, 103 injured
4 Aug 1974	San Benedetto Val di Sambro, Italicus	12 dead, 44 injured
27 June 1980	Ustica Airplaine, DC9	81 dead
2 Aug 1980	Bologna Railway Station	85 dead, 200 injured
23 Dec 1984	San Benedetto Val di Sambro, Train 904	15 dead, 267 injured
27 May 1993	Florence (Georgofili)	5 dead, 41 injured
27 July 1993	Milan (Palestro)	5 dead, 14 injured

But not all acts of terrorism have been forgotten in Italy. There are several differences in the ways in which these crucial events have been inscribed or, otherwise dealt with, in Italian public discourse. However, notwithstanding the marked differences, one discerns a common pattern that can be taken as a concise representation of what happened. In all cases, the trauma process (i.e. the gap between the event and its public representation) could not be carried out in the legal and in the political arenas, but only in the aesthetic ones, because the Italian secret services have systematically misled the investigation of the judiciary. When a magistrate was about to discover the truth, the trial was moved to a new city. So a new magistrate had to take up the case and in fact start the investigation from the beginning. This was, for example, the case of the investigations related to the bombing in Milan, Piazza Fontana (December 12, 1969). The trial was moved from Milan to Rome. Other magistrates were murdered because their investigations were too efficient and effective. For

example, neo-fascist terrorists murdered the Italian magistrate Mario Amato in June 23, 1980 (a few weeks before the Bologna massacre of 2 August 1980). When he was assassinated, he was investigating the role of the NAR (black/fascist terrorists) and their relationship with the Italian and international secret services. He died before being able to reveal what he had discovered.

This prompts the following question: what are the main consequences of this process for a democracy? The public gains its knowledge of the recent Italian past from films and exhibitions, such is the case with *Romanzo di una strage* a film related to the bombing in Piazza Fontana directed by Marco Tullio Giordana in 2012.[3] In other words, in order to understand past events in their country, Italian citizens must go to theatre, museums or the cinema. However at the end of it all, they were 'just' at theatre or at the cinema or in a museum. Put otherwise, public knowledge of this particular past has been produced through the aesthetic mode of production. This public knowledge has a 'degree of truth' not comparable, for example, with that of traditional historical or political discourse. In the end, citizens will be induced to think that 'perhaps it tells the truth, but it is only a film.' Thus reaffirmed is 'a conspiracy narrative' in regard to those traumas, because the degree of reality produced through aesthetic codes is insufficient to compete with other narratives in the nation's public discourse. Moreover, in most cases, the cultural memories generated in relation to the terrorist attacks are 'counter-memories'. They are sometimes marginal voices, sometimes they can become hegemonic ones, but they are nevertheless counter-memories. (Foucault, 1977) When in a democracy a large portion of the recent past can only be recounted as 'counter-memory,' this is a fact which is likely to have a major impact on the collective identity of the entire nation.

However, despite all the limitations mentioned, commemorative rituals in Italy are opportunities for civil and political society to contribute to the values of democracy. They are also significant for the hegemony process, in that they literally make democracy possible. Because in Italy the cultural trauma process can be carried out *at least* in the artistic arena, it is possible to reaffirm the ideal of belonging to a democratic state. Hence, ultimately, notwithstanding the above-mentioned limits, the cultural forms of these controversial pasts contribute to making democracy possible in Italy.

3 The film *Romanzo di una strage* (2012) also outlines the hypothesis of the relationship between NATO, international secret services, Italian ones and the NAR (Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari).

Imperfect Silence and the Public Denial of the Event: The Christmas Attack, San Benedetto Val di Sambro, 1984

On December 23th 1984 in the Appennine base tunnel, a bomb on the 904 express train from Napoli to Milan was detoned, killed 17 and wounded 267.[4] The location of this bombing was close to that of the Italicus express bombing ten years previously (on 4 August 1974). This is a case of great interest because it is the only one in which the Supreme Court has recognised the mafia's and camorra's involvement. We can also define it as a case of 'imperfect forgetting'. In Italy it is remembered as the 'Christmas Attack' because it took place two days before Christmas, when many Italians were travelling from North to South Italy, or from South to North, in order to be with their families for the holidays. But those on the 904 express would not reach their final destinations. Initially 15 of them died, and the toll then rose to 17; the number of injured was 267. The Association of Relatives of the Victims of the Attack on Train 904, founded on 17 March 1985 in Naples, describes the massacre thus on its website:

> Those who organized the explosion, aimed at killing innocent citizens. Everything was planned to cause the highest number of victims as possible: the Christ- mas holiday, the power of the explosion, the timer of the bomb regulated in such a way to blow up inside the tunnel in coincidence with the transit of another train on the opposite track. Only the prompt reaction of the driver who immedi- ately stopped the line avoided a more dramatic disaster. The bomb on the Christmas train was an anomalous act of terrorism, where more clearly the extension of criminal logics, their reciprocal connections may be observed. It is a terrorist act where the shadow of the Mafia is behind the terrorist organization. The enemy is multilateral and hidden, based on many members both inside and outside the country. (Associations of Relatives of the Victims, Train 904, 1985, www.treno904.org)

Since 1984, the public remembrances of this massacre have not become a stable cultural form because of a lack of visibility. There are several complex reasons for this: (1) after almost three decades (1984–2013) there has been no serious endeavour to provide justice and truth to the survivors and their relatives; (2) the state has been deemed guilty of secretly mandating the attack, and (3) this past has been contested. However, the most significant feature of this memory has

4 The following two sections of text summarize the results of a study on the public memory surrounding the terrorist attack in San Benedetto Val di Sambro (December 23 1984) published previously in amended form in Tota (2005a). However, these date are here used to document the impossibility in the case of Naples to take for granted a free civil society and a free public sphere where to project the trauma claim. In other terms, this example is used to document the inapplicability of the cultural trauma model to these contexts where the democratic rights of citizens are suspended.

been its invisibility both nationally and locally. The massacre on Train 904 occurred only 29 years ago during a period of peace in a European democracy. How can it be forgotten? My earlier case study on the attack (Tota, 2005a) documents how an extremely powerful lobby jointly representing the camorra, terrorist organizations, and political powers has systematically disrupted public memory of this event. But there are additional reasons for the cultural amnesia, and they partly concern the fragmentation of the commemorative processes.

Since 1984, the victims of Train 904 have been commemorated in a highly disjointed manner: a number of ceremonies are held during the year and in different areas of the country. But instead of inscribing memory of the Christmas Attack firmly in the public national discourse, these ceremonies have generated ambiguity and confusion. The plurality of the ceremonies has unintentionally contributed to the event's invisibility because it fragments the nationwide attention to the attack. It is so fragmented that it is even difficult to be properly described. This fragmentation is linked to the fact that there are three different terrorist attacks partially commemorated together:

1. The Bologna Train Station Bombing: On the morning of 2 August, 1980 there was a terrorist bombing at the Central Station in Bologna. The attack killed 85 people and wounded more than 200. The attack has been materially attributed to the neo-fascist Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari (NAR). It is commemorated on 2 August every year.
2. The Italicus Attack: In the early hours of 4 August 1974, a bomb exploded on The Italicus Express night train on which, killing 12 people and injuring 48. The train was travelling from Rome to Munich and it was near San Benedetto Val di Sambro when the explosion occurred at approximately 01:23. Former Primer Minister of Italy Aldo Moro was on the train on 3 August, but disembarked before the explosion. Here it is important to note that Aldo Moro was kidnapped some years later on March 16, 1978, by the Red Brigades, a Marxist terrorist organization, and killed after 55 days of captivity. This bombing is commemorated every year together with the bombing of Bologna on 2 August, with a train departing from Bologna immediately after the commemorative ceremony for the victims of Bologna.
3. The Train 904 Bombing/The Christmas Massacre: On December 23, 1984 a bomb detonated on the 904 Naples-Milan express while it was in the Apennine Base Tunnel. A total of 17 were killed and the attack wounded a further 267. The explosion occurred quite close to the site of the Italicus attack ten years prior. The victims of the Train 904 are commemorated with the following ceremonies:
    a. August 2 (annually) – The anniversary of the 1980 Bologna attack, the Train 904 attack is commemorated together with this attack and the Italicus attack in San Benedetto Val di Sambro. This commemoration takes place at the railway station of San Benedetto Val di Sambro, the station nearest to the site of the explosion located 40 kilometres from Bologna.
    b. December 23 (annually) – Small ceremony at the railway station of San Benedetto Val di Sambro.
    c. December 23 (annually) – Small ceremony at the Central station in Naples, from which the train had departed.

There are several factors that can explain this fragmentation. First, the explosion occurred deep within the tunnel at a place very difficult place to reach on foot. As a consequence, the commemorative ceremony cannot be held in its most symbolic location but has had to be moved to San Benedetto, the nearest railway. Because many victims were residents of Naples, it seemed unreasonable to organize the ceremony somewhere so anonymous and distant for them (a small railway station in northern Italy) rather than at the central railway station in Naples. Yet this solution was problematic as well, because in Naples the camorra obstructs every attempt to commemorate the victims properly (as we shall see). Moreover, the San Benedetto commemoration ceremony on 2 August has produced only a sort of 'side' visibility, for it is a joint commemoration of three different attacks with national attention entirely concentrated on the victims of the Bologna attacks. These are victims who are remembered in their city in exactly the place where the explosion occurred, on the exact anniversary of the attack, and by exactly the same citizens who ran into the station after the explosion, gave first aid to the injured, and helped the firemen to extract the bodies from the rubble. As part of this commemoration, a special train leaves Bologna station for San Benedetto Val di Sambro at exactly 11:15. At the end of this 20 minute journey, wreaths are laid on those plaques dedicated to the memory of the Icarus and Train 904 bombings.

Train 904: The Commemorative Ceremonies and the Cultural Amnesiant at Work

As mentioned, the attack on Train 904 is remembered during the commemoration of the Bologna bombing every 2 August. However, the focus here is on the two other commemorations of the terrorist attack on Train 904, those held on 23 December in San Benedetto Val di Sambro (the nearest railway station to the place of the explosion which occurred inside a tunnel) and Naples (the railway station from which the train 904 had departed that fateful evening in 1984).

The San Benedetto Val di Sambro Commemoration (23 December)

The annual ceremony in San Benedetto is held in the small square outside the station. A small plaque has been installed for the victims of the 904 Train massacre. The entire ceremony lasts twenty minutes. Every year with the voice of a railroad worker opens the ceremony. Amplified by a loudspeaker, the worker recalls the names of the victims of the bombing and invites those present to observe a minute of silence. A locomotive whistle is sounded to begin the moment of silence with a second whistle marking its closure 60 seconds later. The banners of the municipalities, which surround the monument to the Italicus victims, are raised in tribute to the victims. Soldiers present at the ceremony stand to attention, and each year the local priest of San Benedetto reads a different Bible passage in commemoration of the victims. Then the victims' relatives lay the wreaths near the plaque. Political and institutional representatives take part in the ceremony, yet they never address those present. The mayor of San Benedetto always makes the effort to attend, as do the presidents of the regional and provincial authorities, representatives of the Jewish community in Bologna and the presidents of the other victims' associations. The victims of Train 904 have been commemorated every 23 December since 1985. The ceremony concludes with a large buffet lunch offered by the mayor to all present and served in the station bar. In San Benedetto the only authority that speaks is the Church. Another distinctive feature of the Val di Sambro ceremony is the rhetorical device of the railroad worker's voice, which is broadcast from a loudspeaker to mark the beginning of the commemorative ceremony. At the specific request of the victims' families, the victims of the Italicus attack are also remembered in this ceremony.

The Naples Central Station Commemoration (23 December)

The participation by citizens in both ceremonies is invariably scant, but this is especially so in Naples. Local and national newspapers publish few reports on the event, with it never gracing the front pages. Since 1994 (a full ten years after the attacks), a commemorative ceremony has been held in Naples' Central Station. This is a brief ceremony and it takes place at the platform from which Train 904. However, until 23 December 2003 there were no symbols of the bombing within the station. For the first nine years of these ceremonies, there was little option but to lay the wreaths on the ground at the very end of the platform. After many difficulties, in 2002 the Victims' Relatives Association was able to finally manage to have a commemorative plaque installed at the Central Station. It was unveiled by Rosa Russo Jervolino, at the time the city's newly-elected mayor. After waiting for 19 years, this plaque remains the only tribute to the victims. It is also the only official symbol of the bombing granted to the victims and their relatives by the municipality of Naples.

There is evidence that the organization of any form of commemoration or any attempt to construct legitimate symbols of this memory in Naples clash with the Camorra's determination to have the bombings forgotten. Only seven people attended the mass celebrated to commemorate the victims on the third anniversary of the attacks. For the following year (1988), Riccardo Meschini, the president of the Victims' Relatives Association, who was injured alongside his wife in the explosion, attempted to organize a concert of sacred music in the local cathedral as part of commemorations. At first, Monsignor Graziosi assisted the association, but ultimately Cardinal Giordano called the concert off. At the time Giuseppe Misso, a prominent Camorra boss, was on trial in Florence for the attacks and there were fears of retaliation for the cathedral's participation, expecially given that the cathedral borders the Forcella neighborhood controlled by Misso's clan. Though the Victims' Relatives Association sought the support of priests at other churches in different neighbourhoods around the city, they all refused to help. Among those churches approached were: San Gennaro Cathedral, San Francesco di Paola, San Ferdinando, Santa Maria degli Angeli, and San Giacomo degli Spagnoli. While there was never a concert, there were several articles published in local and national newspapers that accused Cardinal Giordano of collusion with the Camorra. When interviewed by a journalist, he denied the charge claiming that:

Personally I have never received any request from the Victims' Relatives

> Association concerning use of the Cathedral for a commemorative concert, nor do I know of any request made to the parish priests of other churches in Naples . . . As regards the use of churches for non-religious purposes, the dispositions set out by the Pope are very strict . . . Obviously the decisions of the priests have complied with those criteria and any different interpretation of what happened is tendentious and bizarre. (*Il Mattino*, 24 December 1988)

On 24 December 1988, one of the most important daily newspapers in Italy, the *Corriere della Sera,* published an article headlined "The Church is Afraid of the Camorra. The commemorative concert organised in memory of the dead on Train 904 will not take place because of the denial of the parish priests." *Il Tempo* on the same day also published an article about the situation under the headline of "No church in Naples is willing to commemorate the attacks. Too much fear of reprisals by Misso's Clan." While it would be easy to misrepresent the Catholic Church's role in opposing both the camorra and the Mafia across much of southern Italy, it also needs to be remembered that over the past 30 years this courageous defense of the citizenry has lead to the death of numerous priests at the hands of the camorra and similar organizations.

This is only one example, though an emblematic one. The list of individual decisions, events, and activities that over the past 30 years have constructed a situation of invisible memory is very long indeed. The catalogue of inaction by local institutions, silences and humiliates victims and their relatives, unequivocally demonstrating that 'imperfect oblivion' requires constant work: All initiatives must be blocked, all witnesses silenced and all symbols destroyed. On 5 March 1991, the life sentences given to Pippo Calò, Guido Cercola, Giuseppe Misso, Luigi Cardone, Giulio Pirozzi, and Alfonso Galeotta were suspended by Judge Corrado Carnevale. The municipality of Naples has remained silent, but numerous posters exulting Giuseppe Misso's release appeared on the streets.

There is another example which can be considered emblematic of the emergence of this cultural amnesia: the history of the plaque installed in Casoria, a town near Naples. Among the victims of the Train 904 attack was an entire family: Angela (33 years old), Anna (nine), Giovanni (four), and Nicola de Simone (40). Because Nicola worked at the National Electricity Board (ENEL), the ENEL trade union endeavoured for many years to organize commemorative occasions. Moreover, Angela's sister, Titta Calvanese, worked at the primary school, and the teachers of that school organised several initiatives. In late January 1985 (one month after the attack), the mayor of Casoria

unveiled a bronze plaque bearing the names of all the victims in the main square near city hall. By 2004, the plaque had become dirty and neglected. In interview with the author, Titta Calvanese commented, "Luckily the plaque is not on the ground; otherwise they would park on it." The 'imperfect' oblivion into which this attack has fallen cannot be blamed on other processes. It is due, not simply to the inertia of citizens but to their fear of retaliation following on from the logic of terrorism itself. In many cases of state-sanctioned terror, the battle against terrorism must be constantly fought in civil society. It is a war - a war of symbols and a war against a 'disculture' that must be changed.

Still, the most interesting case is related to that small commemorative plaque the Central Station in Naples previously mentioned installed in 2002. In August 2008, after having read Tota's article (2005) on the Train 904 attack, a group of Canadian students attending a summer school on peace and terrorism at the University of Siena in Italy who were interested in the bombing and its commemoration went with their Canadian professor Joseph Fletcher to visit the Central Station in Naples. When they arrived in Naples, they looked for the commemorative plaque but discovered that it had been removed. No one in the Central Station knew anything about the plaque or about Train 904. After finally finding a railway worker, he explained to the group that the plaque had been removed because the railway station was under renovation. Surprised the Canadian professor asked him where exactly the railway station was 'under renovation' because they could not see any workers inside the station. The railwayman replied, "Just that wall, where there was the plaque, was under renovation." Even, such a small commemorative plaque was a too powerful sign of commemoration for camorra and it had to be removed. However, now the plaque is again at its place in the Central Station and it represents with its few words a small tribute in memory of those citizens of Naples who lost their lives in the bombing.

Total cultural amnesia is at work in reference to the terrorist attack on Train 904. Its inscription in public discourse is almost impossible. All attempts to create symbols of memory have not succeeded. As it occurred less than 30 years ago, many of the survivors are still alive as are many of the victims' relatives. There are collective and individual memories of the event, but there is not any 'social memory', (Halbwachs, 1968), not any 'cultural memory', (Assmann, 1992), not any 'public memory'. (Phillips Kendall, 2004) As camorra is involved, the violence never fully stopped. The place of violence cannot be tranformed into a place of collective remembering. It cannot be

reloaded with new meanings. In this case the cultural trauma process cannot be carried out in either the legal and political arenas, nor can it be carried out in the artistic ones. Coming back to Alexander's model (2004), it would be misleading to say that a carrier group able to work through the representation of the event is missing. The very problem here is that violence is ongoing and its cessation is a necessary, even if not sufficient, condition for reloading the space of violence with new meanings. The carrier group cannot project the trauma claim to the audience, simply because they risk their own and families' lifes. In this case the fact that something that most citizens know of (the terror attack) cannot be mentioned in the public discourse becomes the symbol of the power of camorra in that geographic area. The citizens' silence is the tangible sign of how camorra can be seen to be more powerful than the state in that part of the Italian territory.

While in the first case analysed in this article (state terror) the counter-memories ultimately contribute to making democracy possible, in ones of like the second case (Train 904) the public denial of the trauma is strategically used by camorra and mafia to reaffirm the power of the criminal organization in that region, forming a kind of 'counter-state'. The 'politics of regret' cannot be applied to this case. (Olick, 2007) The state does not have enough power. It does not have the territorial sovereignity. The question that arises is the following: who has the control over the recent Italian past? Who has the power to recall what happened and who lacks the opportunity to tell the truth?

In this second case there are still individual and collective memories, but any form of social memory (in Halbwachsian sense) is missing. But what will happen when the survivors and the victims' relatives die? Over time the individual and collective memories do not resist 'official' memories if they are not embedded and sustained through cultural forms (symbols, commemorative practices, etc). In this case, that past will become invisible. It will be latent, invisible, but will remain there as active agent, as active force to be prompted suddenly one day, to be rediscovered and reactualised. This is a strange quality of trauma. At what level and where do traumatic events continue to exist, even in invisibility?

Perhaps we could imagine that places were violent actions occurred have their own memory – a memory of the place and the space - where information is stored independently from the fact that some individuals remember them. Why do we say that we have to rember the past to avoid its repetition? Why does the invisible, the

forgotten past come back? What kind of relationship is there linking the past, the present and the future? These questions are very difficult to answer and they are open issues for future debate. The fact that they are difficult should not prevent us from further invetigating them.

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