

EMBRACE

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EMBRACE

ISSUE #4 - SUMMER 2019

A LITTLE HOMMAGE TO ALL THE THINGS WE LIKED THIS YEAR

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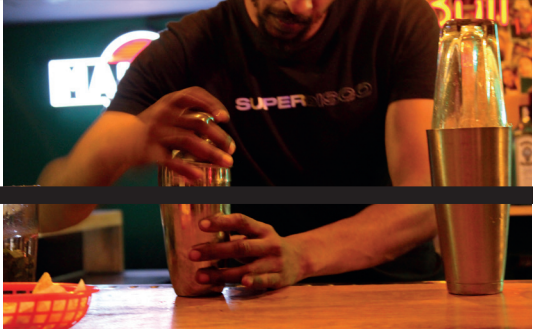
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EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dear reader,

In this issue we look back on an intense but awesome year here at ACE. As your chairman, it has been my pleasure to see new faces get sucked into the social vortex of the association, and see committees organise new and inspiring events.

I'm happy to say that this was one of the best years of my life up until now. I'm more than glad to have met a lot of new people, and be a part of the successful Career Days and DIVE Festival. Every committee member that took part in organising events has more than met my expectations with their incredibly hard work and fun ideas. I was always



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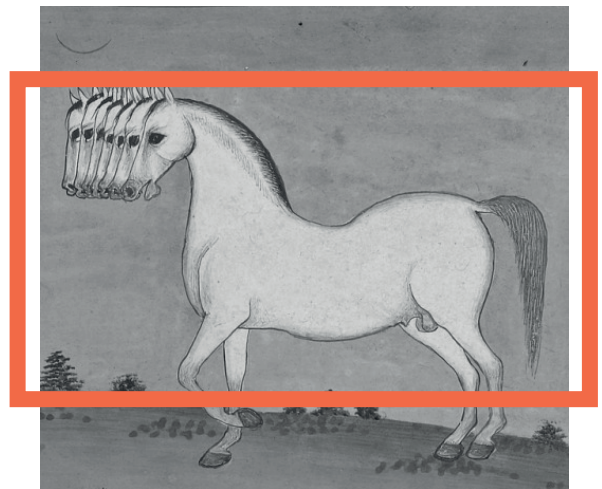
excited to be at the social drinks and see which members of the ACE family were there, and hope to be present at many more in the coming years.

As your editor-in-chief, I was happy to give a platform for creativity and free thinking for the writers at our faculty. Whether somebody wanted to talk

about travel, or Bratz, or outsider art or food; there was always space for them here at EmbrACE. I want to thank the team of editors for their hard work and Maud for her awesome design skills.

Now, looking to the future, I'm happy to say that I think the 38th board will do even better than us. New and old members will find even more events organised and more space for them to find a social life and professional and academic opportunities at ACE.

When I write this, it's the end of July and we can look forward to the Eureka-week, where hopefully a lot of new members will find us and find a family. After that, a busy schedule in September will make sure that those who do sign up are welcomed into the faculty and the association, and will make sure that the first weeks of school will fly by!



Thanks to all the people that read EmbrACE this year, including you, dear reader. I'm happy to give the position to my successor and I'm excited to see what she'll make of it.

To those reading this at the beginning of the new academic year: Good luck and make everyday worthwhile!

With love,

Robin van den Bovenkamp-Roos



A WORLD CUP WITH TWO HANDLES

ON JOY, HOPE, ONLINE HATE AND SEXISM IN THE 2019 FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

BY SARA HAVERKAMP

With great joy I have been closely following the Dutch national women's football team during the past few weeks in their endeavour to conquer the FIFA World Cup 2019 in France. Either on television, behind my laptop screen, on my phone during a university tutorial and even once in Stade du Hainaut at the team's second match versus Cameroon in Valenciennes; I was sure not to miss any of the games. It only added to the sensation that no match was lost or ended in a tie, until the team stranded in the final against the United States of America. Most memorable about the tournament I found was the march towards the stadium in Valenciennes, in which I was only a fraction of the orange sea cheering on the team, celebrating the hype and simply having a good time.

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THE ORANGE FRENZY

After their victory of the UEFA Women's Euro in 2017, the Dutch team - or 'Oranje Leeuwinnen' (Dutch Lionesses), after how they are locally called - has been witnessing an incredible increase in received attention from the Dutch population, critics and the media. The stadiums in which they played became bigger, the attendance of the matches continued to increase, numerous fan

"MY REAL QUESTION IS: IS THIS IS THE FIFA WORLD CUP OR 24 KITCHEN?"

"IT'S JUST SAD WE ARE VALIDATING MEDIOCRITY LIKE THIS."

"SOMETIMES, I'M SO ASHAMED TO BE DUTCH."

WHY AREN'T THEY CLEANING?"

"DOES ANYONE ACTUALLY WATCH THE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP?"

accounts on social media were created and in the run up to the World Cup big brands took advantage of the success through commercials and campaigns.

The enthusiasm heightened the further the team reached and after the final and fatal 2-0 loss that placed them on the number two position, pride dominated over disappointment. However, throughout the tournament I could not help myself but notice how much negativity was disseminated by a number of people, partly online through for instance the comments sections of many World Cup related Instagram posts by football accounts, hateful tweets under hashtags of the World Cup games, and even some people in my own circle expressed themselves oppressively towards the team and their achievements.

ONLINE AND OFFLINE DISDAIN

It is mindblowing to me how far people are willing to go in order to tear others and their passions down. From the very first match – which, ironically and like almost all others, was won by the Dutch team – the players and their fans who followed them to France were figuratively spat upon by online prejudiced expressions of condemnation and did not get a chance to prove themselves. When looking at the festivities in the cities the the women were playing in, people said that they despised being part of the Dutch nationality while looking at videos of the marches. Others oversexualised the players, visible in countless comments on their appearances and the tightness of their uniforms, in the columns titled ‘Best Looking 11’ of the entire World Cup, and in the search results of ‘Oranje Leeuwinnen relationships’ or ‘boyfriends’ popping up

instantly while only typing in the first letters in Google. And do not even get me started on all the comments and tweets about the players needing to go back to the kitchen instead of playing football, or on any other type of traditional stereotypes that has been placed upon them by male Instagrammers or Tweeters with a single click. The sexism is honestly out of this world.

Not solely on these social media platforms were the players, fans, and the entire tournament denigrated to the fullest extent, I experienced it in my immediate surroundings as well. A friend of mine called a certain player his ‘Woman of the Match’ while she had not even played long nor very well, just because he thought she was ‘hot’. Another one – fully aware of my perspective regarding this subject – sent me a video of one of the American players ‘twerking’ in the dressing rooms after having won the World Cup and merely kept laughing off everything I said whenever I tried to spark up a discussion about the topic. All of these examples illustrate how it is really in the small things that cause women’s football to be different from not just the men’s part of the game, but from other sports in general, exactly because they are continuously subject to comparisons

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“THEY MIGHT HAVE WON, BUT THEIR PARTNERS ARE SITTING AT HOME RIGHT NOW, CRYING AND STARING AT THEIR MICROWAVE MEALS: “SHIT, ANOTHER WEEK OF THIS...”

“[DUTCH PLAYER] CONQUERS MANY BALLS THESE LAST FIVE MINUTES.” SLUT.

“KEEP THE WOMEN CONTENT ON YOUR OTHER INSTAGRAM PAGE, PLEASE!”

“I’M GLAD THE MATCH BEING PLAYED AT AN EARLY TIME; THEY WILL BE BACK IN THE KITCHEN BEFORE DINNER.”

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“NETHERLANDS VS. JAPAN: ARE THEY GONNA MAKE SUSHI?”

“CAN’T THEY JUST GO BACK TO COOKING MEATBALLS? MAYBE THEY CAN CONTROL THOSE AT ONCE.”

**AFTER THE LOST FINAL: “FINAL-
LY, RELIEVED OF THIS TERRIBLE
HYPE.”**

that they are not in control of, but yet so inclined to change. Until that time comes, I hope with my entire heart that these players have managed and will continue be able to shelter themselves from this side of the job and focus on the better aspects of it.

CONTESTING EVERYTHING

Eventually, everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but what I found striking is that most of these vicious statements were sexist, discriminatory, or prejudiced by nature, predominantly directed at either

the female players themselves or their level of play. Football being a ‘men’s sport’ is an often heard argument as people continue to compare men and women based on their abilities in the sport. I think it is to be considered common knowledge that due to physical differences, times of emergence, investments of money and efforts throughout time and so



on, the differences between men's and women's football are large regarding all aspects. There is simply no denying that. Whether we are talking about capabilities, achievements, technical skills, payment, attention, media coverage, the men's world is more of the better in everything according to many. It is in the way people approach and treat these gaps that make the differences relevant to them, though. Who decides that men's football should be the norm? If the unsatisfied were to consider both men and women in football separately without the endless comparison, statistics and consecutive annihilation of the latter gender, at least the football world would become a little kinder, the people throwing around hate would have one less thing to be bitter about, and the female players could start focusing on beating their opponents instead of simultaneous and omnipresent prejudice and waves of unfounded criticism.

WINNING THE WORLD

On a final note, there were many good reactions as well – both online and offline. So many people have found inspiration in the fighting spirit of the team and young players can add a bunch of role models to their list of heroes. Given all the attention this World Cup has evoked, it is fair to state that regardless of positive or negative response, women's football has once again gained international prestige. Despite many people calling it the worst names, it should never mean that the girls should not play. They have the right to show what they are worth and what they can achieve in the world of football on their own terms, without being constantly compared to their male counterparts, oversexualised, or unreasonably condem-

“I’D RATHER WATCH THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS OF CHECKERS.”

“NOBODY GIVES A SHIT, STOP FORCING WOMEN’S FOOTBALL, IT’S BORING AS HELL.”

“THESE MARCHES AND CELEBRATIONS ARE JUST CRINGE FOR DUTCH PEOPLE.”

“[DUTCH PLAYER] IS ALWAYS KICKING TOO HARD. IS SHE TRYING TO GET HER THONG BACK ON CORRECTLY?”

THE LOST ART OF MEMORY

PALACES

BY MAX PEETERS

Within the next few paragraphs I will be outlining how you (yes you!) can memorize nearly anything effortlessly. The internet suggest one eat less added sugar, drink less alcohol, get enough sleep etc. to improve their memory. I call this: useless. Thus, if you happen to be a sugar induced alcoholic reading this, or a student all the same, I will be teaching you something much more useful; namely, memory palaces.

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Is humans have come to evolve within the era of information technology, many skills we once possessed have become obsolete. Take shorthand writing for example, a lightning fast way of denotating information based on phonetics (sounds) rather than grammar. With the advancement of the typewriter this skill exists but in the minds of very few. Memory palaces are a similar feat; nearly wiped out by the church due to being seen as unholy.

Our brains can be seen as containing a conscious part (such as the fact that you are aware of having chosen this article to read), and an unconscious part (such as the fact that you are getting really aggravated at the fact I don't just sum up how to magically remember stuff in a few basic sentences... this is now conscious to you though). The problem is, our conscious brain can only handle a few things at once, while our unconscious brain is seemingly limitless in this regard. Take for example the Memory Olympics, a yearly event where a group of memory athle-

tes compete for title of Memory World Champion. In this competition one has, for example, 1 hour to memorize as many packs of playing cards as one can. The world champion in this event has managed to recite 1924 playing cards in order without mistakes, having memorized them in under an hour. How you might ask? By utilizing the unconscious part of our brain!

It could be argued the part of our brain used for visualizing things is much older, and therefor deeper rooted, in our mental processes. This is largely what we are going to be playing around with. A memory palace is a place you know well. This could be your home, a route you are familiar with; such as how to get to the nearest



liquor store, or another place. Regardless of where you might be thinking of, it should be very vivid in your mind. Let's take the example of your home. Each object in your house is going to represent something you can link knowledge to. It helps if these objects don't move location and are placed at least a few feet apart. Say you have to memorize the following shopping list; eggs, milk, wine, and avocados. You are now going to link each food item with something along a set route in your memory palace. For this we can make up the following visual:

Eggs! You open the front door to your home to find your housemate dressed in a pink bunny costume throwing eggs at you while screaming "It's Easter!!". You know very well it's not Easter. Confused, you walk on to find someone has spilled sour milk all over the hallway floor. It reeks, and you swear you can see bits of mold floating in the mess. Yuck! You continue on to see (in this case) a large houseplant and it's on fire. Your second housemate stand next to it smoking a cigarette. "Oops" he murmurs, "My bad". He pulls out a bottle of red wine and pours it onto the plant to douse the fire. At least the room doesn't smell like sour milk anymore. You hear some rumbling and look out the window to find it hailing avocados. People are fleeing the streets and car windows are being smashed by the minute. Thank god I'm a student and can't afford a car, you think to yourself.

You can use seemingly idiotic passages like these to help you remember not only shopping lists, but also vocabulary, dates (though you will need a system for this), just about anything really. If the visuals don't stick in your mind they weren't vivid enough, a good trick is to use all your senses and try to make the visual exotic.



What you are in fact doing is coding this newly acquired information, such as the shopping list, into the unconscious part of your brain where, due to being connected to information you already possess, it will be easier to retrieve. Long live the sugar induced alcoholic inside of you!

OLGA & PABLO: A BIOGRAPHY ON CANVAS

BY JULIAN BELTRAN

Artistic genius is not easily measured and it is highly subjective. The definition of those who create great art which is worth of notice changes with time and paradoxically also follows fads and fashions. In fact, most political figures, artist and even celebrities in recent times, are highly dependant on the social environment that glorifies them, validates and ultimately selects them as being worthy of a place in the canon of their respective fields or even in the canon of human life. These social

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forces tend to mystify those chosen few, raising mere humans to the status of deities. Pablo Picasso, the Spanish artists, who ultimately became one, if not the most, renown figure in the history of modern art, is what everyone calls a genius. His ability to deconstruct the anatomy of all living creatures as well as challenging the traditional perspective of three dimensional space made him the legend he was, is and will most likely continue to be. However, there is always much more to a man or woman who makes history and transcends their lifetime. Picasso was a complicated figure. In fact, artistic prowess was not the only ingredient running through his veins, he was ill tempered, highly introspective as well as having various lovers and mistresses.

I recently visited an exhibition that caught my eye because it wasn't about Pablo himself. Instead it was about Olga Picasso, his first wife. A celebrated Russian ballet dancer, she served as the source of inspiration to the artists in what some call his most most formative years. In the early stages of their relationship, Olga is depicted as a pensive and beautiful young woman. This period of the couple's life coin-

cides with Picasso's classical period and in fact shows his masterful skills in a more figurative portraiture style than the cubist compositions which he is known for. The show, on display at CaixaForum Madrid, starts with Pablo's first portraits of Olga, depicted in soft colours in demure and quaint scenes. The works transmit an air of mystery and intimacy, showing Picasso's efforts to unearth the essence and character of his wife and his many attempts at capturing it on canvas. Interestingly, the works transmit an air of love and admiration and make the paintings that much more personal. At one point going through the first set of galleries I had the feeling that I was not supposed to be looking at these images, as if I was intruding on someone's personal journal. The pair's marriage coincides with the start of Pablo's career, which rapidly reached

the echelons of the art world and made the couple highly valued company in the highest of circles. However, prior to the fever-like obsession of the art scene for Picasso's work, Olga and Pablo lived a somewhat regular life living in various European cities as well as having their only son Paulo. The exhibition includes many personal pictures and letters of the couple which, in my case, had a demystifying effect on Picasso. They humanise him and make him feel more real than he normally is portrayed as. As a matter of fact, Picasso's work on display echos this more human side. The affection and familiarity of the portraits and compositions which include Olga have depth to them that is sometimes hard to find when seeing work by incredibly famous masters. The expectation of their art being genius or magnificent takes away from a more raw-interaction of their work.



Moving through the show, the tone of the paintings also changes, during Olga's pregnancy, she is depicted in goddess-like compositions and resemble some sort of visual thank you notes from Pablo to Olga. However, the latter part of the exhibition has a more dire tone. It parallels Picasso's fame as well as his increasing infidelity on Olga. At this point of their lives, their relationship has deteriorated and their connection and bond has been reduced to bare scraps. Moreover, Picasso's relationship to Maria Therese Walters redirected his artistic production of portraits and compositions that starred her. The occasions when Pablo painted Olga became more and more rare. The few compositions of Olga turned rather monstrous, giving her thinning hair, decrepit teeth and transforming her figure into an unidentifiable mass. These paintings are highly expressive too but in a different sense than his earlier pieces. They show Picasso's deep animosity and bitterness and a sort of violence towards his marriage to Olga and reduce her to a formless monster. This deep change in the depiction of his wife is, in my opinion, a visual exploration of the artist's emotions and worries. His failed marriage and love of others transforms into vibrant colours and amorphous figures. A sort of violence jumps from the artists onto the canvas as if vilifying his wife or coming to terms with the fact that their love has come to an end. The exhibition ends with Picasso's last portraits of Olga, all of which can be thought of as gruesome compositions of love turned into hate.

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The CaixaForum show was a biographical take on the life of Pablo by way of Olga. She was a muse turned monster thanks to the mercilessness of Picasso's love of women. To me, the show had a humanising effect on Pablo Picasso.

It made me realise that, like most historic figures, Picasso was just a man, not anything more, who had an incredible talent for aestheticising and depicting the world around him through his own vision. His work serves as an archive of his feelings and perceptions of others and as such they portray the flaws as well as the virtues of the artist and his subject matter. After all, people who are revered and admired by society have all sort of problems and might not have the most notable moral compass. However, I do not think that those who make it into history books should be saints or moralist, of course many are there and thankfully they keep our social conscience in check, as most of them are not either of those things. But if they are representative the human experience then they are to be as flawed and damaged as those who will read about them in future generations.

COUPE DU MONDE FÉMININE DE LA FIFA

BY MILAN WEBER

Personally, I consider myself a football fanatic. I attend lots of games, spend weekends with friends in multiple football stadiums and a few times a year I actually travel abroad because of football. I must admit that until recently I only watched men play football. That changed a few weeks ago when the Dutch women's team played against Cameroon in Valenciennes, France.

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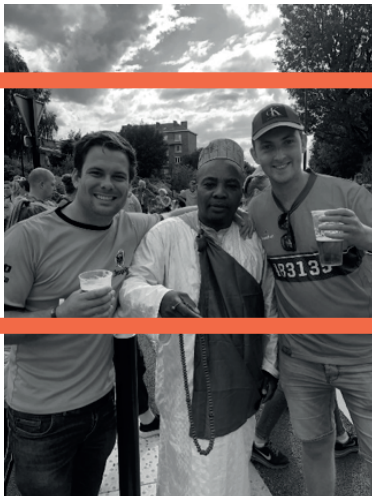
The thing that really attracts me – besides the game of course – is the atmosphere football brings forth. I really love to see sons and fathers walking all together from the pubs to the stadiums. Wherever you go, you see a pattern of predominantly men attending football games. I won't say that women do not watch men's football but the overall activity of watching a game carries a masculine character. For that reason, I wanted to see one of the games the Dutch women had to play in France for the World Championship. The one against Cameroon was best suitable because Valenciennes is just 15 kilometres below the Belgium border. Approximately 15.000 Dutch supporters travelled to France. Another 2,2 million people watched the game on television. It won't be misleading to say that this World Championship finally gained the attention women's football deserves. However,

not all nations competing in this tournament are as enthusiastic as the Dutch.

In terms of audience ratings, this Women's World Cup tournament definitely proved to be an important event in which the tournament turned out to be immense popular for the first time. Approximately 6,1 million people tuned in to watch England versus Scotland. However, the English, who are famous for travelling abroad to support their squad, didn't live up to that tradition during this women's tournament. They played their game in a half-filled stadium. A clear sign that women's football in general definitely increased its popularity but it is still not the same as men's football. Although we have seen some well-filled stadiums when the Dutch or the French played their games, the same cannot be said for other matches that have been played. Why is women football still not as popular as men football?



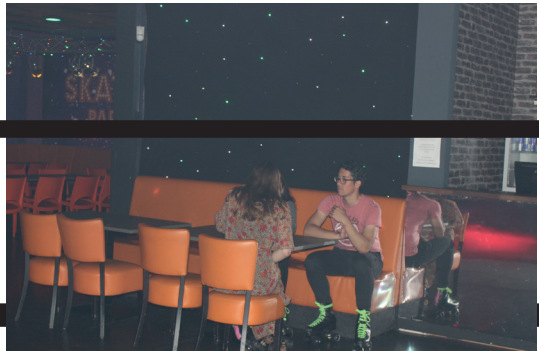
It might have to do with the fact that women football took off later in comparison to men football. Only after 1971, football for women was officially recognised in the Netherlands and in many other nations, women's football was even prohibited for a long time. A tradition of attending football games grew amongst people but this was all about men's football. The support to local and national football teams shaped cultures and identities. This development started more than a hundred years. For that reason, men's football is still more popular in comparison to women's football. However, for how long will this be the case?

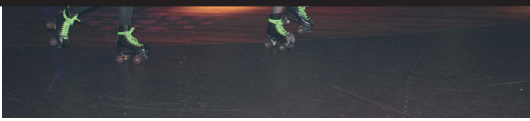


Some important developments are going on in the world of football right now. For example, public broadcasting companies spend as much attention to women's football as men's football. A general spirit spreads around Europe that a football club isn't complete without women's teams. Some clubs pay women the same amount as the men within their club. Those developments are important, for it assures that women's football is taken seriously. Fan support, as a consequence, is growing as well. Supporting a women's team is a great opportunity for those who no longer feel welcome inside a football stadium where a men's game is played. I experienced a very relaxed atmosphere around the game we attended. No away areas, no rivalry, no violence towards your opponents, all supporters were united. I really hope that this will remain the same in the future and that the support will grow. There is a bright future for women's football and many more people will become a supporter if they experience what I experienced.



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MEMORIES OF WWII: BRITISH COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

HISTORY OF THE XXTH CENTURY - RESEARCH PAPER (APRIL 27TH, 2018)

EMMA DAILEY

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Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* (2017) won several Oscars on March 4th, 2018. The success of this film on the 1940 evacuation of Dunkirk, is a testament to the endurance of Britain's collective memory of the Second World War (WWII), and tangible evidence of its prevalence in British society to this day. But while pop-culture is riddled with such examples, it is paramount, while contemplating the topic of memories of WWII, to have a firm grasp on the theoretical framework. The term 'collective memory' or 'mémoire collective' was popularized in the XIXth century, the concept was introduced in French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925, in his book *La mémoire collective* ¹, based on ideas of his mentor Emile Durkheim. Indeed, in the words of Barbara Misztal,

“Durkheim’s belief that every society displays and requires a sense of continuity with the past and that the past confers identity on individuals and groups allows us to see collective memory as one of the elementary forms of social life.”²

As such, while Durkheim demonstrates the role that a societies past has in creating the sense of collective identity, with memory being understood as

“the normative transmission, which links the generations of the dead with the generations of the living in the constitution of a society”³

as defined by Schils, Halbwachs posits that societies have a collective memory, rooted in the group framework of society. This leads to the understanding of history of individual being influenced by group consciousness. The term 'collective memory', sometimes referred to as 'cultural memory', therefore designates this shared pool of information held in the memories for more members of a group. It is often made tangible through the process of 'memorialization', the “process of social remembering”, or “how social groups retain, alter and reappropriate social memory”⁴ which tells us about how the past has been remembered. This is done through the construction of mo-

¹ Halbwachs, M. (1950) *The Collective Memory*, trans. F.J. Ditter and V.Y. Ditter, introd. M. Douglas. London: Harper Colophon

² MISZTAL, BARBARA A. “Durkheim on Collective Memory.” *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 1 July 2003

³ Shils, E. (1981) *Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

⁴ MISZTAL, BARBARA A. “Durkheim on Collective Memory.” *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 1 July 2003

numents, the angles and focus of media and government communications, and the overall discourse held by society, in both the public and private sphere.

But the pool of shared information, the collective memory, is a selective one, inevitable made less accurate by the impossibility of a pure and accurate history, the limited capacity of humans to gather and retain information, and the pervasiveness of human bias, malicious or not. The events that stand out to the collectivity are given a myth-like quality, and become firmly implanted in the collective memory. As such, collective memory is intertwined with this process of mythologisation⁵. The cautious use of terminology is important to keep in mind while discussing the sensitive topic that is a societies past. Indeed, while ‘myth’ which means a widely held but false belief or idea, and therefore ‘mythologisation’ is a word laden with suggestion, error and the spectre of purposeful deceit, self-inflicted or otherwise, the term ‘collective memory’ avoids such connotations⁶. While the constructed narrative of the past may exaggerate some aspects and omit other inconvenient, facts, unsettling images and events, the result is not pure fiction, but rather one coherent story out of many possibilities. This storyline remembered by society, has profound impact on society and politics, both internal and external, and is therefore never totally fixed, but always remains open to reworking and reinterpretation to suit the needs of each succeeding generation.

⁵ Grant, Liam. “The Second World War.” History Class. The Second World War, Sept. 2015, Singapore, Lycée Français De Singapore

⁶ “History, Memory, and the Representation of Britain’s Experience of Strategic Bombing in Survey Textbooks.” History, Memory, and the Representation of Britain’s Experience of Strategic Bombing in Survey Textbooks - Страница 2, kzdocs.docdat.com/docs/index-443.html?page=2.

So how has WWII, arguably the most traumatic events of the XXth century in Europe, entered the collective memory of Great-Britain, a key member of the Allies? What does this process of memorialization and mythologisation tell us about British society, and what impact has this collective memory had? We will explore the memory of what we will call the ‘mythological triad’⁷ of war in the psyche the British population: the evacuation of Dunkirk, the ‘battle of Britain’, and ‘the Blitz’. These episodes have been placed in chronological order but also in increasing order of impact and importance. In each case, we will first analyse evidence of the mythologisation and memorialization process, nuance this perception via comparison to different historical readings, and attempt to investigate the lasting effects of this collective memory on the perception of following events in the war narrative but also domestic politics.

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We will first investigate the the memory of the the evacuation of Dunkirk where 340,000 Allied troops were evacuated using civilian boats, between May 26th and June 4th, 1940, from the beaches of Dunkirk in the north of France after being cornered by german forces.⁸ This episode of WWII is often referred to as the ‘miracle of Dunkirk’, betraying the perception that many still hold, of Dunkirk being a victory in the face of difficult odds. Indeed, the evacuation provoked a “**nation-wide euphoria**”⁹ and

⁷ Angus Calder, The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945 (1969)

⁸ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. “Dunkirk Evacuation.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 21 Sept. 2017, www.britannica.com/event/Dunkirk-evacuation.

⁹ “History - Fight on the Beaches (Pictures, Video, Facts & News).” BBC, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/history/topics/fight_on_the_beaches.

“Each successive boatload that came in safely seemed so precious and triumphant that British morale soared out of the jaws of death”¹⁰

in the words of the original 1940 Times article. Civilians further viewed this even in a positive light due to the fact that the Allied forces were perceived as having successfully escaped ‘right under the noses’ of Axis forces, and that this victory was credited to the involvement of British civilians, supplying and navigating boats despite Luftwaffe raids as vividly portrayed the original ‘Times’ article:

“Inside the blazing line of warships lay transports of every description, from big merchantmen and passenger steamers to channel ferries, private yachts, fishing smacks, tug-drawn coal barges. Over these craft wheeled swarms of German high bombers, down at them plunged wedge after wedge of dive-bombers.”¹¹

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The very same image is conjured by Christopher Nolan’s film. Furthermore the idea of a shared acknowledgement of the civilian duty to participate epitomized with the actor Dave Thewlis playing Mr. Dawson, an average inhabitant of Portsmouth out on his pleasure yacht, who after being told by a downed Royal Air Force Pilot (RAF) he has just rescued from his sinking plane “You should be at home!” retorted, “there won’t be any home if we allow a slaughter across the Channel.”¹² Dunkirk was therefore hailed as a jubilant

10 Rothman, Lily. “World War II Dunkirk Evacuation: Read TIME’s 1940 Report.” Time, Time, 25 May 2017, time.com/4789230/dunkirk-france-world-war-ii-time-report/.

11 Ibid

12 Dunkirk (2017), Christopher Nolan

victory, made possible by civilian involvement, to keep up civilian morale up. This vision is problematic in that an evacuation is not a military victory, and over 30,000¹³ men died. Moreover, very consequential military material was abandoned on the beach for German forces to claim. This perception was only slightly nuanced by Churchill’s landmark ‘We will fight them on the beaches’ speech¹⁴ that most Britons can recite to this day. In the speech, he hailed Dunkirk as “A miracle of deliverance” but nuanced this perception saying “Wars are not won by evacuations” and acknowledging the “colossal military disaster” that had just occurred. Lastly, the Dunkirk Memorial to those that could not be evacuated and died, was only opened in 1957¹⁵, demonstrating a resistance to acknowledging the scale of failure.

As a result, we see that the memorialization of an overly optimistic vision of the events at Dunkirk took place through language, with a plethora of memorable articles and speeches of the time, that have been perpetuated in the rhetoric of most WWII films to this day, most notably, Dunkirk (2017). This seems a natural process, and

“these incorrect memories seem to stem from a desire to remember the war in neater, rosier terms than the actual timeline reveals.”¹⁶

13 Churchill, Winston. “We Shall Fight on the Beaches.” *The International Churchill Society*, The International Churchill Society, 13 Apr. 2017, winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches/.

14 Ibid

15 “Dunkirk Memorial.” Dunkirk Memorial, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2018, www.cwgc.org/find/find-cemeteries-and-memorials/2082800/dunkirk-memorial.

16 “History - Fight on the Beaches (Pictures, Video, Facts & News).” BBC, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/history/topics/fight_on_the_beaches.

The effect of this memorialization of this is visible in its keeping up of British morale during the next main struggle, the 'Battle of Britain' (BoB) as we will now see.

After the fall of France, the Luftwaffe repeatedly attempted to gain air superiority over the English Channel, which would be the first step conducive to invading the United Kingdom. The BoB was the successful defence of British airspace by the RAF from July to October 1940, that protected the UK from invasion 'against all odds'.¹⁷ Just like at Dunkirk, the image of

“Britain as the plucky underdog”

, or

“plucky Little Britain, David against the Goliath of Nazi Germany. (...) backs-to-the-wall amateurs, with those young and gallant Few the last line of defence against the mighty”¹⁸

, as put by author James Holland, remained. This idea that the RAF was at a disadvantage, but came out victorious despite the odds, is inaccurate, but extremely pervasive. Indeed, Churchill's rhetoric entrenched in the British psyche first and foremost, that the UK was succeeding because of the determination of its fighters but also its people, not because of preparation, and a technological upper hand. The perception that the collective memory of Britain has of the BoB is

¹⁷ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopædia. “Battle of Britain.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 8 Nov. 2017, www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Britain-European-history-1940.

¹⁸ Holland, James. “It's Time to Shatter the Myths of the Battle of Britain.” The Telegraph, Telegraph Media Group, 15 Sept. 2015, www.telegraph.co.uk/history/battle-of-britain/11866425/Its-time-to-shatter-the-myths-of-the-Battle-of-Britain.html.

framed by the idea of the Miracle of Dunkirk, and Churchill's following speech:

“We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender!”¹⁹

In fact, James Holland, author of the recently published, *A War in the West* (2017), explains how

“Britain was far better than that image suggests and won the BoB because it was ready and prepared to fight such a battle. It had the world's first and only fully coordinated air defence system, aircraft production that was out-producing Germany at a ratio of 2:1 and had the mechanisms to fight a protracted war. The Luftwaffe had poor intelligence, was under strength for the task in hand, used poor tactics and only managed to knock out one airfield for more than twenty-four hours in the entire battle.”²⁰

As such, the first instances of mythologisation surrounding the BoB is that of Britain as the underdog facing 'formidable odds'. The second, is that of the RAF pilots being moral heroes of the nation.

¹⁹ Churchill, Winston. “We Shall Fight on the Beaches.” *The International Churchill Society*, The International Churchill Society, 13 Apr. 2017, winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches/.

²⁰ Holland, James. “It's Time to Shatter the Myths of the Battle of Britain.” The Telegraph, Telegraph Media Group, 15 Sept. 2015, www.telegraph.co.uk/history/battle-of-britain/11866425/Its-time-to-shatter-the-myths-of-the-Battle-of-Britain.html.

The creation of the myth framing RAF fighters as heroes began before the BoB. After Dunkirk, Churchill said “**there was a victory inside this deliverance**” and accredited this victory to the air-force²¹, portraying the RAF as “**noble knights**”, creating the “**myth of the BoB before it had even taken place.**”²² This was exacerbated by Churchill’s speech “**The Few**”, given to Parliament on August 20th, 1940:

“**Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. All hearts go out to the fighter pilots, whose brilliant actions we see with our own eyes day after day.**”²³

The vision of British RAF pilots being national heroes seems indisputable. There is only one small addendum on could add to the collective memory of RAF pilots, to nuance the vision of them as ‘white knights’.

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Indeed, British pilots did not only defend the UK, they also flew missions above Germany, bombing urban areas and therefore civilian populations. In *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945*²⁴, historian Richard Overy

“**dismisses the long-held belief ‘firmly rooted in the British public mind’ that Hitler initiated the trend for indiscriminate bombings. Instead, he says, the decision to take the gloves off was Churchill’s, ‘because of the crisis in the**

21 Ibid

22 “History - Fight on the Beaches (Pictures, Video, Facts & News).” BBC, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/history/topics/fight_on_the_beaches.

23 Churchill, Winston. “The Few.” Churchill’s Speech ‘The Few’ August 20, 1940 House of Commons, 1940, www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/thefew.html.

24 Evans, Richard J. “The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945 by Richard Overy – Review.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 27 Sept. 2013, www.theguardian.com/books/2013/sep/27/bom-

Battle of France, not because of German air raids [over Britain].”²⁵

British pilots were therefore also guilty of the same actions that German bombers would be during ‘the Blitz’. This meant that the memorialization of the BoB was delicate. A monument to the British pilots, specifically bombers, would not only bring about more awareness concerning these actions, but could also be interpreted as celebrating actions that, when later reversed during the ‘Blitz’ brought Britain suffering.

Because of this, no ‘Battle of Britain Memorial’ was built after WWII. The initiative to finally build one came from Pilot Officer Geoffrey Page, who was a pilot during the BoB. As a result of his efforts, the memorial was inaugurated by the Queen on July 9th, 1993, in Kent²⁶. That it took over half a century to build a memorial to the pilots shows two things. One that the BoB is so present in the British collective memory that a memorial was not necessary for the memory to remain, and secondly, that the fact that the memory does not correspond to the more factual reality and that questions of morality become involved, created resistance to a formal memorialization process that could potentially distort the collective memory by making the British people think of the RAF pilots as anything other than moral and national heroes. Thus we have analysed the collective

bing-war-europe-richard-overy-review.

25 Grey, Tobias. “Hitler Didn’t Start Indiscriminate Bombings - Churchill Did.” *The Spectator*, *The Spectator*, 23 Oct. 2013, www.spectator.co.uk/2013/10/the-bombing-war-by-richard-overy-review/

26 Website by Plain Design & Total Onion. “The Memorial.” *The Battle of Britain Memorial*, www.battleofbritainmemorial.org/learn/history-of-the-memorial/the-memorial/.

memory and the memorialization process of the BoB, and where Dunkirk affected the perception of the BoB, the BoB would not so much affect British perception of the Blitz, but rather the experience of the Blitz would reframe the memory of the BoB, raising the question of the propriety of such a vehement celebration of civilian bombing.

This leads us to explore the collective memory of our third and final struggle: 'the Blitz', an aerial campaign of sustained bombing of British cities with large populations or industrial centers, from September 7th, 1940 to May 10th, 1941. The sustained and unrelenting bombardment by Nazi Germany was etched into Britain's conscience ever since. The collective memory of the UK has therefore enshrined within itself the "Myth of the Blitz", centering around the ideas that all the people pulled together, that spirits were up as young and old, upper and lower classes mixed through together with high morale under the onslaught of the Nazis. Overy explains that

"this was the first time civilians actually became a part of the front line. The cause of this was the advent of aerial bombardment, which, Overy says, exposed 'the democratic nature of total war, which insisted that all citizens had a part to play.' The idea that bombing could demoralise a population and cause a government crisis had been a topic of hot discussion during the interwar years."²⁷

As a result, wartime propagandas primary aim was to keep the popula-

²⁷ Grey, Tobias. "Hitler Didn't Start Indiscriminate Bombings - Churchill Did ." The Spectator, The Spectator, 23 Oct. 2013, www.spectator.co.uk/2013/10/the-bombing-war-by-richard-overy-review/

tion calm, a message epitomized in the "Keep Calm and Carry On" posters, still popular today. The population's spirits had to be kept up, and the concept of "People's War" and "Blitz Spirit" developed.

The idea that the Blitz created a classless society and social solidarity through a shared experience is largely fantasised. The vast majority of people forced to use public shelters came from the same social background, the greatest destruction was visited upon working class districts surrounding industrial areas, and there was inequality in terms of access to appropriate shelters and ability to escape from the cities. Furthermore, in "The Myth of the Blitz (1991)", Calder examined how the German bombings generated ideas and images of plucky and stoical suffering and resistance that defined post-war Britain's sense of itself; but it also showed that the "chirpy Cockney", "all pull together" stereotypes were partly propaganda which hid the reality of an inequality of suffering due to deep social divisions, and concealed unheroic stories of opportunistic looting and rape."²⁸ To this day, the myth of the Blitz is a framework of belief upon which popular memory about the war largely rests. The 'People's War' used by politicians after the war to legitimise their ideas of the modern British state.

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To conclude, Calder suggests that

"the mythological triad of Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz – are predicated upon the acceptance and internalisation of wartime propaganda,

²⁸ "Angus Calder." The Telegraph, Telegraph Media Group, 12 June 2008, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/2119621/Angus-Calder.html.

and this has led to a particularisation which has not only excluded marginal groups from the public discourse, but has also allowed for a narrow, nostalgic and politically soft collective memory of 1940 which reinforces a certain form of British identity”²⁹.

Furthermore, “History, Memory, and the Representation of Britain’s Experience”, a study by Stephen Heathorn and James Byrne into the way survey history books present Britain’s involvement in WWII found that the textbooks prefer to replicate the comfortable collective memory of WWII ³⁰. For this reason, it is paramount to remain critical of one’s reading of history and become aware of the framework of collective memory one finds oneself in. This is an ongoing process, as collective memory is never totally fixed, but always remains open to reworking and reinterpretation to suit the needs of each succeeding generation, particularly nation-building needs since according to Amanda Machin,

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“National memory ... is constituted by different, often opposing, memories that, in spite of their rivalries, construct common denominators that overcome on the symbolic level real social and political differences to create an imagined community” ³¹.

Interestingly, sociologists today argue that we are witnessing the “erosion of the state’s ability to impose a unitary and unifying framework of memory”³²

meaning that it will be interesting to analyze the changes in collective memories in the coming decades, be it on the topic of WWII in Britain, in Asia, or any other topic.

²⁹ Chisem, James. “Angus Calder’s ‘The Myth of the Blitz’.” E-International Relations, 1 June 2011, www.e-ir.info/2011/06/01/angus-calders-%E2%80%98the-myth-of-the-blitz/.

³⁰ “History, Memory, and the Representation of Britain’s Experience of Strategic Bombing in Survey Textbooks.” History, Memory, and the Representation of Britain’s Experience of Strategic Bombing in Survey Textbooks - Страница 2, kzdocs.docdat.com/docs/index-443.html?page=2.

³¹ Machin, Amanda. “Nations and Democracy: New Theoretical Perspectives (Paperback) - Routledge.” Routledge.com, Routledge, 14 Mar. 2017, www.routledge.com/Nations-and-Democracy-New-Theoretical-Perspectives/Machin/p/book/9781138066540.

³² Nora, P. (1996) ‘General Introduction: Between Memory and History’, pp. 1-20 in P. Nora (ed.) *Realms of Memory*, Vol. 1, trans. A. Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press .

UPCOMING EVENTS

11 SEP

THE GRAFFITI EXPERIENCE

12 SEP

COMMITTEE INTEREST DRINK

17 SEP

EXPLORING ROTTERDAM

31

3 OCT

ACE PUB CRAWL

11 OCT

FRESHMEN WEEKEND





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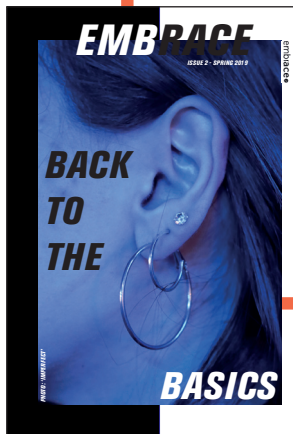


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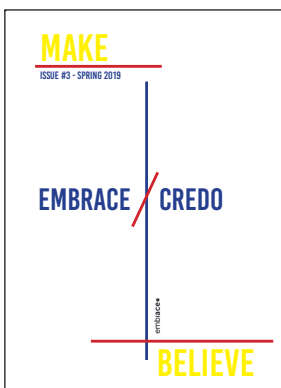


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