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**‘The Erasures, the Silences Where There Should Have Been Evidence’: Dismantling  
Archived History and Dwelling Experience Within the Works of Hilary Mantel**

**Lily Hulatt**

The thesis critically examines Hilary Mantel’s work and its interpretation of the past through literary depictions of dwellings and archives. This thesis explores the concept of the dwelling-as-archive which has the overlapping roles and functions of a domestic dwelling and a historical archive. This thesis investigates this concept as it appears throughout Hilary Mantel’s works. These dwelling-as-archives are also in-between places where memory and historical meaning slip or are hidden. This thesis claims that Mantel’s historical fiction writing is an affective response that questions the ways characters struggle to preserve historical documents in both dwellings and archives. The thesis’ historico-materialist focus on Mantel’s works and dwellings-as-archives argues for a re-historicisation of phenomenology which the thesis defines as a phenomenological approach grounded in historical awareness. Characters attempt to reconstruct an affective experience of the past through domestic objects and archives. The dwelling-as-archives are conceptualised as containers of memory. However, their status as in-between places mean archived objects are frequently hidden, slip, or are waiting to be discovered to re-experience the past. The thesis explores Mantel’s poetic dissembling of the borders between absence/presence, belonging/rootlessness, and private/public that helps expose possible lost historical meaning. The various sites of dwelling examined in this thesis are haunted by memory and the dead, with the inhabitants of such dwellings causing the decay of architectural structures and family homelife. This thesis then examines instances of inscription, intertextuality, and historiographic metafiction in a select number of Mantel’s novels to reveal the archive as an unstable product of familial, national, and institutional historical consciousness. The dwelling-as-archive is a hinterland through which Mantel’s imagination can reconstruct the missing gaps she finds in the historical record. This thesis contributes to a growing critical field of studies on Mantel’s works which includes Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter’s *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (2018) and Lucy Arnold’s reading of spectrality and intertextuality in *Reading Mantel: Haunted Decades* (2019). Recent commercial and critical responses to the *Wolf Hall Trilogy* often do not recognise a literary career spanning twenty-five years from 1985. This thesis then investigates Mantel’s specific challenges when (re)interpreting the past through her imagination and research, with the dwelling-as-archive often a background character in her character’s experience of dwelling and history.



**The Erasures, the Silences Where There  
Should Have Been Evidence':  
Dismantling Archived History and  
Dwelling Experience in the Works of  
Hilary Mantel**

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## List of Abbreviations

### Novels:

<i>EDIMD</i>	<i>Every Day is Mother's Day</i> (1985)
<i>VP</i>	<i>Vacant Possession</i> (1986)
<i>EMOGS</i>	<i>Eight Months on Ghazzah Street</i> (1988)
<i>F</i>	<i>Fludd</i> (1989)
<i>APOGS</i>	<i>A Place of Greater Safety</i> (1992)
<i>ACOC</i>	<i>A Change of Climate</i> (1994)
<i>AEIL</i>	<i>An Experiment in Love</i> (1995)
<i>TGOB</i>	<i>The Giant O'Brien</i> (1998)
<i>BB</i>	<i>Beyond Black</i> (2005)
<i>WH</i>	<i>Wolf Hall</i> (2009)
<i>BUTB</i>	<i>Bring Up the Bodies</i> (2012)
<i>TMATL</i>	<i>The Mirror and the Light</i> (2020)

### Memoir:

<i>GUTG</i>	<i>Giving Up the Ghost</i> (2003)
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### Critical Studies:

*HMCCP* - *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter (2018).

*OEWHM* - *Origin and Ellipsis in the Writing of Hilary Mantel: An Elliptical Dialogue with the Thinking of Jacques Derrida*, Eileen Pollard (2019).

*RHM* - *Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades*, Lucy Arnold (2020).

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Many, many gratitude goes to my supervisor Professor Simon James; for his unwavering support and advice on my thought process and for pushing my critical thinking to go beyond the box. Thanks also to Patrick Gray for advice with regards to this thesis. Also, to my fellow English PhD candidates in ModCon, with a special shout out to Dr Hannah Piercy and Laura Gledhill for reading over chapters.

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Finally, thanks to Hilary Mantel (1952-2022) who sent me on this path one hot day on a stone platform in Montenegro, 2012 with the phrase: ‘I remembered you, Thomas More, but you didn’t remember me. You never even saw me coming.’ Also, thanks to her for saying in 2020 that she will not write another historical novel anytime soon. She will be missed.



*Please, let our next generation lead normal lives. Tell them of our mistakes, and admit to them our regrets.*

**Lost Lives (2019)**

For Rosie, Ian, and Rory

## **The Same is (Not) True of Gloss Paintwork: An Introduction to Hilary Mantel**

But the houses were the backdrop to their lives: they were an important part of life but they were a set where events took place, rather than the principal characters. Now, however, the houses had become so valuable to people who already lived in them, and so expensive for people who had recently moved into them, that they had become central actors in their own right.<sup>1</sup> – John Lanchester, *Capital* (2012).

In ‘The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher’ (2014) a potential precipice of history is about to happen. Hilary Mantel’s counterfactual short fiction explores the disruption that is brought to the neighbourhood, Trinity Place, when Mrs Thatcher receives minor eye surgery there. As the eye surgery is of local and national interest, reporters, TV Crews, and by-passers swarm the area. At the same time, an IRA sympathiser is observing the hospital for different reasons. Posing as a boiler man, the man enters one of the tall houses near the hospital which is owned by the unnamed narrator. The house and the narrator’s bedroom have an accessible ‘perfect view of the hospital garden’ which makes the house desirable to witness Mrs. Thatcher as she leaves the hospital.<sup>2</sup> The neighbourhood, named Trinity Place, triangulates the focus on the short fiction’s three crucial characters, Margaret Thatcher, the Assassin, and the witnessing narrator. The unnamed narrator is a distanced witness to the events of the short fiction, presenting a different perspective than that of the IRA sympathiser and the reporters outside of the house. However, owning the house gives her immediate access to the potential precipice of history. The invasion of the press in the street parallels the invasion of the unnamed narrator’s house after the IRA sympathiser selects it for its perfect view of the hospital garden where Thatcher will soon enter. The simultaneous invasions of private houses and public streets emphasise the pun that runs throughout the short fiction as a ‘great place to get a shot’ (ibid) which becomes a double entendre for recording history and the act of shooting a bullet. Not only is it ‘a great place’ to capture a historical picture of Thatcher leaving the hospital, but it is also a great place to attempt an assassination. This double image of ‘shooting’ a historically significant moment imbues the process of historical recording with violence. In addition to the method of making and recording history, place is also a crucial factor in this process.

In ‘The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher’, there are contrasting perspectives of private and public spaces. The unnamed narrator and the assassin witness events from the

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<sup>1</sup> John Lanchester, *Capital* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Hilary Mantel, *The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), p. 214.

private dwelling, while the reporters remain in the public streets. This contrast between the two spaces and their proximity to the event questions who has the clearest sightline to the historical event– the authority of the press or the house – and whether place matters in the recording of history. The dwelling is unaffected by the disruption in the streets yet remains at the centre of the historical event, making it a crucial viewing point of a history-in-process. In contrast, the newspaper and TV journalists and crews create a sense of dislocation. As they block ‘the street and [park] without permission in driveways’ (p. 210), they limit the organic interchange of information, for their status as official recorders of historical events mean they have an authority to these spaces. However, because the reporters are operating in the public space, they have less access to the historical event of Mrs Thatcher’s assassination compared to the private house. The making and recording of history require no tricks or specialised equipment to convey the historical significance of the moment, which is underlined by the unnamed IRA sympathiser’s proclamation ‘as long as I get a clear view, the distance is a doddle’ (p. 217). The private house’s position decreases the distance between the onlooker and the historical event because it offers the clearest view to the historical event, and to Mrs. Thatcher. The private house would seem to offer a more authentic perspective; however, Mantel complicates this further by revealing the difficulties of capturing history from whichever place you stand.

Another feature of the private house’s importance in the witnessing and recording of history is the shared staircase with the neighbouring private houses. The staircase is a silent place where people and objects can pass undetected. The narrator states that the ‘closed doors annul and muffle the world outside, the cackle of news bulletins from radios, the buzz of the trippers from the top of the town, even the apocalyptic roars of the aeroplanes’ (p. 235). The staircase is an in-between place that lacks clear private or public distinctions. Historical moments and information are lost in this shared staircase. In Mantel’s *Trinity Place*, the staircase is a place of silence, and the neighbours are absent. There is no reception of spoken or written communication in this in-between place because silence prevails. The staircase then offers a certain instability in terms of who can easily pass through the doors, and whether the staircase can capture moments in time.

The narrator states the clear vulnerability of the shared staircase, and the neighbourhood in the recording and retention of information. The narrator implies that the place will disappear into time:

Neither in nor out of the house, visible but not seen, you could lurk here for an hour undisturbed, you could loiter for a day. You could sleep here; you could dream. Neither innocent nor guilty, you could skulk here for decades, while the alderman’s daughter grows old: between step and step, grow old

yourself, slip the noose of your name. One day Trinity Place will fall down, in a puff of plaster and powdered bone (p. 236).

The staircases express a state of ‘neither in nor out of the house’, reflecting the lack of storage capability or archival processes. The knowledge or secrets that the staircase potentially carries or cannot capture will disappear when Trinity Place, the staircases, and the doors disappear. The staircases then signify the contrasting interactions of the narrator and the IRA sympathiser’s discussion and the public’s response to events as they are captured by the press. The discussion around the historical event will also disappear, which is a thematic concern that the narrator addresses when considering the staircase’s vulnerable and ambiguous situation as a recorder of history. On the one hand, the house offers a more ‘authentic’ perspective because of the access it grants to the assassin, not only through its proximity to the historical event in question but also due to its in-between staircases and doors that symbolise the access to ‘different histories [that] lie close’ (p. 237-38). On the other hand, these staircases and doors can represent pockets in which information can become lost.

Doors are then an ambiguous symbol in Mantel’s short story, for they can represent ‘different histories’ that narrators or witnesses of history can access if they open the porous door that ‘obeys no laws that govern wood or iron’ (p. 239). At the same time, doors can remain inaccessible to historical inquiry. They can be closed, locked, destroyed. The doors in the shared staircases, then, offer a possibility of symbolic access into other histories. The narrator in the short story reflects on the importance of doors as potential avenues of historical access since the staircases are a porous container of historical meaning. The narrator states: ‘But note the door: note the wall: note the power of the door in the wall that you never saw was there. And note the cold wind that blows through it. When you open it a crack. History could always have been otherwise. For there is the time, the place, the black opportunity: the day, the hour, the slant of the light’ (pp. 239-40). The immediacy of time and place is enforced by the image of the ‘slant of the light’ that illuminates the in-between places. The door has symbolically opened to the ‘different histories’ in the staircases. The ‘slant of the light’ compliments the Assassin’s clear view into the historical event, an access granted to him by the position of the private house. At the same time, doors allow the illumination of spaces when they open. The presence of the in-between place means that the characters in the short story can uncover silences and the ‘otherwise’ (p. 240) history by looking through doors in the staircase.

‘The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher’ offers an examination into the immediacy of private accesses to the past and the ways historical meaning or witnesses can slip through in-

between places according to what kind of access they have. The Assassin, for example, leaves the hallway after he assassinates Mrs. Thatcher, taking the experience, his and the narrator's shared knowledge of the events, and their prior discussions with him in the process of enacting this counterfactual history. The counterfactual perspectives of the narrator, the assassin, and the British press aids the sense of an 'otherwise' history generating in the in-between place. The narrator, however, retains the immediacy of access of this in-between place of knowledge interchange because she owns the private house with the sightlines and the door into the stairway. The narrator has an important perspective to these events, which brings into question what the meaning and effect the narrator has and why they are the ones telling the story. The narrator is then an archival agent because she is the authoritative voice in the situation due to their immediacy to the events and to Trinity Place. However, the implication of Trinity Place becoming dust in the future means the narrator is aware they cannot go back to this time to retell with full authenticity despite already having the immediacy of the place to give them the clear access to the past. Is it ever possible, in Mantel's dwellings, to capture a historical moment as it truly happened? The in-between place, then, becomes an archival place that collects hints of historical meaning. The immediacy of the 'slant of the light', the potential knowledge that haunts the staircases, and the doors adjacent to the focal private house creates a certain place the thesis calls a 'dwelling-as-archive', which has the overlapping roles of archive and dwelling site.

In her historical and contemporary novels spanning 35 years, Mantel blurs the margins between dwellings and archival places to show how historically meaningful objects and events become missing. Historical meaning changes over time depending on who collects the object for their historical inquiry and in which place or context the object is (re)located. Dwellings, archives, and the overlapping dwelling-as-archive, are bodies of knowledge that Mantel interrogates and dismantles to make sense of the past. In this sense, dwellings-as-archives are containers of the past and historical memory. However, the presence of in-between places in dwellings and archives also represent these containers of the past as permeable and porous sites where historical knowledge and memory escapes or slips.

The in-between places require doors and windows to access the silences and missing gaps within the bodies of knowledge that dwellings and archives offer. In *The Nature of History*, Arthur Marwick outlines the public and private places in which the past has left relics. He states that relics are found in 'the buildings, the cities, the streets which are open to every gaze; less obviously, the billions upon billions of sources of all types which have to be sought

out in libraries, and archives and in archaeological digs. Traces of the past exist too in the memories, traditions and ceremonies which are relayed on from generation to generation.’<sup>3</sup> All human societies ‘betray a preoccupation with their own past,’ and much of what is preserved and ‘passed on from age to age may have only a tenuous relationship to the past as it really happened’ (ibid). Marwick then defines history as ‘an interpretation of the past’ (p. 3). The dwelling-as-archive is the in-between place in Mantel’s works where memory and historical knowledge slip or are revealed. The in-between place is a critical motif that offers the potential presence and the reinterpretation of missing memories or lost historical meaning.

This thesis critically investigates Hilary Mantel’s work and its interpretation of the past. Mantel contributes to literary representations of embodied experience in dwellings and archives, which are often an affective response to dramatic historical events. The focus on bodily autonomy and historical reconstructions explores a historico-materialist approach with serious consideration for a neo-phenomenological argument to outline Mantel’s interpretation of historical fiction. Border theory and genre-bending techniques accompany Mantel’s re-historicisation of her characters’ phenomenological experience of dwellings and archived documents. Neo-phenomenology is a phenomenological knowledge grounded in historical awareness and the performative enactment of the past through objects.

The material of Mantel’s Reith Lectures informs the research focus, which argues that writing history is an interpretative act and questions the fractured ways historical processes are written and conceptualised. This thesis explores several critical theories on historiography and memory that developed when Mantel wrote her novels. The research into such theories does not offer a complete chronological study to fully represent the current debates and views on historiography in 2022. Mantel never focuses long on a single historical period in her twelve historical novels, two short story collections, and a memoir until the Cromwell Trilogy.

Mantel sets her characters in borderless, unstable structures that undergo periods of transition, places that manifest the dwelling-as-archive. The instability and slippage the in-between place offers are a dismantling technique that de-centres the grand patriarchal narrative of historiography, give voice to the voiceless, and reflect the turbulence of the historical change Mantel’s historical characters experience. The mutability in genres and fictional forms in Mantel’s works concerned with the presentation of dwellings and archives are central to the embodied historical experience with which the thesis is concerned.

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<sup>3</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 2.

This thesis offers the themes of spectrality, neo-phenomenology, historiographic metafiction, and the romance of the archive as the main focus in the thesis's investigation of the in-between places in Mantel's dwellings and archives. However, this thesis also draws on various theories from multiple disciplines to examine and make room for the diversity and ambiguity of Mantel's dwellings, archives, and the recording of history. There are multiple interpretations and reimaginings of historical facts in Mantel's works. There are also multiple levels and layers of archiving and experiences of dwellings that complicate readings of historical knowledge, memory, and their containment in such Mantelian dwellings-as-archives. The varied demands of each of Mantel's twelve novels' historical and social contexts around housing and archived memory necessitates a broad range of themes and critical thinking, which the thesis will briefly explore.

## **I. Critical Approaches to Hilary Mantel's Works**

A challenge in investigating Mantel's work is adding to the rapidly growing critical works and thoughts to discussing her fiction and history writing. Recently, the task of exploring Hilary Mantel's fictional interpretation of the past in-depth has been taken on by many critics. New academic works include a contemporary critical perspective anthology by Ginette Carpenter and Eileen Pollard published in 2018, with a follow-up book *Origin and Ellipsis in the Writing of Hilary Mantel: An Elliptical Dialogue with the Thinking of Jacques Derrida* by Pollard in 2019. Lucy Arnold's contribution to Mantel's works is a book-length study named *Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades* (2020), which focuses on spectrality and its political, social, and moral resonances. Tom Chadwick's 2020 article on archival agency in Mantel's first historical novel is another development considered in the thesis, as is Catherine Spooner's chapter on urban Gothicism in *London Gothic: Place, Space and the Gothic Imagination* (2010). In 2015, Jerome de Groot's *Remaking History: The Past in Contemporary Historical Fictions* dedicated a chapter to Mantel's narrative recreation of history. Victoria Stewart examines subjectivity in 'A Word in Your Ear: Mediumship and Subjectivity in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*' (2009). The thesis considers the significance of the works by Lucy Arnold, Tom Chadwick, Eileen Pollard, and Ginette Carpenter as frameworks for investigating the complex ambiguities of Mantel's works.

The critics' ideas have influenced multiple changes of direction in the thesis's focus on the use of the archive in Mantel's works and how often the roles of the archive overlap (or are

overtaken by) the role of domesticity in dwellings. The thesis' take on archival buildings and haunted dwellings as the overlapping and ambiguous dwelling-as-archive places builds on Lucy Arnold, Eileen Pollard, and Tom Chadwick's critical approaches to Mantel's works. Their assessments have supported the thesis' reading of Mantel's writing, especially as frameworks that allow for divergences, further investigation, and the melding of their different theories. The thesis' approach agrees with these critics' assessment of the ambiguities inherent in Mantel's works and joins in the collective uncertainty surrounding how Mantel's works can be labelled.

Exploring the dwelling-as-archive in Mantel's works links Arnold's theories of haunting and spectrality to Chadwick's studies on archival fictions, adding De Groot's assessment of Mantel's affective take on historical writing. In doing so, the thesis draws attention to the need to explore the genre-blending potential of Mantel's works. Examining the existing critical material of Mantel studies also offers different interpretations on which the thesis builds to understand the ambiguous interplay of history and fiction within Mantel's works. Mantel's critics have yet to explore the importance of domesticity and dwellings in-depth. This thesis argues that domesticity and dwellings are intrinsic to Mantel's research approach for writing about the past and exploring the affective response to historical experience and ghostly encounters. There has also been a lack of attention to the dual role of domestic home and archive in these dwellings, with critics preferring the notion of Marc Augé's 'non-place' or the effects of haunting and ghosts in the archive and houses in Mantel's works. Outlining the overlap between dwelling and archive also demonstrates the complex and ambivalent aspects of Mantel's prose and engagement with the past.

The thesis initially postulates that the Mantelian dwelling acts as the metaphorical structure which actively embodies the past despite the fluctuating border between the present and the past. The slippage of historical meaning, ghosts, and memory in these in-between places confirm the presence of lost histories, while asking why those histories have been lost or reconfigured in the historical record. However, these statements are complicated by previous investigations of the spectral and ghostly impact on material objects by Lucy Arnold. Lucy Arnold's *Reading Hilary Mantel* (2020) is the first book-length study covering Mantel's works. Arnold analyses ghosts, spectrality, and the gothic in Mantel's works to explain the complexity and ambiguity inherent in her texts. As Arnold puts it, 'spectrality and the motif of the ghost preoccupy Mantel's work, both formally and textually.'<sup>4</sup> Arnold notes that ghosts are a 'dis-

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<sup>4</sup> Lucy Arnold, *Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), p. 1.



organising principle’, or a disruptive force in Mantel’s works, as well as figures that reveal previously hidden historical knowledge. Arnold posits a distinction between ghosts and spectres to understand Mantel’s many usages of ghosts and ghost-seeing in her works (which are often formal or textual). The many usages respond to a homogenising impulse in critical discourse regarding terms used for haunting and the undead – the post ‘spectral-turn’ from the 1990s as Arnold notes in her introduction of *Reading Hilary Mantel*.

Arnold identifies four different kinds of ghosts in Mantel’s works; first ghosts appear in response to potentialities or decisions not taken. Second ghosts are not necessarily dead human subjects as objects also take on phantasmal existence. Third, the Mantelian ghost makes unknown or unavowed spaces accessible. Finally, ghosts are formed of people from the historical record. Arnold describes ghosts as a ‘phenomenon created through, or metaphorically invoking, persistence after biological death, though such ghosts in Mantel’s work do not necessarily correspond to discrete human subjects.’<sup>5</sup> However, Arnold makes a distinction between ghosts and spectres. Arnold also describes spectres and the concept of spectrality as ‘a denial or lack of full presence (whether visual, auditory, legal, or subjective) which is not predicated in biological death but may be generated by a range of factors such as the closing down of historical and individual potentialities, political and social hegemonies or textual practices itself’ (ibid). The thesis builds on Arnold’s descriptions of ghosts and spectres to claim that houses in all their shapes and forms in Mantel’s works approximately fit Arnold’s description of the spectral.

Houses, flats, mission houses, university halls, and ruins are described in the thesis as spectres under Arnold’s description. Whereas 2 Buckingham Avenue in *Every Day is Mother’s Day* (1985) fits the Arnoldian ghost because it is a decaying physical object, it also doubles as the phantasmal and spectral space where historical meaning shuts down, or the potential recollection of memory is evaded. Thus, the dwelling-as-archive seen in the thesis’s examination of ‘The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher’ is the place where ghosts and spectrality lie. Where Arnold asks, ““where are the ghosts of meaning?” and “what are the meanings of ghosts?”” (p. 2) the thesis identifies the dwelling-as-archive as the in-between space where the ghosts of meaning always lie. The dwelling-as-archive is also a phantasmal space that reveals and disrupts memories and historical meaning.

It is because of these in-between places that historical meaning and memory become slippery and hard to contain. The lack of fixity in these in-between places grants the phantasmal

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<sup>5</sup> Arnold, p. 5.

existence to objects, places, and memories, underpinning Mantel's ambiguous use of home, dwelling, and archives in her works. Houses and public dwellings have many different metaphorical meanings, which the thesis will develop parallel to Arnold's assessment of the different metaphorical meanings of ghosts. The thesis uses the framework of the dwelling-as-archive and the multiple representations it presents in Mantel's works to investigate instances when spectres lie in in-between places, which allows them to disrupt memory and cause its absence while revealing the potentialities of memory's presence.

The thesis also further develops the concept of the haunted house which Arnold touches on in her chapter 'Spectres of Margaret: Thatcherism, care-giving and the gothic in *Every Day is Mother's Day* and *Vacant Possession*'. In the chapter, Arnold explores how domestic and familial decay in the two novels, as Arnold puts it, 'undermine Conservative idealisation of the familial domestic and its ability to provide a care-giving environment.'<sup>6</sup> Arnold assesses that Mantel describes the dereliction of the domestic space in the many forms of dwellings in her first two published texts. Arnold notes that Mantel presents the family home 'as a space that is at best not fit for purpose and at worst on the verge of physical collapse, explicitly undermining the notion of such spaces as havens for care-giving' (ibid). The thesis extrapolates the undermining process described by Arnold and her description of the spectral.

The thesis states that Mantel also presents the family home of 2 Buckingham Avenue as the in-between space where historical meaning dissolves and becomes traces, revealing the absence of memory and the obliteration of familial pasts. *EDIMD* and the family home 2 Buckingham Avenue serve as guiding frameworks for how the thesis investigates all of Mantel's different dwellings and their various metaphorical meanings. Due to their phantasmal and in-between status of dwellings, the thesis views them as duplicitous. They hide ghosts and memory and are often not the secure places they first appear to be. These dwellings and their duplicitous nature by virtue of their multiple meanings then undermine familial relationships, notions of safety, and memory's containment. These Mantelian dwellings also fail to act as domestic havens and archives due to their porous nature. At the same time, these dwellings' inhabitants work in each text to inscribe historical meaning onto these places that nevertheless cement the dwellings' status as archival buildings full of potential familial memories and secrets.

Catherine Spooner also explores Gothicism and ghosts in her chapter '[T]hat Eventless Realm': Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* (2005) and the Ghosts of the M25.' Spooner examines

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<sup>6</sup> Arnold, p. 48.

*Beyond Black's* (2005) presentation of the M25 and London as a gothic hinterland landscape, drawing from Marc Augé's concept of the non-place and terms such as supermodernity. As Spooner states, London and the M25 are 'a dead zone in which community is fragmented and memory lost, swallowed by an affectless consumer culture.'<sup>7</sup> Those living around the London Orbital in *BB* experience a similar fragmentation and memory lost. Ghosts, Spooner states, are traditionally associated with 'locations with a dense historical charge – castles, abbeys, stately homes, places that have seen decades or even centuries of human use' (ibid). Ghost-seeing and haunting in *BB* question whether ghosts can manifest in places with no historical charge such as 'motorways, shopping malls, and gated communities symptomatic of contemporary culture' (ibid). Spooner notes Mantel's use of the 'traditional' ghosts' feelings of dislocation in supermodern places. Highways, shopping districts, and public transport in *BB* represent Spooner's supermodern places. The thesis states that the suburban domestic dwellings of *BB* add to the supermodern buildings presented in the M25 and London. The new-build houses that Alison Hart and Colette share simultaneously have and do not have historical charges which complicates a similar reading of Marc Augé's non-place for the thesis.

Because the new-builds in *BB* share an in-between status with many of Mantel's fictional dwellings, ghosts are more readily found in domestic dwellings. Ghosts easily inhabit houses if they have belonged to families for years, or because such dwellings are recognisable places with similar values of 'home' despite only being freshly built. Spooner claims that 'Mantel's reinvention of ghostly geographies maps the dislocation of an entire society. By relocating the historically rooted urban and rural ghosts of folklore and Gothic narrative into the suggestive non-place of the outer suburbs, Mantel blocks, or reverses, the traditional function of hauntings' (p. 83). The thesis agrees with Spooner's assessment and builds on Spooner's previous quote by adding that the manifestation of ghosts in in-between places in Mantel's works does not deliver a sense of domestic, privately secure place or enhance the sense of recovered familial memory. Rather, ghosts and suburban neighbourhoods illustrate the continuous sense of fragmentation as historical meaning breaks down in these in-between places.

The readings offered here add a further layer of ambiguity to Spooner's reading of dislocation by suggesting that the ghosts' sense of dislocation is more acute because of their

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Spooner, "[T]hat Eventless Realm": Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black and the Ghosts of the M25* *London Gothic: Place, Space and the Gothic Imagination*, ed. Lawrence Philips and Anne Witchard (New York: Continuum Literary Studies, 2010), pp. 80-90, p. 81.

complex relationship with houses (whether they are in suburbia, cities, or rural areas). In *BB*, ghosts offer a confirmation of familial history but only in domestic sites because the fictional new-builds represent the presence and absence of historical meaning and memory. The in-between places in Mantel's works (found in the dwelling-as-archive) are similarly ambivalent places. They make locating and communicating with ghosts difficult because in-between places in *BB* have a different sense of historical charge. While the in-between places are used for decades, they have either not been inscribed or embedded histories, or these histories have been erased. Because of this, in such in-between places, ghosts are difficult to contain or locate. The thesis loosely draws on Spooner's idea of hinterland to identify a new sense of hinterland in Mantel's works the in-between places the dwelling-as-archive represents.

Mantel's characters navigate hinterlands and other in-between places with uncertainty. Characters' uncertainties around their perception of public and private places parallel their uncertain recollections or documentations of witnessed historical events. Tom Chadwick's "'Documentary Evidence": Archival Agency in Hilary Mantel's *A Place of Greater Safety*' assesses Mantel's first historical fiction *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992) as an archival fiction. The thesis claims that all Mantel's texts are variations of archival fiction because they are concerned with the archiving process, or the degree of archival agency that her characters navigate with increasing uncertainty. Chadwick explores Mantel's rooting of, as he puts it, 'a fictional narrative within historical detail' as a central concern for Mantel.<sup>8</sup> Chadwick also notes archival traces in *APOGS* that actively record and produce history as the novel progresses. Chadwick's main argument is that *APOGS* incorporates and revises two fictional strategies (recovered histories and historiographic metafiction) while showing their relation to the theoretical developments of the archival turn outlined in his article.

He identifies three characteristics of archival fiction in Mantel's *APOGS* which the thesis uses as a framework. First, the theme of archiving, and the focus of the novel's setting and plot on how record keeping marks the historical record. Second, that Mantel explicitly constructs the form of the novel from archival documents. Third, as Chadwick puts, 'the theme of archiving and the influence of the archive in the novel's form combine to highlight a particular archival agency' (p. 166). The agency Chadwick notes is the Revolutionary characters' agency over how documents are written and preserved. The same archival agency can impact the characters and destroy their own reputations they have built.

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<sup>8</sup> Tom Chadwick, "'Documentary Evidence": Archival Agency in Hilary Mantel's *A Place of Greater Safety*', *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 31.2 (2020), 165- 81, p. 165.

Chadwick figures the archival agencies as both human and nonhuman, with the nonhuman developed from Gabriella Giannachi's theorisation of the archive as a site of production that can frame human experience. The thesis identifies Chadwick's argument for archival fiction in all of Mantel's works. The thesis theorises that the archive is, in Chadwick's words, not 'a passive storehouse of human history' (p. 167) because of its overlaps with domestic dwellings to become the dwelling-as-archive. The in-between places in *APOGS* are sites where the production and dismantling of historical meaning and memory occur, framing the felt experience of historical events in private homes and the characters' interaction with records and writing historical accounts.

The thesis then builds from Chadwick's work to argue that the characters' uncertainty over their archival agency and the process of archiving is because of the in-between places in Mantel's works. The thesis also adds Suzanne Keen's romance of the archive as another fictional strategy to understand Mantel's fictional representation of the archival agent. Blending the genres of romance of the archive with Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction allows a new focus on the archival places in Mantel's works as an affective source and subject in Mantel's dwellings-as-archive. The dwelling-as-archive is not only an in-between place where memory and historical meaning is preserved or slips. The dwelling-as-archive also shows the ways in which domesticity and familial memory have a certain haunting agency that exceeds the borders of public and private places in Mantel's works. Domesticity is a key motif in Mantel's works that ties the archive, history, and fiction together in one place to better understand the multiple ambiguous interpretations of domestic homes from the past that are missing from the historical record. While memory and historical meaning are absent and present in Mantel's works, senses of home or domesticity are always present in her works. The characters' struggles (in various degrees) to fit into ideals of domesticity serves as a metaphor for their sense of belonging to the historical record and archives.

The affective sense of history and the imagined processes of recording and archiving it in Mantel's works have been explored by Jerome De Groot in *Remaking History: The Past in Contemporary Historical Fictions*. In the chapter 'Reading and Ethics', De Groot explains that Mantel combines self-conscious untruth (the recounting of narrative) and an appeal to trust. It is in this affective sense of the past that the aesthetics of historical fiction lies. Mantel's works constantly strive for a 'reality' while being acutely aware of the aesthetics and presentation of fictional narratives. De Groot states that 'issues relating to obscenity, haunting, fictive doubleness, and the iterations of memory' occur self-consciously throughout Mantel's *Wolf*

Hall (2009).<sup>9</sup> The thesis then develops from De Groot's claim that Mantel's 'treatment of ghosts, affect, repetition, memory, and a personal and deeply felt relationship with the past demonstrates a narrative self-consciousness about the historical fictional mode' (p. 23). The dwelling-as-archive is the motif that links De Groot's assessment of Mantel's *WH* with her other novels.

Mantel's characters' worry about writing the past and maintaining domestic archives, which is not limited to her historical fictions. De Groot's assessment that historical fictions offer multiple interpretations of history, memory, and identity is a useful framework to draw on when considering Mantel's historical writing, particularly in his claim that fiction helps to imagine actual and possible historical or everyday events. Also, as De Groot puts it, historical novels 'force the reader into a temporal disjuncture. They demand a shifting of imaginative time and, most particularly, a recognition of temporal otherness' (p. 15). The thesis uses this idea of the temporal disjuncture De Groot outlines to point to Mantel's in-between places as physical manifestations of the past collapsing into the present. Because in-between places are where meaning and memory slip, the reader experiences the acute absence of the past and hidden memories in the immediate present.

The in-between places posited by the thesis builds from De Groot's other assessment of Mantel's insight into an otherness of the past. De Groot states that 'Mantel also sees the action of writing about the past (or remembering it) as somehow regenerative or like a kind of imaginative resurrection' (p. 19). The thesis draws from De Groot's word choice of 'imaginative' to frame discussions on how Mantel strives for the (re)imagination of the past with the in-between places and her reimagined dwellings. De Groot points to Mantel's affective response to Ralph Sadler's Tudor house, the physical evidence of the past. As De Groot puts it, the house 'translates her sadness and allows her to communicate her emotions' (*ibid*). De Groot notes that Ralph Sadler's house is a vehicle for Mantel's affective response to the past. The thesis also explores dwellings-as-archives as phenomenological vehicles to the past to understand Mantel's particular affective blend of historical writing. De Groot states:

'History' has given her 'paper, brick and stone', but the historical novelist resists this typological definition, looking to find that which has been stored and packed away by that superficial controlling structure. On the one hand, then, this event seems to clarify the difference between a textual (physically structuring) History and the 'emotion' (sense, empathy, comprehension) communicated somehow by the novelist. Mantel and the others cited here create a binary between History and historical fiction, suggesting that their practice disrupts the rational, taxonomizing structure of a totalising – but empty – way of translating the past into the present (p. 19).

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<sup>9</sup> Jerome De Groot, *Remaking History: The Past in Contemporary Historical Fictions* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 22.

The in-between place, the dwelling-as-archive, offers a different place that reveals what has been, as De Groot says, stored and packed away as well as revealing the absences. Mantel writes historical fiction to reconstruct and reimagine the past in domestic and archival places, which dismantles De Groot's usage of the binary terms of History and historical fiction.

In addressing De Groot and the historical writing process, the thesis briefly examines critical thought on historical fiction and the tensions between genres that are purported to be about either fiction or fact. Furthermore, it explores how affective responses to writing the past lead to discovering certain elisions of bodies of knowledge. Historical fiction is well established as a literary genre first popularised by Sir Walter Scott's texts *Waverly* (1814) and *Rob Roy* (1817). Georg Lukács notes that novels with historical themes are to 'be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, too, and [...] one can treat medieval adaptations of classical history or myth as 'precursors' of the historical novel.'<sup>10</sup> Historical fiction is foundational to the history of the novel, which Everett Zimmerman affirms when he states that the novel in the eighteenth century 'constitutes itself from its interactions with history.'<sup>11</sup> Zimmerman claims that historical consciousness is defined 'in Lukács's formulation as a sense of the past that is embodied in or culminates in an event. His focus is on the event's participation in change, as opposed to epistemological or hermeneutical questions about the evidentiary status of, or representational possibilities for, the event' (ibid). Lukács, meanwhile, believes that the novel must uphold fidelity to the 'reproduction of the material foundations of the life of a given period,' and the reader should 're-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel, and act just as they did in historical reality.'<sup>12</sup> The historical novel should link the public historical event with the private lives of historical subjects.

Historical fiction critiques the very structures of a totalising history which, in Lukács's words, means that:

They challenge a deeply ideological sense of temporal identity, challenging hegemonic structures of knowing the now. The strategies inherent in knowing, enacting, and constructing official versions of history are laid bare by the effects of historical novels which attempt to hold within them the actuality and the authority of history, but always, always know, deep down, that they are fabrications.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), p. 19. He also notes that 'the historical novel does not differ from the novel in general [...] its specific problem, the portrayal of human greatness in past history, has to be solved within the general conditions of the novel' (p. 127).

<sup>11</sup> Everett Zimmerman, *The Boundaries of Fiction: History and the Eighteenth – Century British Novel* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 222. Zimmerman also notes that the eighteenth-century novel is a historicised fiction, not historical fiction.

<sup>12</sup> Lukács, p. 167, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> Lukács, p. 16.

From Lukács's assessment, the thesis understands that affective responses to the past, and reimagining it, are a part of categorising historical fiction as a literary genre. De Groot argues that historical fiction challenges the sources of the past because writing history is a performance. He states that 'the past as presented in historical novels is an enactment, a recreation, a performance of pastness: it is a mimicking of a dominant discourse that enables the consideration of other multiplicities of identity and behaviour' (ibid). Sources of the past are filtered, translated, and reordered by the novelist, who transforms history into a fictionalized performance for the reader to interpret.

Mantel's addition of the sensory and embodied experience in the historical narrative, then, blurs the boundaries between history and fiction, making both, as Linda Hutcheon says, 'notoriously porous genres.'<sup>14</sup> Historical fiction's status as the fictionalised performance of the past then allows, calling back to De Groot's words, 'the writer to meditate upon society's strange relationship with the alterity of the past.'<sup>15</sup> Historical novelists often reflect on present society's view of history, their 'duty' when fictionalising the past, or question the 'historical novelist's' description. Emilie Walezak claims that Rose Tremain, Mantel's contemporary and 1989 Booker Prize nominee, disputes 'the alleged escapism of the genre and insists that she aims at confronting contemporary issues even in her historical novels.'<sup>16</sup> Tremain resisted the term historical novelist in an interview with Elena Dedukhina, stating: 'because it implies a shallow kind of fiction, in which the reader can escape completely any obligation to think about the modern world. I believe/hope that, although (some of) my fictions transport the reader to a different time, the human dilemmas we face today are present in the story.'<sup>17</sup> Tremain's *Restoration* (1989) is set during Charles II's reign and, stated in the novel's introduction, is a fictional response 'to the climate of selfishness and material greed that began to prevail in our society during the Thatcher years, from which we have never recovered.'<sup>18</sup> Tremain signals an obligation to carefully explore the current/contemporary perspectives of culture and history.

For Mantel, the translation of the past to the present is part of an ordering process to memorialise and commemorate the dead. This process is the affective response to the unavailability of the past, which Mantel reveals in an interview with James Naughtie in 2013:

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<sup>14</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 106.

<sup>15</sup> De Groot, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Emilie Walezak, 'Satire Revised in Light of Thatcherism in Rose Tremain's *Restoration*', *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines*, 51 (2016), [date last accessed: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020], <<http://journals.openedition.org/ebc/3373>>.

<sup>17</sup> Elena Dedukhina, 'Interview with Rose Tremain', *Knizhnaya Vitrina*, *Wisdom and Sense Web*, [date last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020], <<http://www.wisdom-and-sense.blogspot.com/>>.

<sup>18</sup> Rose Tremain, *Restoration* (London: Vintage, 2009), p. xi.



‘The past is so close, and yet irretrievable, and that has always affected me emotionally.’<sup>19</sup> De Groot states that fiction explores what the sources of the past cannot directly inform the collective and individual imagination, for ‘the recognition of death and disappearance as marking out the past and our relation to it – is constantly attended to and only partially reconciled or repressed through the comforting actions of fiction (all types of fiction, including the ones that societies tell themselves, disguised as “history”)’ (p. 20). Historical fiction then ‘inflects the historical or archival record through consideration of the personal, the individual, the unwritten, the unseen, the unheard and unsaid’ (ibid). The gaps and elisions of the past are played out in fiction as a kind of haunting or doubling, a claim agreed on by most of the Mantelian critics discussed in the thesis.

Eileen Pollard’s chapter ‘Making History Otherwise: *Learning to Talk* and *The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher*’ in *Contemporary Critical Perspectives* points out the nature of gaps and ellipsis in Mantel’s short story collections. Gaps and elisions are often at the centre of the short fictions themselves. Her reading of *Learning to Talk* (2003) is that it is a duplicitous map of Derbyshire, the settings referencing both specific geography and the geography of a particular time (thus making these places imaginary doubles of the ‘real’ thing). Pollard’s reading of the ellipsis and fictional doubles informs the thesis’s reading of the fictional doubles of houses that pervade Mantel’s works. The doubled house increases the sense of knowledge slipping and disappearing because it is an ambivalent structure of fictional imagination and reconstructed experience of dwelling. The sense of duplicity in the dwelling-as-archive is the recognition by many characters that their private dwellings are not the stable containers of memory and personal objects as they would like to think. The body of knowledge is frequently compromised; photos are stolen, newspapers decay, and coats are misplaced. As such, stable identities cannot be maintained in this duplicitous place, and thus the nature of ‘home’ is frequently questioned. Questioning the home (whether a decaying structure or a reimagined place of power) allows the thesis to interrogate how porous archives double as dwellings, and whether this overlap causes memory elisions or slips.

Pollard further explains elisions and slips in Mantel’s works in her book *Origin and Ellipsis in the Writing of Hilary Mantel*. She notes multiple themes in Mantel’s works and, as she says, ‘what traces all these themes, and indeed all her texts, is a strong sense of

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<sup>19</sup> Mantel and James Naughtie, ‘Hilary Mantel: Bring Up the Bodies’, *Bookclub*, BBC Radio 4, 10 October 2013.

ambivalence'<sup>20</sup>. There is an emphasis of the elusive and suspicion of totalities in Mantel's works. Pollard notes the need for nuanced approaches towards Mantel's writings and their complex ambiguities. In Pollard's words, 'Mantel's writing is ambiguous, darkly humorous, layered, and elliptical' (ibid). Pollard also explains that Mantel's individual texts are very different from each other, which has posed a problem for scholars to account for these differences by labelling or over-ascribing a theme to unite the texts. The thesis offers the dwelling-as-archive as a motif because the thesis does not examine one type of dwelling or archive. Rather, and especially in terms of the archive, the thesis examines a genre blend of literary forms in Mantel's works to maintain and underline the in-between places as the ambiguous and disunifying element in her archives and dwellings.

Using Jacques Derrida's theorising of the ellipsis in *Writing and Difference*, Pollard gestures towards a thread or trace of silence that unites Mantel's corpus. The thesis does not offer threads or traces of dwellings. The terminology of traces or threads are applied to memory, historical meaning, and archival documents. However, in Mantel's works, dwellings and documents in archival places are material objects rather than the historical 'traces' interpreted in the empty spaces where a family heirloom should lie. The textual presence of Austin Friars in *The Cromwell Trilogy*, which Chapter five of the thesis posits as a reimagined dwelling, comprises traces and threads from Mantel's research. However, she has reanimated Cromwell's home as a textual framework that has as much a physical and solid presence to Cromwell as the other dwellings in her works are to her fictional characters. There is an additional layer of complexity in Mantel's works to consider when we introduce the dwelling and domesticity into existing critical material. Where historical meaning, memory, and ghosts resist being tracked by the historical record, dwellings and archival places resist becoming traces simply because of their role as containers of the past. For this reason, the dwelling-as-archive is the in-between place that lets these multiple interpretations of home and family, and the navigation of historical traces, play out as being contained in bodies of knowledge.

Pollard also seeks to trace the effects of the ellipsis in Mantel's writing. In Pollard's words, she introduces 'the duplicity of the ellipsis in order to explode any notion of centredness or singular explanation for meaning, since even the most notionally solid concept can be shown to inwardly rely on the difference and deferral of the ellipsis in order to "make sense"' (pp. 2-3). The thesis' attention to the dwelling-as-archive first appears to be something Pollard

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<sup>20</sup> Eileen Pollard, *Origin and Ellipsis in the Writing of Hilary Mantel: An Elliptical Dialogue with the Thinking of Jacques Derrida* (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 2.

would resist in her approach to Mantel's works. However, this thesis argues that there is a need for the motif to show the differences in dwellings and archives in Mantel's works. The motif shows multiple, incoherent experiences of dwelling and familial memories. The in-between place underpins how these differences and deferrals of Pollard's ellipsis resist 'making sense' of Mantel's works and allows for further investigation into the multiple layers of dwelling and archival fiction characteristics.

Finally, as memory is also a focus in the thesis because of its presence and absence in Mantel's fictional in-between places, Siobhan O'Connor's contribution to memory in Mantel's Cromwell Trilogy is a valuable framework for the thesis. In the chapter 'History, Nation and Self: *Wolf Hall* and the Machinery of Memory' of *Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, Siobhan O'Connor argues that *WH*'s key concerns lie in the usurpation of political narratives and the transformation of private and public memories. She states that, in the novels, 'memories are re-worked as convenient national stories that rationalise present structures. History is a political creation whose purpose is to justify the way things are.'<sup>21</sup> However, as O'Connor argues, Mantel introduces ambivalence in Cromwell's effacement of history for political ends with the ironic reflection over how his natural memory suffers from the same indeterminacy he exploits. The thesis then builds on O'Connor's position that the historical novel's politicised national pseudo-memory features in 'Wolf Hall' as an imaginative place.

The assessment remains unclear regarding the importance an imaginative place has towards representing memory in *WH*. Rather, O'Connor stresses *WH*'s preoccupation with the philosophy of early-modern Europe towards collection, classification, and imaginative potential of knowledge. Thus, the thesis takes O'Connor's exploration of the imaginative reconstruction of memory in Cromwell's 'ledger' and applies it to the structure of the dwelling Austin Friars. Cromwell's private dwelling is both a memory 'machine' and, textually, the site of imaginative reconstruction of the missing dwelling Austin Friars in the real world. Mantel textually reanimates the lost Austin Friars within the pages of *WH* as Cromwell's personal and political dwelling-as-archive, which allows the reader to navigate the fictional Cromwell's private memories and archival documents in one place to interrogate the ways Cromwell manages memories and knowledge. The thesis also applies the idea of the dwelling-as-archive Austin Friars to the other dwellings in Mantel's works. Dwelling-as-archives and their status as

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<sup>21</sup> Siobhan O'Connor, 'History, Nation and Self: *Wolf Hall* and the Machinery of Memory', in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 27-40, p. 28.

in-between places make them memory machines, constantly producing and hiding historical meaning. They are also places where previously absent memory can be reconstructed and reimagined.

## II. Dwellings and Theories

The resonance of ‘home’ that Mantel mentions in her first Reith Lecture ‘The Day is for the Living’ intertwines the nostalgia of domestic ideals (of hearth, origin, and authenticity) with its status as a powerful domain for performing private and public dramas. Mantel links the word home as a bridge to her great-grandmother. Catherine O’Shea haunts Mantel’s lecture, cementing family and domesticity as important to the process of historical writing. Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter state that Mantel ends her first Reith Lecture with ‘the word ‘home’, revealing the route into history, the trick, the root, being those ghosts of or at home.’<sup>22</sup> The thesis uses the term ‘home’ to signify a representational place. Dwelling sites are, Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei claim, ‘generally perceived to be a physical built dwelling for people in a fixed location, the home, although it may possess the material characteristics of a built dwelling implies a space, a feeling, an idea, not necessarily located in a fixed place.’<sup>23</sup> Dwelling sites and the dead become intertwined in Mantel’s texts to introduce hesitation and contingency, making the domestic values of home unfamiliar.

Dwellings contain various kinds of ghosts, including the uncanny, the revenant, the echo, and the spectre. The thesis describes the dead in Mantel’s fictions as spectres for their artistic illusion of disorder and breaking the borders between disembodied/embodied. In *Spectres of Marx*, Jacques Derrida’s defines spectres as a ‘paradoxical incorporation’ and ‘the becoming body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes rather, some ‘thing’ that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition.’<sup>24</sup> A spectre is neither dead nor alive. They nevertheless represent

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<sup>22</sup> Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter, ‘What Cannot Be Fixed, Measured, Confined’: The Mobile Texts of Hilary Mantel’, *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 1-12, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei, ‘Introduction’, *The Domestic Space Reader*, ed. Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 3-16, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 6.

the past as a ‘thing’ that invades the corporeal body and domestic spheres to move kitchen appliances and disrupt archived order.

Spectres and the dead haunt Mantel’s dwellings, transforming rooms and other spaces into what Sigmund Freud’s refers to as *unheimlich* or unhomely.<sup>25</sup> Dwellings allow the mostly disembodied spectres to explore the spaces between private and public borders and uncover the silences and gaps in knowledge. Mantel’s dwellings demand new ways of thinking about the past and how, as Carpenter states, ‘dis/embodiment further destabilise[s] conventional binaries whereby both the past and the body are bounded and fixed’, which then positions the past ‘as a space that can be actively traversed and to demonstrate how Mantel metaphorically walks with and raises the dead.’<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, Wolfgang Funk claims that the dead are embodied within sources of the past which give them substance ‘in however disembodied a form, to an oscillation between absence and presence, between past and future, between form and content.’<sup>27</sup> Spectres and the dead are able to gain substance in household objects, leading characters to question the effect of haunted objects in their domestic dwellings. The role of the dead in Mantel’s historical fiction reveals Mantel’s imaginative recreation of the past through these haunted objects and houses.

The thesis explores the phenomenological experience of ghost-seeing as part of the recognition of historical presence that Arnold briefly touches on in *Reading Hilary Mantel*. Mantel narrates her memories with the dead, her step-father, and the house as a phenomenological interaction in her memoir *Giving up the Ghost* (2003). The immediacy of the present tense in *GUTG* evokes Mantel’s recollection of her past: ‘At eleven o’clock, I see a flickering on the staircase. The air is still; then it moves. I raise my head. The air is still again. I know it is my stepfather’s ghost coming down. Or, to put it in a way acceptable to most people, I ‘know’ it is my stepfather’s ghost.’<sup>28</sup> Throughout the memoir, houses are unfamiliar places for Mantel. Her physical response immediately follows the visitation, ‘it may be, of course, that the flicker against the banister was nothing more than the warning of a migraine attack. It’s at the left-hand side of my body that visions manifest; it’s my left eye that is peeled’ (p. 2). Mantel’s memory of her stepfather, her physiological response, and the place where she

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<sup>25</sup> Sigmund Freud, ‘The Uncanny’, *Writings on Art and Literature*, foreword. Neil Hertz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 193-233, p. 195.

<sup>26</sup> Ginette Carpenter, ‘Walking the Dead: Unruly (Re)Animation in *A Place of Greater Safety*’, in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 101-116, p. 101.

<sup>27</sup> Wolfgang Funk, ‘Becoming Ghost: Spectral Realism in Hilary Mantel’s Fiction’, in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 87-100, p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> Mantel, *Giving Up the Ghost* (London: Fourth Estate, 2003), p. 1.

experienced the visitation become a repeated performance of memory that is played out in dwelling places. She states that ‘all my memories of him are bound up with houses, dreams of houses, real or dream houses with empty rooms waiting for occupation: with other people’s stories, and other people’s claims: with fright and my adult denial that I was frightened’ (p. 4). Consequently, Mantel believes that houses lack temporal borders. Any house Mantel inhabits since her childhood are reminders of her dead family members and past identities ‘when you turn and look back down the years, you glimpse the ghost of other lives you might have led. All your houses are haunted by the person you might have been. The wraiths and phantoms creep under your carpets and between the warp and weft of your curtains, they lurk in wardrobes and lie flat under drawer liners’ (p. 20). Every chapter but one in *GUTG* is set in a different house. The borders between past, present, and future are blurred within the ideology of home, which differs from the material representation of the house.

The home is where intersections of place, borders, identity, and performances occur or are unsettled. Joanna Richardson states in *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home* (2019):

If we feel ‘at home’, we have a stage from which we are enabled to perform the rest of our lives – that is, we feel empowered to be ourselves within home, but also as a place from which to ‘launch’ into our daily lives: work, school, social interactions with others. That ‘stage’ – home – from which we can perform, is potentially constructed and reconstructed many times during our lives, and not necessarily because we move physical space.<sup>29</sup>

Embodied practices and identities are mapped out in domestic places due to the playful and pragmatic nature of performance. The representational space of the ‘home’ is reduced to a surface where meaning and subjectivity is inscribed, while intercutting what Carpenter states is ‘between the private and the public to demonstrate their inextricable interweaving.’<sup>30</sup> The subjective experience of dwelling facilitates the inscription of subjectivity and identity into the home.

In his essay ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ (1951), Martin Heidegger notes that dwelling is maintained by the construction and preservation activities associated with building. An individual is secure in the dwelling space because they built it themselves. In her examination of Heidegger’s ideas of dwelling, Iris Marion Young states that through building ‘man establishes a world and his place in the world, according to Heidegger, establishes himself as somebody, with an identity and history. People inhabit the world by erecting material supports for their routines and rituals and then see the specificity of their lives reflected in the

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<sup>29</sup> Joanna Richardson, *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home* (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Carpenter, ‘Walking the Dead’, p. 107.

environment, the materiality of things gathered together with historical meaning.<sup>31</sup> Material objects and activities such as buying and furnishing that make a house a home are stabilising techniques to create a sense of security with a domestic space that reflects their identity and performances of domesticity. However, homes in Mantel's works are dysfunctional and resemble the Freudian *unheimlich*/uncanny.

Under Freud's assessment of the uncanny home, ideas of personal or private property (coupled with the names of institutions or places and architectural forms) are uprooted to reveal a sense of something unhomely or defamiliarized within the familiar rooms of the home.<sup>32</sup> Anthony Vidler states that the uncanny is 'aesthetically an outgrowth of the Burkean sublime, a domesticated version of absolute terror, to be experienced in the comfort of the home.'<sup>33</sup> The uncanny breaks borders between private and public sites because it is not simply confined to the house; the sense of the uncanny invades and disrupts public and private spheres. The uncanny has often 'found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community [...] has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity' (p. 11). The subjective experience of the uncanny is routed in perception and affectivity. Unhomeliness further presents subjectivity as being located on a type of border crossing, a process that Cuming states is where 'the self is a part of two realms that are not easily assimilated.'<sup>34</sup> Mantel's characters then often never feel at home despite the houses they occupy or own. Their unhomeliness is often the direct result of the supernatural world invading the real worlds, and also of the past and memories invading their present.

The physical limits of the house are in constant tension with the performative sites of the home. The house, Monika Shafi claims, belongs:

To the basic inventory of literary traditions, and the interaction between dwelling and travelling, stasis and movement – or between housebound and travel-bound – has yielded ample fictional material. Providing for our most basic needs, offering both shelter and identity, and representing specific historical formations, houses touch upon virtually all aspects of individual needs and collective organisation.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Iris Marion Young, 'House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme', *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 136-37.

<sup>32</sup> Freud, p. 195.

<sup>33</sup> Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Massachusetts: MIT Press 1992), p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Emily Cuming, *Housing, Class and Gender in Modern British Writing, 1800-2012* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 166.

<sup>35</sup> Monika Shafi, *Housebound: Selfhood and Domestic Space in Contemporary German Fiction* (London: Boydell and Brewer), p. 1.

Domestic places in Mantel's works are reinscribed as uncanny sites where their ghostly inhabitants disrupt identities, history, and the borders between public/private to the unseen and hidden. Emily Cuming states in *Housing, Class and Gender in Modern British Writing* that the domestic setting in *GUTG* and the 'uncanny quotidian proximity of the supernatural are aligned with an Irish Catholic aesthetic sensibility. For the young Mantel, growing up amid secrecy, disappearances and a submerged Catholic past, ghosts are not necessarily fearful presences, but a part of the domestic setting and a way of life in working-class mid-century Hadfield.'<sup>36</sup> Ideally, dwelling are places where characters can safely perform their inner subjectivity and domestic needs such as eating and shelter. However, Mantel's dwellings do not easily contain memory and history, meaning Mantel seeks to revise modern and/or middle-class concepts of 'home' and nation as secure dwellings. The Mantelian dwelling appears in various states of decay or ruin, renovation, as haunted, as an in-between suburban network, or as missing. The characters situated in these Mantelian dwellings then are not sheltered or safe from the public world or the supernatural world residing in the borderless in-between place.

Mantel states in an interview with Rosario Arias: 'When I write about a household, I am not simply writing about someone's domestic set up. I'm writing about them as a reflection of politics in the wider world.'<sup>37</sup> Conceptually, the Mantelian dwelling is a small world that mirrors in however distorted a fashion the outside world. If the private dwelling is an unsafe place, then the outside public world is equally a complex and unsafe place. The home becomes the representational space of public and private drama, affecting the character's experience of both spaces and facilitating the character's home becoming what Liz Herbert McAvoy calls a 'geography of the mind itself.'<sup>38</sup> While Mantel has been writing from the 1970s, the study of houses in literature has experienced a multidisciplinary growth during the last decade, which Shelley Mallett pinpoints: 'many authors also consider notions of being-at-home, creating or making home and the ideal home.'<sup>39</sup> Domestic spaces in literature are linked to the mid-twentieth century 'spatial turn', which focuses on buildings as objects of preservation and dwelling as modes of being. Theories presented by Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, Henry Lefebvre, and Michael Foucault developed space and place as part of modes of being. Briganti and Mezei also refer to Frederic Jameson and Jacques Derrida's

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<sup>36</sup> Cuming, p. 160.

<sup>37</sup> Hilary Mantel and Rosario Arias, 'An Interview with Hilary Mantel', *Atlantis*, 20.2 (1998), 277-89, p. 281.

<sup>38</sup> Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Medieval Anchoritisms: Gender, Space and the Solitary Life* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), p. 147.

<sup>39</sup> Shelley Mallett, 'Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature', *The Sociological Review*, 52.1 (2004), 62-89, p. 65.



examination into ‘architecture as a form of writing, way of thinking, and mode of being and the interpellation of space, power, knowledge, and politics’ (p. 5). This thesis also notes the differences between Walter Pater’s literary architecture, or aesthetic historicism, and Derrida’s spatial concepts emerging from ‘postmodern architecture’. Mantel’s works reflect a certain ‘spatial turn’ which considers the role of multiple types of dwellings and buildings in narratives.

Further developments into public/civic, transnational, and post-colonial places and dwellings are made by Jurgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, David Harvey, Arjun Appadurai, and Homi Bhabha. The intersectional development between gendered space and architecture is seen in critical works by Iris Marion Young, Doreen Massey and Gillian Rose. A feminist focus identifies the domestic spaces as subversive places to facilitate accessibility and female mobility in the workplace and public spheres. Mantel’s desire to write about dwellings as a reflection of the politics in the wider world touches on geocriticism and spatial literary studies. Geocriticism and spatial literary studies frequently make, in Robert T. Tally Jr.’s words, ‘productive connections to architecture, art history, geography, history, philosophy, politics, social theory, and urban sites [...] spatial criticism is not limited to the spaces of the so-called real world, and it sometimes calls into question any too-facile distinction between real and imaginary’ places.<sup>40</sup> This thesis finds these theorists valuable for exploring dwellings as a critical literary study, and for providing frameworks to describe the in-between places as hybrid zones where fiction intersects with reality.

The house as a subject in fiction has multiple forms and readings. Shafi notes that:

As an intensely emotional experience, major financial investment, and a material reality embedded in architectural, aesthetic, and social traditions, houses can be regarded as the building blocks of culture. Houses can also produce and echo subjectivity, thus occupying a unique place in life stories. They reflect and shape the psychological, socio-economic, and political conditions of those who live in them, thus making them a potent and complex expression of characters and their circumstances.<sup>41</sup>

Dwelling sites in Mantel’s works frequently appear as either having a central role or acting as a background locus. The same is true in Mantel’s public articles and presentations concerning her approach to history writing. In ‘Can These Bones Live?’ Mantel narrates her temporary move to a new-built house in Surrey. Her dismay with the ‘pictures of beams’ being stuck onto ‘raw breezeblock’ informs her approach to grounding authentic historical fact in fiction: ‘it was like living inside a giant metaphor about the faking of the past. In those days, my thoughts were

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<sup>40</sup> Robert T. Tally Jr., ‘Series Editor’s Preface’, *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives: The House as Subject*, ed. Andrew Hock Soon Ng (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), pp. xi-xii, p. xi.

<sup>41</sup> Shafi, p. 1.

moving to the sixteenth century. I wondered how quickly I could learn to inhabit a new era. I thought, I don't want my walls to be paper-thin, my knowledge to be stuck on. I need a solid house for characters to live in.'<sup>42</sup> The new-built house serves as an ill-fitting backdrop to Mantel's writing process for *WH* (a novel named after a house) and confirms the place's importance for Mantel to imagine the past. Mantel cannot interpret historical meaning in a new-build because it is not grounded in the past, nor can it securely contain historical knowledge. Buildings need a sense of history and/or an accumulation of authentic and genuine objects for the past to be found and interpreted.

Mantel notes that her characters cannot inhabit the place because history and identity cannot interact. Shafi states that houses appear 'not simply as a backdrop to narrative developments or a primarily symbolic representation of a character's identity (though interior space commands, of course, great metaphorical weight) but also as a place that, in its history and physical substance, shapes and mediates lived experience and connects it to a vast storehouse of the home imaginary.'<sup>43</sup> Mantel's Reith Lectures explore the links between mediated space and forgotten partial history through specific domestic examples such as her newly built house, Derwent's drowned village, her ancestor's house in Waterside, and Windsor Castle. The specific locations where the Reith Lectures are performed contrast with Mantel's examples. The locations themselves are Halle St Peter's in Manchester where Mantel spent part of her childhood, Middle Temple Hall in London where the first performance of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was held, the Butcher's Guild Hall of Antwerp in Belgium which has links to Thomas Cromwell, Exeter University which is near Mantel's home in Devon by the time of 2017, and the Arts House in Stratford-on-Avon which was the birthplace of Shakespeare. The places are chosen because of their historical significance, their connection to the lectures' themes, or their connection to Mantel herself. The performance neither means 'fake' or 'acted', but instead by what Lidia Valeriyevna Bondarenko and Elene Vasiliyevna Polkhovskaya explains is the 'means of a unique beginning, figurative and ludic narration, question-answer strategy for maintaining contact with the audience, utilizing formal and colloquial lexis, lingua-stylistic devices – allusions, metaphors, similes, epithets, repetitions.'<sup>44</sup> The locations are either familiar to the audience attending yet defamiliarized by the ghosts

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<sup>42</sup> Mantel, 'Can These Bones Live?', *The BBC Reith Lectures*, BBC Radio 4, 8 August 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Shafi, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> Lidia Valeriyevna Bondarenko, and Elene Vasiliyevna Polkhovskaya, 'Specifics of the Writer's Open Lecture as an Example of Public Discourse (Based on the Material of Reith Lectures by H. Mantel)', *Sovremennye Issledovaniya Social'nyh Problem*, 11. 5 (2019), 26-39, p. 28.

Mantel also raises: Mantel's Great-Grandmother Catherine O'Shea, Polish writer Stanisława Przybyszewska, and Derwent Church. These places have a strong historical sense which serves as a strong backdrop for Mantel to explain her historical writing process.

Mantel examines the processes of historical writing through the historically embodied structures to ground historical experience. However, this thesis finds that the public and private dwellings in her Reith Lectures also struggle to hold cohesive architectural identities. Thus, the dwellings in Mantel's fictions and Lectures act as representations of historical meaning which struggle to contain memory and history. French Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre states in *The Production of Space* that representational spaces are 'space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' [...] this is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.'<sup>45</sup> Representational spaces 'need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness [...] they have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people' (p. 41). Mantel's fictional architectural spaces from her lectures, and the specific characteristics of windows and doors, are given metaphorical and symbolic significance. The same is then true of her fictions' dwellings. As they are representational spaces, Mantel's dwellings conceptualise history as fluid, relational, and dynamic. These dwellings also imply the lived experience as necessary to understand the sense of multiple histories (either seen, missing, or hidden) in these fluid architectural structures. However, this thesis uses the term 'place' when explaining the pseudo-material structure of the dwelling-as-archive to account for the multiple interpretations of history and domestic meaning.

Dwellings are not just places that contain ideals of domesticity or history for Mantel. Dwellings are also important for access into familial records and memory. In 'The Day is for the Living', Mantel describes the house in the Irish mill village of Waterside that once belonged to her ancestors:

There was a row of houses which fronted Waterside, their backs within the mill's enclosure. In time the houses were knocked down, but the facades had to stand, because they were part of the mill wall. The windows and doorways were infilled by blocks of stone. By the time I was alive to see it, this new stone was the same colour as the mill: black. But you could see where the doors and windows had been [...] the door of a house should lead to a home. But behind this door was the public space of the mill yard.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 39. Representational spaces are part of Lefebvre's spatial triad, which includes representations of space (conceptualised) and spatial practices (perceived space), which suggests space as fundamental to lived experiences in the world.

<sup>46</sup> Mantel, 'The Day Is For The Living', The BBC Reith Lectures, BBC Radio 4, 18 July 2017.

Mantel structures, in Daisy Hay's words, an 'image for the way buildings both obscure and record history. Her doors that lead nowhere offer the illusion of access, but in reality, stand for the evasions and silences of the past; for the things that cannot be recovered in the stories of lost lives lived among semi-recoverable bricks and mortar.'<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, 'Mantel tells of doors leading to public places, a disruption of architectural form and purpose that says much about the fractured way in which we experience and receive history' (ibid). Doors and doorways are on the borderline between historicity and fictionality. Doors are reoccurring symbols for information denial; they facilitate entrapment and frame Mantel's novels' temporal spaces. The doorway and the binaries of outside and inside a domestic space then point to the ways a place is contested and produced by conflicting historical and cultural forces. Family dynamics in Mantel's works often reinforce the tensions of history and lost meaning by locking doors and hiding archival documents or memories. Therefore, Mantel asks whether the reader or characters can understand any historical meaning in her dwellings when her settings often represent the evasions and silences of the past.

As well as doors that access the dwelling-as-archive, the past feels immediately present due to memory. Silke Arnold-de Simine states that memory studies:

Originated in the 1980s and are closely connected with the crisis or proclaimed 'end of history' (Francis Fukuyama), a new era labelled by Jean Baudrillard as 'posthistoire' and either bemoaned as 'loss of historical consciousness' (Frederic Jameson) or celebrated as the abandonment of 'grand narratives' (Jean-Francois Lyotard). In this situation 'memory' gained importance both as a cultural paradigm and, inconsequence, as a theoretical concept in the humanities. The idea was that this new perspective would allow for a democratisation of remembrance culture, encouraging and facilitating the growth of alternative, marginalised, multivocal narratives from diverse sources.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, memory studies no longer consider remembering as retrieval and recollection of stable information but as a fluid and imaginative process. In Mantel's *An Experiment in Love* (1995), the protagonist Carmel claims: 'Memory's not a reel, not a film you can run backwards and forwards at will: it's that flash of startled fur, the slither of silk between the fingers, the duplicated texture of hair or bone. It's an image blurring, caught on the move.'<sup>49</sup> Memory is also fluid and experienced in the immediate moment in Mantel's works. The misplaced, decaying, or transitional objects reflect the fluid movement of historical meaning and memory. Thus, familial, communal, and personal memory are also portrayed as unreliable and prone to slippage without objects to contain them.

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<sup>47</sup> Daisy Hay, 'Wanderers Without a Home': Houses and Houselessness in the Johnson Circle', *European Romantic Review*, 29.5 (2018), 557-78, p. 575.

<sup>48</sup> Silke Arnold-de Simine, 'Trauma and Memory', *Trauma and Literature*, ed. J. Roger Kurtz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 140-52, p. 143.

<sup>49</sup> Mantel, *An Experiment In Love* (London: Viking, 1995), p. 11.

What past knowledge of a particular historical setting acts as the framework through which the writer needs to interpret? David Lowenthal, known for his studies of heritage, states: ‘Three sources provide past knowledge: memory, history, and relics. Memory and history are processes of insight; each involves the other, with boundaries fluid and indistinct. Yet they are justly distinguishable: memory is inescapable and essential to existence, even when fallacious; history is contingent and accretive.’<sup>50</sup> Relics are objects found in museums and other social archives and differ from archived materials because of their physical structure, are representations of the presence of the past, and are fetishized with historical meaning. The archive must be investigated for historical meaning, while the relic is already embedded with meaning. Unlike ‘memory and history, relics are not processes but residues of processes, natural or cultural. Relics reveal the past both organically, through ageing and weathering, and historically, through forms and structures recognised as stemming from an earlier epoch’ (p. 292). The forms and processes of insights such sources provide reveal that a degree of unreliability is evident when dealing with the past.

Mantel’s works ask if, as Peter Burke puts, ‘remembering the past and writing about it no longer seem the innocent activities they once were taken to be. Neither memories nor histories seem objective any longer. In both cases we are learning to take account of conscious or unconscious selection, interpretation and distortion. In both cases this selection, interpretation and distortion is socially conditioned.’<sup>51</sup> Mantel similarly outlines history as unstable and subject to bias and distortions. Historians are unreliable, and the past can constantly change due to interpretation:

The past is not dead ground, and to traverse it is not a sterile exercise. History is always changing behind us, and the past changes a little every time we retell it. The most scrupulous historian is an unreliable narrator [...] Once this is understood, the trade of the historical novelist doesn’t seem so reprehensible or dubious; the only requirement is for conjecture to be plausible and grounded in the best facts one can get.<sup>52</sup>

Mantel’s pursuit of her familial knowledge is affected by the process of remembering and forgetting. Mantel states in the article ‘Blot, Erase, Delete’ that parents are an unreliable witness and in her family:

An active censorship bore on both past and present. There were things you could say in the house, but not out of the house; perhaps there was a third category of things you could say in the garden. It is hard

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<sup>50</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 292.

<sup>51</sup> Peter Burke, ‘History as Social Memory’, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997), p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> Mantel, ‘Booker Winner Hilary Mantel on Dealing with History in Fiction’, *The Guardian* (2009), [date last accessed: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/oct/17/hilary-mantel-author-booker>>.

for a child to learn where the boundaries are, and also difficult not to be in the wrong place when adults utter what they regret.<sup>53</sup>

Familial memory (a kind of cultural memory on a smaller scale) is linked with sources of knowledge and the construction of identity and phenomenological perspectives. A.S. Byatt states that ‘our immediate ancestors *are*, in some sort, our memories – they disappear, as presences, as bodies, but they persist as icons, as hauntings, in our minds. They take with them their memories of ourselves, so that part of us dies with them, as part of them persists in us, both in the genes and in the workings of the brain.’<sup>54</sup> Familial memory is a source of past knowledge. Remembering and uncovering the gaps of familial history and knowledge becomes a performative action that once again depends on domestic space and the boundaries within the physical structures of the house.

Mantel also explores families as unreliable witnesses of the past. In the late twentieth century, authors used unreliable narrators and narratives to explore memory’s influence on the narrated experience of historical events. Such unreliable narratives include Ian McEwan’s *Enduring Love* (1997), Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day* (1989), Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1996), and Julian Barnes’s *The Sense of an Ending* (2011). The epistemological scepticism that postmodern fiction explores with the notion of ‘unreliable sources’ of the past creates dissonant ‘broken’ narratives’ that question the past and the structures that house these sources. Bruno Zerweck claims that unreliable narratives’ metafunction is to create ‘ambiguity and dis coherence.’<sup>55</sup> He also states that the development of unreliability has now ‘become the norm and reliability violates our narrative expectations’ (p. 229). The simultaneous present tense narrative allows an affective relationship between the reader and a historical character that simulates an immediacy of recall despite the reader’s retrospective knowledge of historical events that contradicts the narrator’s subjective memory.

Irmtraud Huber states that memory makes the past present because of its retrospective framing: ‘the presentifying power of memory is one of the recurring motifs of retrospective present-tense narration.’<sup>56</sup> While the ‘accuracy of the images memory evokes is frequently

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<sup>53</sup> Mantel, ‘Blot, Erase, Delete: How the author found her voice and why all writers should resist the urge to change their past words’, *Index on Censorship*, 45.3 (2016), 64-68, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> A.S. Byatt, ‘Memory and the Making of Fiction’, *Memory*, ed. by Patricia Fara (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 47-72, p. 53.

<sup>55</sup> Bruno Zerweck, ‘The ‘Death’ of the Unreliable Narrator: Toward a Functional History of Narrative Unreliability’, *Narrative in Culture*, ed. Astrid Erill and Roy Sommer (Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 215-40, p. 227.

<sup>56</sup> Irmtraud Huber, *Present-Tense Narration in Contemporary Fiction: A Narratological Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 53.

called into question, the emphasis is mostly on the continuing relevance of such vivid memories, rather than on their unreliability' (ibid). The relevance of memories is dependent on the individual and, in Huber's words, 'the turn to memory instead of history allows for truth claims that are always qualified as individual and possibly faulty. Memory is typically evoked as vivid but individual, always with the acknowledged possibility of fabrication. Thus, the narrator can claim truthfulness' (p. 105). The possibility of fabrication still points to the unreliability of the remembered narrative and questions the individual's memory.

Meanwhile, Jay Parini argues that fabrication 'distorts everything, supplying details as needed, massaging the facts to fit the ideological bias of the person who recollects.'<sup>57</sup> Central to Mantel's sense of historiography in 'The Day is for the Living' is that anything processed by memory is fiction, and 'the process of fictionalisation is instant, it's natural, and it's inevitable.'<sup>58</sup> The processes of biographical fiction writing also dwell on memory's influence over retrospective narratives. In Parini's words, 'think how often, for instance, we retell a story and recreate dialogue. Can we possibly remember exactly what was said? Is it possible to recapture anything remotely like what actually happened? Even as history happens, it shifts, complicates, and confuses. Each person around us sees the same events differently, with a subjective lens firmly in place.'<sup>59</sup> Despite the prevalence of unreliable memory in narrators as a common trope in historical fiction, they often question homogenous accounts of a historical event.

Alison Ribeiro de Menezes states that memory is not simply individual and is social and collective, 'it has manifold cultural dimensions that are embedded in our sense of shared identities. Memories – personal, collective, and cultural – are thus part of how we see ourselves and others, and these intersections have a currency beyond the academic sphere, in national and transnational debates concerning the burden of traumatic and unmastered pasts.'<sup>60</sup> Memory is both an individual and collective source of knowledge about the past. While Mantel claims that her main concern as a writer 'is with memory, personal and collective: with the restless dead asserting their claims', the familial memory is often prioritised in her historical narratives despite its stated unreliability.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Jay Parini, 'Writing Biographical Fiction: Some Personal Reflections', *Auto/Biography Studies*, 31.1 (2016), 21-6, p. 25.

<sup>58</sup> 'The Day Is For The Living'.

<sup>59</sup> Parini, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Alison Ribeiro de Menezes, *Embodying Memory in Contemporary Spain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> 'The Day Is For The Living'.

Memory is an unstable source of knowledge in Mantel's works for the following reasons: recounting the past through dead family members confuses individual and familial memory; the immediacy of narrative blurs the boundaries between past and present; the borders between personal and collective places are muddled, and details are forgotten or changed by the processes of recollection and narrativization. Furthermore, Mantel's dwellings distort memory because they are unreliable containers. Mantel's focus on embodied rather than enplaced memory is another iteration of what Ribeiro de Menezes calls the 'imaginative and emotional investment in the past rather than cognitive rationalisations.'<sup>62</sup> The language used by Lowenthal to describe relics as residues of process hints at another instability in historical knowledge. Like memory and history, there is prioritisation and bias inherent in constructing historical narratives in the dwelling-as-archive, leading to (secular) relics or domestic objects being left out or unseen. The characters base their phenomenological experience on the unstable 'objects' which Mantel's works represent in memory, history, and relics.

Mantel's works then question whether objects in the dwelling-as-archives can faithfully contain past knowledge and memory. Can historical knowledge be recreated or recovered through these objects, and what could prevent the historical meaning attached to the objects from becoming reliable accounts of the past? Can the dead be accessible through the objects they have left behind for the living? This thesis uses Mantel's phrase 'to take the past out of the archive and relocate it in a body' to examine (dis)embodied objects in the dwelling-as-archives presented in her works.<sup>63</sup> These objects suggest that the past can indeed be relocated and made accessible through the dwelling-as-archives' status as an in-between place. Mantel's works, then, offer imagined dwelling places as containers of re-imagined memories – allowing Mantel to link memory, reminiscence, and imagination into her historical fictions.

### III. Archives and Theories

Permeable and unreliable dwellings frequently question whether memory and the past can be stored in objects. A container of memory and history is usually an archive which stores archived and processed documents. However, in Mantel's works, dwellings such as 2 Buckingham Avenue in *EDIMD* through to Thomas Cromwell's Austin Friars in *The*

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<sup>62</sup> Ribeiro de Menezes, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> 'Can These Bones Live?'



Cromwell Trilogy are presented as archives of familial and social histories. Mantel's haunted, transitory, and imaginary dwellings respond to the pressures of historical or political processes of the outside world by becoming archival havens. Familial objects are stored, categorised, and consigned in these family homes, maintaining familial memory and pasts. Dwelling places become conventional archives that contain their owner's pasts. Since dwellings are also porous, borderless sites, their function as an archival place becomes complicated. As dwelling sites are in-between places overlapping the private and public, the dwelling's function as an archival haven also experiences a similar ambiguity and borderless existence. If the living or dead disrupt a house and its rooms, what happens when the archived familial objects lose meaning and the objects themselves are lost or misplaced? The archive in Mantel's works then offers further explanation as to how dwellings become porous and borderless places.

The archive situates itself in multiple sites in Mantel's works: the domestic, the institutional, the public. Therefore, the separate status of archive and the dwelling overlap to form in-between places that double as sites of historical knowledge interchange. Archives contain historical knowledge through personal and publicly owned material objects. Objects include photographs, documents, newspapers diaries, bodies, and dwellings such as houses. Often, the archive requires certain bodies to move the material objects inscribed with historical meaning in and out of these places. An archival site depends on historically meaningful objects to present itself as a body of knowledge. In Mantel's *Vacant Possession* (1986), Isabel Field states 'after all, it's just a house. Just an empty shell, when the people are taken away.'<sup>64</sup> The status of the house as a historically meaningful archival place disappears if the objects and people are gone. Thus, the information contained in archived objects is a floating signifier of the past in Mantel's works. The frequently missing domestic and archival objects reflect Mantel's experience of missing information and gaps in her own historical research.

Anne J. Gilliland and Michelle Caswell state that records, 'which are the preoccupation of archival theory and practice, are classically and formally understood as the by-products, essence or other forms of documentation of actions or acts that are evaluated, valued and employed according to legal, administrative and historical constructions of evidence.'<sup>65</sup> Records and recorded evidence are often reliable sources of the past. Records, or evidence of the past, take many forms in Mantel's works. In *The Mirror and the Light* (2020), Cromwell's

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<sup>64</sup> Mantel, *Vacant Possession* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986), p. 20.

<sup>65</sup> Anne J. Gilliland and Michelle Caswell, 'Records and their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined', *Archival Silence*, 16 (2016), 53-75, p. 71.

nephew Richard Cromwell uncovers bones under the floor as he builds a new house at a convent in Hinchbrook. Faced with the unknown historical evidence, builders make up stories about the bones while Richard Cromwell refuses to disturb the archive the bones represent: ‘I can live with them under my floor, they are not likely to get up and walk about at night. I was obliged to allow prayers for their souls, the workmen would have downed tools if I had done other. But I will not let them alter my building plans.’<sup>66</sup> The hidden archive of knowledge is undisturbed even as they uncover bodies. However, no new meaning is gained by uncovering the bones. Building a new house over the bones signifies the denial of historical inquiry and the desire to build new histories over the convents in the Henrician Reformation. *TMATL* underlines that the past is evident even as it is buried, with bones representing the by-product of history. The novel also suggests that archives are easily overwritten or silenced.

Instances of physical evidence without historical explanation or inscribed meaning frequently occur throughout Mantel’s works. The dwelling-as-archive has missing, buried, or purposefully destroyed objects of historical meaning. Characters recover historical meaning in objects through an embodied connection to personal and collective memories. In *Beyond Black* (2005), Alison Hart accesses her personal past by massaging ‘the sole of her foot’ to go back ‘to where there is no Alison, only a space where Alison will be.’<sup>67</sup> Physical embodiment fills the gap that conceptions of history and memory cannot fully answer. Mantel offers a phenomenological understanding of archives by, in Gilliland and Caswell’s words, ‘namely acknowledging that evidence is not always understandable or legible and accordingly shifting the parameters of the archive in relationship to objects that serve as evidence.’<sup>68</sup> Archives depend on objects to maintain their historical significance. Mantel imaginatively recreates archives (with multiple forms and functions) in her works to uncover how historically meaningful objects are potentially lost or destroyed in the historical setting she has researched. The lost or destroyed objects then challenge the historical significance of the archival places, questioning their authority as a place that holds a certain interpretation of the past.

Characters adopt the mask of archival agents to navigate the missing historical information and meaning in various archival forms and dismantle the power dynamics inherent in the maintenance and circulation of historical production. The protagonists’ role as archival agents means they become metaphorical exhumers of hidden or buried histories. The archival

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<sup>66</sup> Mantel, *The Mirror and the Light* (London: Fourth Estate, 2020), p. 696.

<sup>67</sup> Mantel, *Beyond Black* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), p. 417.

<sup>68</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 64.

form in fiction, Ann Laura Stoler claims, involves a ‘prose style, repetitive refrain, the arts of persuasion, affective strains that shape “rational” response, categories of confidentiality and classification, and not least, genres of documentation.’<sup>69</sup> Mantel unsettles the sense of coherent archives which her protagonists explore with her use of fiction and historical fact. Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever* states that ‘the archives could neither do without substrate nor without residence [...] Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation any heterogeneity or secret which could separate (secernere), or partition, in an absolute manner.’<sup>70</sup> According to Derrida, the principle of the archive is gathering together. Meanwhile, Trevor Owen Jones claims that the archive ‘can never dispose of its idealist element of being a mass or unity of collected (consigned) elements. That substrate – pulling together units in a univocal direction – simply posits an extensive set of all sets.’<sup>71</sup> Mantel’s works reflect a similar consignation of the past through her research. However, the disunifying element to her works’ archives are often the character’s inability to belong to a home and construct a cohesive narrative out of historical evidence.

In a 2021 interview for *Myslexia*, she states ‘become a magpie. Collect anything that attracts you: images, phrases, little glimpses, footnotes from books... Cut them out if you can, record them on blank postcards, scribble them in a notebook.’<sup>72</sup> Mantel notes in her interviews that she investigates the missing gaps of written and other physical materials that cannot be, or have purposefully not been, consigned which, in Michel-Rolph Trouillot words, means ‘any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly.’<sup>73</sup> Mantel writes history as an interpretative act that requires imagination to fill in the gaps that the historical record leaves out. Her works are examples of what Barbara Brookes and James Dunk claims is how,

Every record is also an interpretive work which sifts and selects from a vast array of experiential data and wraps this data in language, fitting it into linguistic categories which give it form and protect it from oblivion. Many ‘records’ have been gathered into archives, repositories which house not what is left but

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<sup>69</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 20. Stoler refers to the archive as ‘condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources’. Such anxiety is never given voice in Mantel’s fiction which focuses mainly on body illness or memory as intense sources of embodied/ phenomenological anxiety.

<sup>70</sup> Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, ‘Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression’, *Diacritics*, 25.2 (1995), 9-63, p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Trevor Owen Jones, *The Non-Library* (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2013), p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Hilary Mantel and Debbie Taylor, ‘The Mantel Method’, *Myslexia* (2021), [date last accessed: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021], <<https://mslexia.co.uk/magazine/blog/the-mantel-method/>>.

<sup>73</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p. 27.

what has been kept, and organise these calcified writings into hierarchical families which limit and shape the range of possible interpretations.<sup>74</sup>

The ‘kept’ materials in archives assume that ‘the work of protecting, arranging, and sometimes destroying records represents investment in certain pasts, by present governments and private organisations’ (p. 282). Documents are material objects that are found in both private and public places. Michael Moss and David Thomas claim that archives contain ‘mainly texts and as a result they suffer from the weaknesses of all such objects: their words and format can conceal their meaning. Documents can be silenced in plain sight. The first problem of texts is often recognised as being the need to discover which is the original and so what should be focus of scholarly investigation.’<sup>75</sup> Part of writing historical fiction lies in sorting archival documents. However, the gaps, rumours, and the place where material objects were last left complicate the process of sorting and understanding the past.

Recent interest concerning silences and absences in the archives includes Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History* (1995), David Thomas, Valerie Johnson, and Simon Fowler’s *The Silence of the Archive* (2017), and Michael Moss and David Thomas’s *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost and, Uncreated Archives* (2021). However, Mantel’s concern with the silences in the historical record, and her imaginative treatment of the gaps in the record, began in the 1970s: ‘I wanted to find a novel I liked, about the French Revolution. I couldn’t so I started making one. I wasn’t after quick results. I was prepared to look at all the material I could find, even though I knew it would take years, but what I wasn’t prepared for were the gaps, the erasures, the silences where there should have been evidence.’<sup>76</sup> This thesis claims that Mantel’s research process is a version of the Freudian romance concerning archives. Carolyn Steedman states that ‘much of the modern allure of the archive is to do with a Freudian romance, of finding all the lost things and names, whatever they may be: things gone astray, mislaid, squandered, wasted. They will also discover a very great deal about what they are doing, when they sit down with a pencil in hand.’<sup>77</sup> Steedman explains that the Freudian archive expressed in *Archive Fever* is a romance of the archive which Suzanne Keen outlines. This thesis then uses Suzanne Keen’s romance of the archive and Linda

<sup>74</sup> Barbara Brookes and James Dunk, ‘Bureaucracy, Archive Files, and the Making of Knowledge’, *Rethinking History*, 22. 3 (2018), 281-88, p. 281.

<sup>75</sup> Michael Moss and David Thomas, ‘Theorising the Silences’, *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost and, Uncreated Archives*, ed. Michael Moss and David Thomas (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 10-25, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> ‘The Day is for the Living’.

<sup>77</sup> Carolyn Steedman, ‘Archival Methods’, *Research Methods for English Studies*, ed. Gabrielle Griffin (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 18-31, p. 18.

Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction to support the exploration of unreliable evidence of the past and flawed archival agents attempting to find meaning from the missing objects.

Linda Hutcheon coined the term historiographic metafiction in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) to address historical narratives which, as she says, 'plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record [...] certain known historical details are deliberately falsified in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error.'<sup>78</sup> In 'The Iron Maiden', Mantel states that 'my tendency is to approach the received version [of the past] with great scepticism and try to get the reader to challenge what they think they know. The problem is that people are very loyal to the first history they learned.'<sup>79</sup> Representations of archival research and recovered history saturate recent British novels. Historiographic metafictional the literary genre was popularised by John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Graham Swift's *Waterland* (1983), and Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* (1987). Hutcheon celebrates the return to the historical novel as a serious endeavour which, Ladislav Nagy explains, is now a 'form that restores history at the very core of the novelistic practice, in which novelists [...] come forth with the question whether we can indeed know the past and represent it in a coherent narrative.'<sup>80</sup> Hutcheon's refusal to accept an ahistorical postmodern tradition reinstalls 'historical contexts as significant and even determining, [...] problematises the entire notion of historical knowledge.'<sup>81</sup> The missing archives and documents which represent the past reveal the limitations of the character's ability to know and recover the past.

Mantel works state a scepticism of any ability to know the past. In *EDIMD*, the character Edmund Toye says to the history teacher Colin Sidney 'well, you say history, but I wonder what you think history is.'<sup>82</sup> Mantel's works problematises accepted representations of the past, and often, as Hassan Abootalebi puts it, 'indicate[s] history to be a constructed narrative, and not something completely corresponding to the past.'<sup>83</sup> In Mantel's works, the archival agent questions what historical meaning remains in material objects or what

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<sup>78</sup> Hutcheon, p. 114.

<sup>79</sup> Mantel, 'The Iron Maiden'. Marxist historical relativism, the attention to tradition and history as constructions, and other discourse surrounding history's claim to truth has been interrogated in the twentieth century by critics such as Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Hayden White, and Fredric Jameson.

<sup>80</sup> Ladislav Nagy, 'Historical Fiction as a Mixture of History and Romance: Towards the Genre Definition of the Historical Novel', *Prague Journal of English Studies*, 3. 1 (2014), 7-17, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup> Hutcheon, p. 89.

<sup>82</sup> Mantel, *Every Day is Mother's Day* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1985), p. 158.

<sup>83</sup> Hassan Abootalebi 'Problematising Representation of the Past and of its Verisimilitude in Historiographic Metafiction', *Spring Magazine on English Literature*, 2.1 (2016), 30-36, p. 30.

documents are stored in which archives. Her protagonists are typically characteristic of historiographic metafiction protagonists, which Hutcheon states ‘are anything but proper types: they are the ex-centrics, the marginalised, the peripheral figures of fictional history.’<sup>84</sup> The peripheral, marginalised figures access the past by performing the role of archival agents, who actively participate in collecting and writing down historically meaningful information into an archive.

Hutcheon explains that historiographic metafiction incorporates a ‘theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs [...] is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past’ (p. 5). Historical fiction reveals the historical record as an artefact and complicates the subjective recollection of the past as faithful and neutral additions to the archive. Subjective experience and an individual’s recollection processes take the forefront of postmodern narratives such as Julian Barnes’s *Flaubert’s Parrot* (1984). Vanessa Guigney notes that *Flaubert’s Parrot* ‘exhibits a proclivity for hybridity, multiplicity and decompartmentalization, and the mixture of genres enables the narrator to approach Flaubert in original and varied ways and to avoid the pitfalls of each individual genre.’<sup>85</sup> Mantel, too, works with the conventions of fiction writing when the limitations of historical facts impact her research and the historical narrative. She claims in a 2015 interview with Mona Simpson ‘to make fiction flexible so that it bends itself around the facts as we have them.’<sup>86</sup> Raymond A. Mazurek, referencing Hutcheon, points to how ‘history itself depends on conventions of narrative, language, and ideology in order to present an account of “what really happened.”’<sup>87</sup> Thus, there is a tension in Mantel’s works between a fidelity to historical research, the reliability of the historical record and archives, the selection and elision of historical facts to suit fiction, and Mantel’s imagination filling in the gaps of the record.

Laura Saxton’s assessment of *WH* notes Mantel’s attention to accurate historical detail as contributing to her historical fiction’s success:

Rather than drawing the lines between fact and fiction, she explicitly states that hers is merely one of an indefinite number of possible representations. While this is apparent in her commentary outside the novels, her narrative also reminds us, her readers, not to believe the story that she is weaving. The authorial voice regularly tells the reader that this world is illusory. While she uses evidence, those sources

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<sup>84</sup> Hutcheon, p. 114.

<sup>85</sup> Vanessa Guigney, *The Fiction of Julian Barnes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 40.

<sup>86</sup> Hilary Mantel and Mona Simpson, ‘Hilary Mantel, Art of Fiction No. 226’, *The Paris Review*, 212 (2015), [date last accessed 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021], <<https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6360/art-of-fiction-no-226-hilary-mantel>>.

<sup>87</sup> Raymond A. Mazurek, ‘Metafiction, The Historical Novel, and Coover’s *The Public Burning*’, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 23.3 (1982), 29-42, p. 29.

do not offer truth but are themselves impressions, interpretations, and opinions. The details, however well-researched, do not open a window to the past.<sup>88</sup>

Saxton claims that, for Mantel, ‘historiographic metafiction do not reject accuracy but are self-reflexive in their role to construct representations of the past. Adherence to and respect for facts does not mean that Mantel does not play with generic conventions of critique perceived authority’ (ibid). Mantel’s play with generic conventions of history writing further questions the archive as a totalising form of knowledge. Furthermore, Mantel participates in restoring historical meaning by writing around the gaps in history even as her novels remain highly sceptical of reliable evidence.

The subgenre romance of the archive, as Suzanne Keen states, ‘hazards the casting of characters in the unprepossessing roles of researchers, readers, and thinkers. It makes an adventure out of the intellectual quest.’<sup>89</sup> Characteristics of the romance of the archive subgenre outline the ‘discomforts and inconveniences suffered in the service of knowledge’, ‘sex and physical pleasure as a result of questing’, ‘settings and locations (such as libraries and country houses) that contain archives of actual papers’, and ‘material traces of the past revealing the truth’ (p. 35). Keen claims that romance of the archive fictions are restorative/resurrectionists of the past. Keen states ‘whether it endorses, defies, revises, or magically extends historians views about the past, the Romance of the Archive arrives at something labelled truth, recovers lost or concealed knowledge, and reassures the reader with the promise of answers that can be located, despite the intervening obstructions and obfuscation’ (p. 43). Mantel’s characters often seek information from archives, from other people about socio-political contexts, through rumours, and documents. In *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* (1988), protagonist Frances Shores states: ‘I spend too much time on my own in the flat, reading the newspapers and trying to work things out.’<sup>90</sup> Mantel’s works, Tom Chadwick and Peter Vermeulen note, take the ‘form of a romance of the archive, where characters are able to directly experience the weight and presence of history.’<sup>91</sup> This thesis agrees that Mantel’s works are a form of the romance of the archive because of how her novels and characters restore lost facts with fiction, or possible interpretations of the past.

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<sup>88</sup> Laura Saxton, ‘A True Story: Defining Accuracy and Authenticity in Historical Fiction’, *Rethinking History*, 24.2 (2020), 127-44, p. 138.

<sup>89</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 30.

<sup>90</sup> Mantel, *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* (London: Viking, 1988), p. 106.

<sup>91</sup> Tom Chadwick and Peter Vermeulen, ‘Literature in the New Archival Landscape’, *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 31.1 (2020), 1-7, p. 2.

The discovery (or quest) of missing evidence or archives features in Peter Ackroyd's *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993), Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory* (1991), and A.S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* (1990). John J. Su states that Byatt's novel asks '(1) Can heritage or other forms of memorabilia ever assist in the imagination of more satisfying social roles and identities? And (2) Can collecting material traces lead to an accurate or truthful depictions of the past?'<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, Keen states that *Possession* explores the protagonist's recovery of a Victorian love story 'within a contemporary plot about scholarly research [...] Byatt celebrates the recovery of an important episode of an imaginary British literary history in a tour-de-force of manufactured evidence, complete with imitations of Victorian poems, stories, letters, and diaries.'<sup>93</sup> Su claims that the subtitle of *Possession*, 'A Romance,' 'aligns the text with a literary tradition that aestheticizes the past in order to make it more easily accessible' which the thesis states situates Byatt's novel within the historical romance genre despite the novel's frequent categorisation as a historiographic metafiction.<sup>94</sup> The discovery of lost evidence drives the plot of *Possession*. However, there is missing evidence in the form of a flower crown that carries a message 'which was never delivered', and only the reader knows.<sup>95</sup> Byatt's protagonist Roland Michell, an academic, also contributes to silences in the archive in his pursuit of discovering lost letters on Randolph Henry Ash: 'There were notices about mutilation of volumes, about theft, with which he quite failed to associate with himself' (p. 8). The pursuit of discovery reveals silences in archives which characters must come to terms with.

Historical inquiry and the pursuit of truth haunt Mantel's characters because they are far from scholarly academics (with the probable exception of history teacher Colin Sydney and Dr. John Hunter). Mantel's characters' quest for truth never resolves happily. There are, as Keen puts, no 'feel-good conclusions about learning and discovery.'<sup>96</sup> However, research and the discovery processes (through self-knowledge or reinvented inscriptions) are central components to Mantel's works' interrogation of the past. Mantel examines the destroyed, the altered, and the imaginary archives more than the recoverable past and successful truth-seeking Byatt celebrates in her neo-Victorian novel. Restoring the past through imagination can reveal more silences and unanswerable meanings related to the past, underpinning in the real world

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<sup>92</sup> John J. Su, 'Fantasies of (Re)Collection: Collecting and Imagination in A.S. Byatt's 'Possession: A Romance'', *Contemporary Literature*, 45.4 (2004), 684-712, p. 685.

<sup>93</sup> Keen, p. 32.

<sup>94</sup> Su, p. 700.

<sup>95</sup> A.S. Byatt, *Possession* (London: Vintage, 1990), p. 511.

<sup>96</sup> Keen, p. 56.



that some knowledge is lost forever. The silences Mantel explores in her fictional archives are not pursued for the sake of discovery. Instead, the underlying socio-historical reasons in which silences originate are in dialogue with the recreation and restoration of fictional facts. Memory, too, creates silences in familial and cultural archives due to their unreliability. Throughout her work and interviews, Mantel engages critically with the sceptical mode embodied in the postmodern genre while also working to reimagine the past into the present.

Keen states that ‘by far the bulk of romances of the archive endorse the view that the truth is worth seeking. It can be recognised, interpreted, and presented to the audience.’<sup>97</sup> Mantel’s characters attempt to recreate their own archives (whether familial, public, or domestic) of their memories and experiences. Memory acts as an unprocessed and stored archive of embodied knowledge which Mantel’s characters interrogate as they reproduce the past in inscribed acts. Instances of inscription frequent Mantel’s works to suggest the characters’ awareness that historical recording must occur to preserve their familial archives and memories. The characters embody the past by writing about their social and historical realities within their domestic spheres. Themes of inscription, intertextuality, and historiographic metafiction question archival preservation methods in domestic and institutional archives. Inscribed materials such as newspapers and diaries focus attention on the materiality of history and open the archive into the material culture that Mantel presents in her works. Historical fictions are themselves a collection of rival accounts of the past or archival evidence, for they, in Ann Rigney’s words, ‘link up with the ongoing collective attempts to represent the past and invite comparison with what is already known about the historical world from other sources.’<sup>98</sup> Mantel’s works underline that the processes of capturing and writing down the past relies on imagining other histories which often contradict each other. The truth may be worth seeking, but Mantel’s works often describe a need to ignore other histories to imagine new possibilities and interpretations as to why there are silences in the archive.

In Mantel’s last Reith Lecture ‘Adaptation’, she states ‘A paper and pen will do to conjure a world. Our imagination, we say, needs no power supply.’<sup>99</sup> The pen and archival agents facilitate the inscription of the past into material records and documents. The pen is a key motif in Mantel’s works that describe the archival agent’s complicated processes of writing the present and past into permanence. Isabel Field searches for pens to write down the missing

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<sup>97</sup> Keen, p. 58.

<sup>98</sup> Ann Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> Mantel, ‘Adaptation’, *The BBC Reith Lectures*, BBC Radio 4, 15 August 2017.

file of Muriel Axon, her affair, and the murder at 2 Buckingham Avenue, which happened ten years before *VP*. Frances Shore attempts to recollect her experience of Jeddah's theocratic state within the gothic inversion of Virginia Wolfs' *Room of One's Own* (1929). Camille Desmoulins generates Revolutionary newspapers under the awareness that he is passing into history (much like Stasia), while Gabrielle D'Anton's private diary is burnt after her death, which emphasises the silencing of account. In *A Change of Climate* (1994), Emma Eldred struggles with the decision to inscribe Matthew Eldred's name into the familial archive because it is either a reclamation of the silenced past or an invitation of spectral haunting. Carmel McBain implicitly constructs her autobiography as a series of memories even as her double Karina threatens her sense of autobiographical 'I'. Thomas Cromwell considers his past's spectral haunting as he writes documents that legislate Henry VIII's modernisation of Reformation England. These characters need pens or other tools (such as a cassette tape) to record what they have witnessed or are trying to recollect.

Mantel's characters present, in Christopher D. Morris's words, 'work[s] of history as it is being written.'<sup>100</sup> In Mantel's works, the characters' acts of inscription stress the act of storytelling as part of the recording and reconstruction of the past. Active inscription in Mantel's works is part of a romance of the archive, with characters struggling to write down a present that is swiftly becoming past. The simultaneous narratives of histories being generated occurs in all of Mantel's works, meaning Mantel's history writing process is a neo-phenomenological position. Neo-phenomenology is the re-experiencing of a historical phenomenon or a historical event through the character's eyes, and the historical character's lived experience in a historical narrative. Mantel explains in 'Can These Bones Live?' that 'the novelist's job [is] to put the reader in the moment, even if the moment is 500 years ago. There are techniques, but no tricks. You can only do it through honest negotiation with the facts and the power of the informed imagination.'<sup>101</sup> Readers experience the archival agents act of writing history as it is being written. The reader then experiences an ahistorical moment where the borders between past and present are gone, and they can re-imagine the character's past as a present moment.

Mantel's hinterland (and works) fulfils Edmund Husserl's phenomenological condition of being descriptive, referring to a conventional memory sense that brings characters to the

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<sup>100</sup> Christopher D. Morris, 'Ellipses and Death in *The Book of Daniel*', *Models of Misrepresentation: On the Fiction of E. L. Doctorow*, (London: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), p. 81.

<sup>101</sup> 'Can These Bones Live?'

dwelling that act as in-between places. The reader's perception and knowledge of history (and possible meanings) reanimate the past and the sense of dwelling in homes and historical events. Rita Felski furthered the neo-phenomenological description as part of a contemporary 'suspicion' that historicism is over: 'neo-phenomenology is phenomenology after the linguistic turn, cognizant that cultural mediation renders consciousness neither self-contained nor self-evident. It declines to quarantine personhood from the pressures of context, to bracket the historical and cultural factors that shape interpretation.'<sup>102</sup> Everyday perceptions of domesticity and an individual's social-political knowledge are necessary for interpretation and immersion into Mantel's historical fictions. Mantel states that when writing a novel, 'the activity is immersive. The novelist is after a type of knowledge that goes beyond the academic.'<sup>103</sup> Such immersion into the historical record is neo-phenomenological which re-establishes a symbiotic dynamic between history and memory.<sup>104</sup> Historical fact and the reader's embodied experience and memory of dwellings is necessary to reconstruct a(ny) historical setting into the narrative. However, historical contexts are sometimes not explained in Mantel's works (except in paratext) and often the reader's prior knowledge and research into the period can impose on Mantel's reinterpretation of the past.

Mantel's Reith Lectures pinpoint a neo-phenomenological instance that explains her historical writing process:

Your scene may be as simple as a woman writing a letter, when a man comes in and interrupts her. But when two people are talking in a room, they have a hinterland, and you must suggest it. To that one moment, you bring a sense of every moment that led us there, everything that has brought your woman to this hour, this room, this desk. The multitude of life choices. The motives, conscious or unconscious. The wishes, dreams and desires, all held invisibly within the body whose actions you describe.<sup>105</sup>

The 'Hinterland' is neo-phenomenological because it represents the historical context embodied in the character's dialogue and, as Mantel points out, how to embody historical knowledge textually. This hinterland is an ahistorical, in-between place. In suggesting the hinterland, the reader is immersed in the historical context and past lived experiences. Mantel links embodied imagination, memory, and the (re)collection of historical meaning through the pen. In *VP*, Muriel's paranoid landlord Mr Kowalski states:

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<sup>102</sup> Rita Felski, 'After Suspicion', *Profession* (2009), 28-35, p. 31.

<sup>103</sup> 'Can These Bones Live?'

<sup>104</sup> John. Kucich, 'The Unfinished Historicist Project: In Praise of Suspicion', *Victoriographies*, 1.1 (2011), 58-78, using neo-phenomenology to describe Mantel's work comes with a self-awareness that refashioning 'older theoretical models and deploy them as if they were newly minted' (p.72) is similar to the 'motif of return' that characterises historical fiction's ability to 'affirm the value of those archives to lie in what secrets they reveal about more familiar canons' (ibid).

<sup>105</sup> 'Can These Bones Live?'

He picked up his pen, and was overwhelmed by a rush of feeling so violent that his hand shook and he was forced to put it down again and recover himself. All the horrors of the last months flooded back; the voices of strange women, the heavy footsteps overhead. The beating in the street, the blonde imposter on his own stairs; the giant, limping off round the corner. Presently he calmed himself; but his hand still shook when he picked up his pen and wrote: Curtains, Swansong, Terminus: The Final Chapter.<sup>106</sup>

When Mr Kowalski picks up a pen, he enters the hinterland where the past and present collapse the moment he inscribes into his book of idioms. Consequently, his immersion into the past means Mr Kowalski ‘will never be free. I am an exile by profession, Mrs Wilmot. I am a badly wanted man’ (p. 73). Mr Kowalski warns that the archival agent’s obsession with recollecting and remembering the past through traversing the hinterland renders them permanent exiles (or spectres) of the present. Thus, these hinterlands are unreliable places where people and memories can easily slip even as they are being generated by inscription.

Meanwhile, in *ACOC*, Emma Eldred reflects over the repeated ellipsis of knowledge within the Eldred family. Her brother Ralph was ignorant of her affair, and the Eldred children are unaware of their lost brother who disappeared when Ralph and Anna Eldred worked as missionaries in South Africa. She notes that the Eldred family ‘practise restraint and the keeping of secrets, and the thoughts we respect are unvoiced thoughts; even Felix, an open secret, was a secret of a kind. But our secrets do not keep us. They worry at us; they wear us away, from the inside out.’<sup>107</sup> Emma inscribes the Eldred family’s name into a prayer book yet skips over Matthew Eldred’s name. The novel’s close signals Emma’s resolution to reanimate Matthew, who has haunted the Eldreds’ throughout the narrative. Emma states:

Her pen moved over the vacant line. The ballpoint marked the paper, but nothing appeared: only white marks. She shook it once, slammed it on the wooden desk. At last, like a slow cut, the ink began to bleed. Laboriously – the pen faltering, blotting – she filled in the missing line:  
MATTHEW ELDRED (p. 342).

The imagery of the pen as a bleeding instrument signifies an embodied knowledge that ‘breathes life’ back into Matthew’s memory. Inscribing the familial archive through the pen reanimates the memory of Matthew in the text, which means he is no longer a gap within the Eldred archive. However, Eileen Pollard references the inscribed act as an uncertainty, for ‘Matthew is not ‘called by’ a name, he is snatched before growing into a nickname – then later he is eclipsed and never referred to by name. Though eventually the ink of the pen ‘filled in’ the missing line, the space, the writing is neither solid nor certain. It offers an estranging repetition that signifies a departure just as much as a return.’<sup>108</sup> The double act of reanimation

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<sup>106</sup> *VP*, p. 224.

<sup>107</sup> *ACOC*, p. 26.

<sup>108</sup> Pollard, *Origin and Ellipsis*, p. 146.

and departure represents the uncertainty of bringing back the dead and the ambiguity of the past's effect on the present as the archival agent recollects and inscribes past experiences. Thus, Matthew Eldred remains unable to embody the familial memory or become part of the familial archive. The prayer book in *ACOC* is another hinterland where historical and familial meaning slips as the past and the present converge in the pages.

The pen motif in Mantel's works is part of a historiographic metafictional awareness of the neo-phenomenological instances. When Isabel, Cromwell, and Frances pick up a pen to write, they fill in the gaps in the archive with their imagination which allows them to explore a possible past. Such imagination enables more fictional interplay on the tension between public and private memories lost within families or nations. As Mantel states in her interview with Eileen Pollard in *Contemporary Critical Perspectives*: 'This is material outside history. We have no access to it. It was never on the record. So where is it going to come from?'<sup>109</sup> The pen, through which Mantel engages with the genre of romances of the archive, is a formal engagement with the postmodern intertextuality Hutcheon outlines. Hutcheon states that 'postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context [...] it is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead, it directly confronts the past of literature – and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts (documents).'<sup>110</sup> In *VP*, the past cannot be felt or rewritten in a new context if the pen is not available to hand: 'I should start writing it down. I'd like to write down everything that worries me, about my life ten years ago. I'd like to write it. But I can't find the pen.'<sup>111</sup> The pen for Isabel is part of how she organises her memories and recollects the archived materials she lost in the events of *EDIMD*. Isabel cannot enter the hinterland and recollect historical meaning if the pen is absent. The pen inscribes the past in the present to challenge the reader's perception of history and fiction.

Mantel's fidelity to the past, her magpie-like scepticism of material documents, and her embodied knowledge of dwellings and historical facts represent her imaginative genre-bending of historical narratives further to convey the permeable borders of the past and present. The distinctions between the romance in the archive and historiographic metafiction are analogous to the perceived distinctions between Historical Romance and literary Historical Fiction. Helen Hughes states that historical romance is 'sometimes used indiscriminately by publishers and

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<sup>109</sup> Mantel and Pollard, 'Between the Real and the Imagined: Hilary Mantel's Craft', in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 147-55, p. 151.

<sup>110</sup> Hutcheon, p. 118.

<sup>111</sup> *VP*, p. 19.

booksellers for historical novels of all descriptions.’<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the major themes of romance ‘are adventure and sexual love, with a narrow range of behaviour and experience being portrayed. Well-known stories, reassuring in their familiarity, are used and re-used. For essentially the romance is written to entertain’ (p. 2). The exploration of the familiar/unfamiliar dwellings points to awareness by Mantel of ‘well-known’ structures and traditions of historical narratives. Her use of houses then supports the reader’s immersion into the past because of the common experience of dwelling.

Mantel has expressed anxiety over entering historical fiction writing due to the potential labelling of her historical works as historical romances: ‘In those days historical fiction wasn’t respectable or respected. It meant historical romance. If you read a brilliant novel like Robert Graves’s *I, Claudius*, you didn’t taint it with the genre label, you just thought of it as literature. So I was shy about naming what I was doing.’<sup>113</sup> Helen Hughes explains the distinctions between literary historical fiction and historical romance. In historical romance novels, the,

“Past” setting is a “pretext” which “helps one to enjoy the fictional characters”. In historical novels proper, however, the characters may be fictional but they “tell us something ‘true’ about their period because they are representative of it. The aim of such novels is to gain a better understanding, not only of the period chosen, but also of the present as an “end result of those remote historical events.”<sup>114</sup>

Mantel then prefers historical realism and historical novels ‘proper’. The past is not a pretext but a living performance that the reader re-experiences in Mantel’s works. Thus, the archives in Mantel’s works represent a complex tension between imagined historical facts, the recovery and losing of documents, and the reconstruction of historical meaning. Mantel’s dwelling-as-archives offer better understanding of the historical periods features in Mantel’s works by underpinning the inscription processes that introduce silences and gaps into the records. They do not tell us something true, rather, the dwellings-as-archives present hinterlands where the reimagining of the past and memory is offered as possible and phenomenologically felt.

The margins of these in-between places pinpointed in Mantel’s works lie solely where the overlap of archive and dwelling exists. Neither the private home nor the public institution, in-between places act as the borderline between self and other, fiction and fact, memory and reimaginings. Thus, the dwelling-as-archive blends tensions between the overlapping homogeneous archive and the unreliable dwelling to question memory’s presence or absence in objects and houses. Mantel’s characters are uncertain of their ability to inhabit private places

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<sup>112</sup> Helen Hughes, *The Historical Romance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 4.

<sup>113</sup> ‘The Day Is For The Living’.

<sup>114</sup> Hughes, p. 4.

and record their dwelling and historical experience, complicating their ability to narrate and recollect memory. Because of their uncertainty towards dwelling in these in-between places, characters often find their identity and memory slips as a result.

Thomas Cromwell states in *WH* ‘He Thomas, also Tomos, Tommaso and Thomaes Cromwell, withdraws his past selves into his present body and edges back to where he was before. His single shadow slides against the wall, a visitor not sure of his welcome. Which of these Thomases saw the blow coming? There are moments when a memory moves right through you.’<sup>115</sup> Cromwell phenomenologically experiences memory moving through him, meaning that he is unable to contain his individual past and thus preserve his identities. The presentation of the dwelling-as-archive is an unstable container of memory in Mantel’s narratives that evokes anxiety in the preservation and reimagining of the past. Memory and historical meaning constantly slip or erodes both in the present moment of recording history, and Cromwell’s perception of his identity. The past is acutely felt in these dwellings-as-archives because of the characters’ affective experience of how memory and historical meaning disappears in these in-between places.

The thesis focuses on a select number of Mantel’s novels to trace the multiple levels of the dwelling-as-archive. Chapter one explores *Every Day is Mother’s Day* and the depiction of 2 Buckingham Avenue as a decaying dwelling where memory and archived objects constantly slip and disappear only to reappear later in time or in different rooms. The house acts as a gateway for the mundane and the supernatural, making it an in-between place for Muriel Axon to roam free while Evelyn remains trapped by her memories. Meanwhile, the Axon family experience neglect and the invasion of spectres, the Sidney family, and social workers which further break down the Axon archive. The entropy of the house and mother-daughter relationship represents the complex relationship between home ownership and self-reliance in a Thatcherite Britain.

Chapter two moves to Mantel’s first historical novel *A Place of Greater Safety* and its theme of the city as a polyvalent dwelling place where historical meaning is constantly created and erased. The image of the city in Mantel’s works is never a fixed entity. Cities are sites of radical change (in urban planning, architecture, historical events, or social change), and knowledge is constantly disrupted, hidden, or altered into misinformation. The chapter offers a comparative approach to *APOGS* with Mantel’s novel *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* to

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<sup>115</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009), p. 71.

investigate the city as another in-between place that complicates the recording and storing of archival documents in private dwellings.

Chapter three examines Mantel's *Fludd* (1989) and the complex discourse between religious doctrine and the archiving of local community knowledge. The vernacular archive in *Fludd* shares tensions with the physical archive that the statues of St. Thomas Aquinas represent. The church is a decaying dwelling that doubles as a physical symbol of the Fetherhoughtonian community's vernacular archive, which is disrupted by Catholic religious reform and the alchemical influence of Fludd. The church and the town of Fetherhoughton is a complex dwelling-as-archive that remains an archive because of its buried historical meaning that the Fetherhoughtonians can recall yet dare not mention.

Chapter four then investigates the suburban neighbourhoods in *Beyond Black* as the more concrete example of the in-between places in Mantel's works. The new-builds in *BB* supposedly hold no historical meaning or history to haunt the medium Alison with. However, the fragmented sense of history and memory from her personal life and the lives of her clients eventually invade both private and public dwellings. The new-builds become places where historical meaning and familial memory are reimagined rather than lost totally, and they become a distorted ideal of an archive in the novel. The failure of twenty-first century technology as an archival resource cement the need to return to the house and body to better process and contain memories.

Chapter five looks to the Cromwell Trilogy and the fictional depiction of Thomas Cromwell's Austin Friars as a dwelling-as-archive haunted by a lack of domesticity. Austin Friars is an in-between place in London where the political and personal overlap, international language is spoken and trade is carried out, and where the borders between fictional representation and documented facts about Cromwell's life blur. The textual resurrection of Austin Friars is yet another ambivalent archive that holds real documents that shape the form of the narrative and imagined documents such as *The Book of Henry*. Austin Friars is a physical dwelling representing Cromwell's personal and national memory management. The dwelling-as-archive is influenced by the political agendas of the Henrician Reformation that shapes and disrupts Cromwell's centre of political and personal power.



## Chapter One: ‘A Place Not Occupied, But Still Furnished’: The Decaying Dwelling-as-Archive in Hilary Mantel’s *Every Day is Mother’s Day*

Mantel’s first published novel *EDIMD* features the decaying private dwelling as both setting and character. The private dwelling of 2 Buckingham Avenue is an unsettled domestic space. Mantelian dwellings such as the house play with the readers’ perception of secure dwellings and the distinctions of public and private borders. Private dwellings usually preserve family possessions and have adequate and functioning furniture. However, Mantel’s first published novels subvert typical assessments of a secure dwelling-as-familial archive with its themes of invasion, hauntings, and fragmentary familial memory. Set in a West Midlands town in the late 1970s to the 1980s, the novels are concerned with generating a historical record of familial neglect and, in Eleanor Byrne’s words, the ‘dismantling of social welfare and care structures.’<sup>1</sup> The physical structure of Muriel and Evelyn Axons’ (and later the Sidney family’s) house of 2 Buckingham Avenue undergoes cyclical transformations of decay which either parallel or contrast the family dynamics between Muriel and Evelyn Axon, or later the Sidney family.

Under the Axon ownership, the house is outwardly described as ‘a nice detached property’ with a neglected interior:

The most remarkable thing was the quality of furniture, each heavy and unpolished piece pushed up against the next, jostling for space on a mud-coloured carpet; surely, Florence thought, carpets are not woven in any such shade. The upholstery of the suite was greasy and worn, the wallpaper yellow with age. What a way to live, Florence thought; creating a slum, here in this neighbourhood.<sup>2</sup>

There is still quality and useful furniture, yet items like the Axons’ china cabinet are empty and electric fires are dusty with bare wires. The house is not a domestic haven. Rooms like the kitchen deny access, isolating the Axons from domestic chores like cooking. Evelyn forewarns that nothing seems to survive in this house and the presence of spectres is never confirmed in the empty hallways except for the tossing of possessions. Due to the presence of spectres in empty hallways, Evelyn’s bedroom, and the kitchen, the house is an in-between place in the neighbourhood that evades attempts to record or restore history. The tossing of furniture and the neglect of possessions imply a disorganised archive and a disrupted private home.

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<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Byrne, ‘Mantel’s Social Work Gothic: Trauma and State Care in *Every Day is Mother’s Day* and *Vacant Possession*’, in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspective*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 13-26, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 10, p. 111.

The house's placement on the corner of an avenue also emphasises the Axons' isolation from their neighbourhood. Evelyn notes that due to her work as a medium, people come to the house 'for a Cook's Tour of the other world; as if it were in some other but accessible place' (p. 14). Meanwhile, in *EDIMD* Colin Sidney states that despite the Axons being neighbours with their front gate in Buckingham Avenue 'you didn't think of them being next door' (p. 178). The perception of 2 Buckingham Avenue as a forgettable gateway into the supernatural world negates the house's function of a domestic haven in a suburban neighbourhood. The dwelling, the garden attached to the dwelling, and the owners of the house are squarely in an in-between place. Just as the house represents an in-between place that refuses to contain historical meaning, it also evades attempts to be captured in any historical record. 2 Buckingham Avenue also acts as a borderless site where present and past coexist, emphasised in Isabel's '*Confessions of a Social Worker*' that she writes in *VP*. The Axons' 2 Buckingham exists in *VP* as a memory for Muriel Axon and Isabel Field, cementing its phantasmal in-between place status in text and memory. Furthermore, 2 Buckingham Avenue is a decaying archive, where documents such as newspapers and familial memory become illegible and lost, unable to be recreated or recalled. This chapter investigates the multiple layers 2 Buckingham represents as a dwelling that is also a problematic archive.

As frequently noted by those investigating Mantel's works, 2 Buckingham Avenue is a gothic domestic space that does not merely allude to, as Arnold states, 'historical details or parodic nods to the derelict ancestral homes of early gothic narratives, but form[s] analogues with the putative carers who inhabit them.'<sup>3</sup> A Mantelian dwelling site is rarely a ruin. Ruins, Sarah Annes Brown defines, are traditionally 'thought of as uncanny, haunted places. As well as simply being the traces of the buildings in which people long since dead once lived, ruins have themselves often been figured as skeletons, corpses, or ghosts.'<sup>4</sup> 2 Buckingham Avenue is a decaying dwelling, with the walls acting as porous borders that slowly break down the differences between reality and the supernatural world. The Mantelian dwelling site *EDIMD* represents acts as a border between the spirit world and the outside world on account of how these quasi-ruins have the constant capacity to haunt the people who live in the house. The Axons' house offers a modern-day version of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*'s (1898) examination of ghosts and haunting, which plays with the character's uncertainties about their

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<sup>3</sup> Arnold, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Annes Brown, *A Familiar Compound Ghost: Allusion and the Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 76.

dwelling because of the lack of barriers between paranoia and perception. Ghost-seeing affects the Axons' distinction between past and present, and domestic spaces are made unhomey.<sup>5</sup> The spectres are purposeful and have more agency than ghosts to express different historical meanings in mundane objects and architectural studies. Thus, 2 Buckingham Avenue's spectres and the themes of decay cement the novel as a gothic novel.

The collapse of the house allows spectres to achieve a level of corporeality with the ambiguous and porous walls and rooms. Their habitation of the halls presents their physicality as, in Jacques Derrida's words, a paradoxical incorporation or a 'becoming body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes rather, some "thing" that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition.'<sup>6</sup> Their inhabitation of the house's physical structure breaks the borders between the uncanny and the mundane, and the incorporeal and corporeal experience of dwelling. Their presence aversely effects the Axons' dwelling experience, and the novel suggesting that spectres are the cause of the house's decay and the breakdown of familial relationships.

As expressed in *VP*, spectres make themselves known in the spare room of 2 Buckingham Avenue as, Muriel thinks, 'malign intentions, Mother said, [they were] waiting to be joined to bodies; they were the notions of the dead, expecting flesh.'<sup>7</sup> Previously ghosts, they are summoned into corporeality by Evelyn's work as a medium. Their invasion into the house as manifested 'people' (or in the form of memory) is emphasised through violent yet mundane actions. Evelyn observes these invasions as evidence, for 'now here was the proof of it, the tin taken some weeks ago. It was always the same kind of trick; the spilt sugar, the small thefts, the china they had smashed pieces.'<sup>8</sup> The broken china signals the spectres' ability to move objects, but also that they can break material objects into fragments. The broken china then symbolises the spectres' ability to remove archived objects from their designated places (such as the china cabinet as a crockery archive), and thus their disruptive impact on domestic objects. Spilt or broken objects then simulate an in-between state of being or incoherent, fluid bodies that resembles both Derrida's spectres and Julia Kristeva's abject (though broken china and spilt sugar are not liquids).<sup>9</sup> Spectres are then the cause of fragmented archival objects in

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<sup>5</sup> Freud, 'The Uncanny', *Writings on Art and Literature*.

<sup>6</sup> Derrida, p. 6

<sup>7</sup> *VP*, p. 37.

<sup>8</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> See Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) for the definition on Abject.

their quest to become corporeal bodies, which then blurs the borders of these objects' corporeality and conceptual archives.

The spectres redefine the borders between spiritual and mundane, while simulating the tensions of territories seen in classic European historical novels. Franco Moretti figures historical fictions from the nineteenth century as located primarily 'away from the centre [...] in the proximity of borders' with a 'weak centripetal pull, with the story running immediately away from the national capital.'<sup>10</sup> Moretti claims that the geographical constant of borders offered 'nineteenth-century Europe a veritable phenomenology of the border' when 'the need to represent the territorial division of Europe [grew] suddenly stronger' (p. 35). Matthew Hart further develops Moretti's links between historical fiction and space by stating the historical novel represents the

'disorderly spatial and temporal character of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century states, which are not singular sorts of polity at all. By staging tales of treachery and adventure close to various internal and external borders, classical historical novels reveal the developmental and territorial heterogeneity of the newly dominant nation-states of Europe.'<sup>11</sup>

Borders are at once rooted in time and space yet symbolise process and fluidity in geographic or domestic spaces. Mantel goes further by placing her characters within domestic borders and boundaries as a parodic reflection of national dramas and challenging the developmental and territorial heterogeneity of long-established domestic places. The literary depiction of the historical past through these borders are, in Matthew Hart's words, 'not by reconciling bourgeois notions of progress with the reality of a history forged in crisis (Lukács's thesis), or by travelling to frontier settings that affirm the integrity of the national home (Moretti's conjecture)' (p. 146) but through the absence of historical meaning.

The spectral allusions in Mantel's works, particularly in *EDIMD* and *VP*, simulates borders' influence in geopolitical discourse and identity. However, the novels also point to absent borders. The breakdown of the borders in 2 Buckingham Avenue means that there are no borders, which allows Muriel and the social workers to cross the border between the public and private spheres. Sarah Green states that borders are 'supposed to act as barriers, intended to control the movement of things, people, and sometimes also ideas, between one place and another.'<sup>12</sup> Green also claims that those who live near borders are considered 'bastions of the

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<sup>10</sup> Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 33-35.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Hart, *Extraterritorial: A Political Geography of Contemporary Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), p. 143.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Green, 'A Sense of Border', *A Companion to Border Studies*, ed. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 573-592, p. 576.

nation [...] because there is a danger that these people are, or will become, mixtures or hybrids, transgressing and combining what should be kept separate' (p. 577). Because the Axons live in a borderless territory of the in-between place that 2 Buckingham Avenue represents, they are hybrids of corporeal and non-corporeal beings. Evelyn's inability to track Muriel or the memory of Clifford in the dwelling emphasises their hybrid existence in a borderless place.

When she was alive, Evelyn refers to Muriel as a spectral or ghostly figure unable to autonomously transmit knowledge: 'useless to try to talk to Muriel, to ask her for some account of the letter. Muriel rarely spoke now; it was like going back to her childhood. More and more, when Evelyn was in a room with her daughter, she felt as if no one was there.'<sup>13</sup> Evelyn's inability to track Muriel confirms Muriel's unseen movements both inside and outside of the house. Muriel also mimics spectral behaviours in the house by picking up objects and moving them between the kitchen and garden. Muriel is rendered spectral to her own mother, exemplifying Green's assessment of the hybrid existence at borders.

Muriel operates in *VP* as another malevolent spectre seeking revenge and repossession of 2 Buckingham Avenue. Muriel exhibits border crossing from the decaying domestic structure of 2 Buckingham Avenue into the clinical settings of psychiatric hospital Fulmers Moor and the geriatric hospital where Colin's mother, Mrs Sidney, and the father of Muriel's child and Isabel Field, Philip Field, reside. These buildings are attributed with visual metaphors of 'crumbling grey core', or like a 'workhouse, grey and draughty, with its high ceilings and stained walls. [...] Its general air was so depressing, its inmates so futureless and its corridors so drab.'<sup>14</sup> Arnold describes Fulmers Moor as having the impression of a 'deracinated and ahistorical location [...] deprived of any architectural features which might situate it within a particular historical moment.'<sup>15</sup> The building's ahistorical location aids Muriel's border crossing so she can gain access to Philip Fields room, and her memory of her past encounter with him. In contrast, the geriatric hospital retains the memory and furniture of the workhouse it once was.

The institutionalised spaces that Muriel experiences outside of 2 Buckingham Avenue frame her as a depersonalised subject whose mental disability further ostracises her from society: 'Can't I be treated like a normal person?'<sup>16</sup> The institutional spaces are ironic domestic spaces, a 'homely home-from-home to pursue a career as a lunatic' (p. 48), that further

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<sup>13</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> *VP*, p. 64, p. 91.

<sup>15</sup> Arnold, pp. 64-65.

<sup>16</sup> *VP*, p. 54.

facilitates the disconnect between subject and dwelling. Muriel exhibits the characteristics of a postmodern subject – specifically the Lacanian ‘split’ subject brought on by neglect – derived by the multiple readings of placement and spaces experienced through what Donna Haraway calls a ‘permanent partiality.’<sup>17</sup> The denial of individual identity to Muriel and the other patients juxtaposes the repeated border crossings between outside and the hospital. Her disconnect from Buckingham Avenue begins, in Arnold’s words, ‘a process of spectralisation that is compounded by nursing practice. Mantel’s choice of narrative voice when relating the experience of the patients at Fulmers Moor attests to an erasure of individual identity, collapsing as it does any discrete subjective voice and implying a blending together of individual experience.’<sup>18</sup> Fulmers Moor inspires Muriel to assimilate multiple identities to enter society and the working world of the Geriatric Hospital, though she steals Poor Mrs Wilmot’s documents to assume her identity, ‘the documents that tied her colleague to the working world.’<sup>19</sup> The documents facilitate Muriel’s hidden movements in the hospital as she enacts revenge on Philip Field and Mrs. Sidney. However, her movements and access to ahistorical places confirm her status as a social spectre with no firm identity of her own.

These ahistorical locations muddle the patients’ sense of place and time, as well as identity. Muriel’s spectral status parallels Mrs Sidney’s experience of care at the hospital, where ‘the rigidity of institutional life has proved a too forceful model for her inner reality’ (p. 154), and she believes herself a member of the royal family. The caregiving facilities are reimagined as fractured spaces where identity and home values cannot be carried out. Their physical characteristics denote a placelessness where historical knowledge cannot be embedded or interpreted. The embodied experience of dwelling is partial and constantly uproots feelings of stability in public places, especially in borders and in-between places. The fact that Evelyn also believes that Muriel’s baby is a changeling emphasizes the production of hybrid beliefs and bodies in a borderless territory. Thus, the ahistorical locations of public dwellings mirror the borderless status of 2 Buckingham Avenue. These places also mean there is no ability to track the bodies that inhabit these in-between places. Mantel frequently writes on marginal experiences and people who live on borderlines, stating in the Reith Lecture ‘The Day is for the Living’ that ‘for most of my career I wrote about odd and marginal people.’<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Donna Haraway, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century’, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1991), p. 173.

<sup>18</sup> Arnold, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> *VP*, p. 68.

<sup>20</sup> ‘The Day Is For The Living’.

The spectral figures of the past are grouped with these marginal people Mantel writes as a result of the disordering process of domestic borders. In *EDIMD*, the structure of a house as a material border between the individual and society necessitates the mundane for the inhabitants to maintain their identity. However, without the mundane and clear distinctions between domestic and public, people become spectres with no roots to their domestic homes.

Domestic objects are crucial in defining the domestic place. The relation between objects/furnishings and the inhabitant of domestic spaces are also an affective, sensory experience. However, in *EDIMD*, objects are not reliable and are moved around to confuse the inhabitants, which makes them complex archival objects. When Evelyn catalogues the movement of objects by the supernatural, it also symbolises the distinct disordering process that complicates the archival role of the dwelling and Evelyn's sense of control over the house and its rooms. Household objects are frequently mobile or in transit, which points to what Maruska Svasek describes as 'how transportable objects evoke feelings in distinct socio-geographical milieux [...and] contributes to recent debates about globalisation, cultural production' and historical meaning.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the spectral disrupts the ordering process of understanding the relations between subject and object, which reframes the sensory experiences of cultural production and historical meaning into the unfamiliar or sublime.

The spectres' ability to interact with mundane objects in 2 Buckingham Avenue refigure the house as a potential site for historical knowledge and a metaphor for a geography of the mind. The Axons' house stands as an artefact of spectral presence because of the physical objects (e.g. furniture) it holds as a domestic/supernatural archive or with clothing that once belong to the haunting dead: 'Clifford has come back, and hung his coat on the hallstand.'<sup>22</sup> In her own reading of spectrality, Arnold notes the particular use of Clifford's possessions as a spectral representation of historical artefacts. His possessions are unearthed by Muriel, doubling as what Arnold calls 'relics of the traumatic past, bringing objects back into the house and with them the histories that are attached.'<sup>23</sup> Their movement from the garden to the house outlines the past's mobility and outlines objects of the past as central to recall. The past that deeply affects Evelyn concerns the implied corpses of children put there by her husband ('do you take children down there?'<sup>24</sup>) and the objects Muriel unearths point to Evelyn as a witness

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<sup>21</sup> Maruska Svasek, 'Introduction', *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions*, ed. Maruska Svasek (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), pp. 1-40, p. 1

<sup>22</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> Arnold, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 174.

and contributor to buried pasts: ‘A blind eye Evelyn, a blind eye’ (ibid). Clifford’s warning, echoed through time, reinforces Evelyn’s recognition of objects’ ability to unbury the past. Clifford as a spectral presence confirms a spectral intervention buried in gardens and the unseen foundations of the house.

*EDIMD* is a contemporary to Graham Swift’s *Waterland* (1983). Mantel’s novel expresses guilt as crucial to historical inquiry and explores the infinite theoretical regressions that narratively occur when recalling the past or attempting to understand an origin. The spectres of 2 Buckingham Avenue have unknown origins. Was the assimilation of the spectres into the house because of Clifford’s actions, Evelyn’s seances with clients evoking them (which began the novel *EDIMD*), or because of Evelyn’s own emotionally deprived childhood perpetuating a multigeneration failure of parenting? The spectres’ influence on Evelyn’s past and the house draws attention to the supposed fixity of historical knowledge in decaying architectural structures and mundane objects. The house’s additional function as a failing familial archive with no fixed and meaningful objects also means that there is no origin of the Axons past to explore or recover.

The status of the historically meaningful object is called into question, which Mark Wigley states is expressed in architectural theory’s concern with ‘theoretical objects, which is to say, objects whose theoretical status and objecthood are problematic, slippery objects that make thematic the theoretical condition of objects and the objecthood of theory [...] in the end, the solidity of an object is always a product of slippage.’<sup>25</sup> The production of slippage in historically significant objects then interrogates whether memories are easily ‘placed’ or subject to shifting territorial disputes based on the specific placement of the object in the decaying domestic sphere. Memories are easily lost in ahistorical locations because there are no permanent objects to help the Axons recall their past. The disruption of historical knowledge influences, and is influenced by, the dilapidated physical state of the house with subsequent affective responses concerning the neglect Muriel and Evelyn experience.

Meanwhile, the house is falling apart because it is an archive of Evelyn’s unprocessed or unsorted past. The dwelling-as-archive is then ‘full of what [Evelyn] had conjured up; a three-bed two-reception property on a large corner plot, all jostled and crammed with the teeth-baring dead, stranded souls whistling in the cavity walls, half-animated corpses under the

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<sup>25</sup> Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 30-31.



flagstones outside.’<sup>26</sup> The corpses are obliquely referenced as unseen and buried within the house, which overwhelms Evelyn’s memories and experience of the domestic space: ‘the nameable fears giving way to the unnameable, the familiar dread of evening muffled under a pall of fog, of blackness, of earth; all the days lived as if underground.’<sup>27</sup> Evelyn’s foreshadowed death in the novel conflates her past with her future, presenting a timeless dwelling-as-archive that contains unprocessed memories.

Arnold states that ‘the image of being buried alive tips Evelyn herself into being a quasi-spectral figure, whose full claim to subjecthood has been compromised.’<sup>28</sup> Her murder completes the transformation and marks the house’s distinct capability to spectralise its inhabitants; Evelyn becomes the past in real-time and is then embodied in the house as another spectre. The act of recalling brings her back into the text of *VP* as a spectral figure who haunts Muriel as another image of the Axons’ collective past. Muriel states that ‘mother had not materialised; but often, as she polished the scratched dining table at Buckingham Avenue, Muriel thought she felt her hanging in the air.’<sup>29</sup> In either a corporeal or spectral form, Evelyn is still fixed in the house (and text), which proves the dwelling’s physical structures’ ability to contain her and her past as an archive.

Thus, 2 Buckingham Avenue is the repository of the Sidneys’ and Axons’ familial archive, with the spare room as a metaphorical space to which Isabel consigns her memories of her temporary imprisonment. The borderline of the domestic space contains the past: the conservatory, the walls, and the flagstones. The Axons have an unprocessed catalogue of objects, corpses, and spectres contributing to the silenced archive 2 Buckingham Avenue represents. Evelyn assigns the conservatory to contain Clifford’s collection of newspapers:

The local *Reporter* for all the years they had lived at Buckingham Avenue. There was no topic which had interested him, no local good work or sport or sewerage scheme. He had merely laid them aside in the spare room, week after week. After his death Evelyn had left them for a while, and then, sensing that the room was needed, had dashed them in great bales down the stairs and humped them along the hallway and out through the back door. It is absurd to say, she tells Muriel, that we do not have newspapers. They are all there [...] postcards from relatives escaped to Bournemouth, *Little Dorrit* with the back off [...] They yellow and moulder’ (p. 53).

Newspapers as a source of embodied historical knowledge are rendered obsolete. The decaying texts (also represented in the intertextual reference of *Little Dorrit* (1855-1857) then facilitates a silence in 2 Buckingham Avenue’s material sources.

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<sup>26</sup> *VP*, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 174.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> *VP*, p. 159.

Evelyn deliberately shuts out the public sphere and the attached inscribed historical knowledge from the private realm through the metaphor of the door and her refusal to buy newspapers. Evelyn's rejection of the public sphere signifies Muriel's impending dissolution and estrangement from the public record. The abandoned newspapers are a spectral archive with a reduced materiality because they embody fragments of the Axons' past through the ghostly image of Clifford. They are 'emptied of the written word – of any information about the political events unfolding outside the prison walls – the newspaper is no longer a vehicle of knowledge but has been reduced to its materiality, a seemingly worthless pile of grubby paper.'<sup>30</sup> Newspapers have no relational meaning for Evelyn, who is concerned with the supernatural influence on the objects: 'All the news was the same, and all bogus. The papers took no cognisance of the other world, except when they found some cheap talk of poltergeists or table-turning to fill the pages up.'<sup>31</sup> The Axons' house stands as an archive of spectral presence because it stores spectres rather than newspapers which are the unprocessed archival objects of the public sphere. The unprocessed archive is then characteristic of the Mantelian dwelling-as-archive being an in-between place.

Hidden rooms hold Clifford's consigned objects, and these rooms represent an unprocessed familial archive contaminated with spectres and Evelyn's memories of the past. The Axons' archive maps the supernatural's presence in the everyday objects and so subverts the totalising authority of the archive. Gabrielle Giannachi claims that archival sites, 'rather than their content, had become synonymous with their authority. By being in an established archive, a document gained in credibility and, possibly, believability.'<sup>32</sup> The implicit unidentified dead bodies in the garden symbolise Evelyn's resistance to remembering (do you take children down there?)<sup>33</sup> The 'half-animated corpses under the flagstones outside'<sup>34</sup> are part of the unseen and buried past through which people who intrude in the archive cannot discover, such as Colin Sidney and the Police.

Muriel 'has a passion for giving objects the wrong name, even when she knows the right one; it is a technique of bafflement she is practising,' which contributes to the unsettled historical meaning within the catalogued archive of domestic objects of 2 Buckingham

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<sup>30</sup> Katharina Boehm, 'Historiography and the Material Imagination in the Novels of Sarah Waters', *Studies in the Novel*, 43.2, (2011), 237-57, pp. 248-9.

<sup>31</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> Gabrielle Giannachi, *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2016), p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> *VP*, p. 37.

Avenue.<sup>35</sup> Muriel's deliberate muddling of objects' names and placement in the house compounds Evelyn's aversion to catalogue the spectres and dead corpses. Named objects possess their own archival potential, even as Muriel does not understand their historical meaning:

Then her eye caught some writing. Writing in a coat? Who would want to write in a coat? She sniggered. She carried the coat over to the light to make sure. Yes, there was a kind of tape sewn into it, yellow and frayed, and faint grey letters on the tape. This coat had a name. Or its owner had a name. It would be pleasant to find out who was under the stones. Evidently corpses wrote in their clothes; evidently they had a strong sense of private property (p. 81).

Without proper inscription with its historical meaning attached, Clifford's coat is a floating signifier that haunts Evelyn. According to Jacques Derrida, the unprocessed archival object is 'something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it is, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence.'<sup>36</sup> The spectres assimilate into 2 Buckingham Avenue's walls and moving objects, becoming a textual presence.

The text on the coat evokes the Freudian uncanny. The coat seemingly does not belong to Evelyn's familial archive as Clifford is dead, and the writing on the coat has not been ascribed to his body. However, Evelyn attributes historical knowledge ascribed to the nameless coat as part of the spectral archive that 2 Buckingham contains. The hidden bodies under the flagstones point to, in Susan Strehle's words, 'the uncertainties of knowledge and the limits of observers' authority' in unprocessed archives.<sup>37</sup> The lack of newspapers in Evelyn's life does not liberate her from the past, and 2 Buckingham Avenue falls further into its entropic pocket of the unprocessed past. If spectres, the body, and the decaying 2 Buckingham Avenue are the indicators of time passing for the Axons, then the inscribed materials such as newspapers are the only indicator to present unprocessed time.

The borderless places, and the lack of inscribed knowledge, further muddles Muriel's concept of the past and present into an interior hinterland:

Without causality there is no time, and there is no causality in Muriel's head. Evelyn's speech is just a noise, like the clatter of dustbin lids or the crack of bone, the incessant drip of the guttering. Events have no order, no structure, no purpose. Things happen because they must, because they can. Each moment belongs in infinity, each infinity cherishes its neighbour like turtle-doves on a bough. Muriel's heart is a mathematical place, a singularity from which, in time, everything will issue.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 45.

<sup>36</sup> Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Susan Strehle, *Contemporary Historical Fiction, Exceptionalism and Community: After the Wreck* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 45.

Historical information relating to the Axons' familial archive does not pass the borders of public or private spheres, and the borders between past and present remain muddled without a reliable archival agent to sort the unprocessed inscriptions.

The fixity of historical knowledge for the Axons is further challenged when the dwelling-as-archive 2 Buckingham Avenue is disrupted by the Sidney family's cosmetic changes to the house and furniture. Colin Sidney states that they can 'give it a good clean-up, slap a bit of white paint around, it'll be completely different' (p. 209). The changes to the space introduce the Sidneys' spatial memories and family values, drawing attention to the active and repetitive practices needed to cement a certain identity in the home. The Sidney family substitutes the Axons' house for their own purpose. Meanwhile, Colin buries any historical record of the Axons when he steals Isabel Field's missing file on the Axons from the house of his colleague Frank, who planned to use the file to turn the domestic scenario into 'a sort of allegory, you see, about the state of our society' (p. 159). Colin's active suppression of the Axons' domestic expression of a decaying house and home simulate decaying histories in localised environments.

Meanwhile, the Buckingham Avenue occupied by the Sidneys is similarly influenced by the 'accumulated misery' derived from the breakdown of family dynamics, which affect their mundane objects: 'Nothing works. There's no hot water. The lightbulb's gone in my room and I daren't stand on a chair.'<sup>39</sup> The house returns to a parodic 'origin' or 'official history' of decay, an 'authorised transgression' according to Linda Hutcheon.<sup>40</sup> Instead of the Axons' spectres facilitating this physical breakdown, Muriel haunts the Sidney family as their daily woman and goes through their household objects, such as Sylvia's photographs and drawers. Muriel's disguises aid her unseen influence over the Sidneys' domesticity and archive. Thus, 2 Buckingham Avenue's objects and attempts to hold archives and memories are forever disrupted by the unseen and hidden.

## **I. The Reinvention of Inconvenient and Incoherent 'Truths' in 2 Buckingham Avenue**

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<sup>39</sup> *VP*, pp. 185, p. 187.

<sup>40</sup> Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 101.

2 Buckingham Avenue is a dwelling-as-archive because of the way the social worker Isabel Field inscribes her experience of the house and being trapped in the spare room by Muriel. Despite claiming that 2 Buckingham Avenue is ‘just a house. Just an empty shell, when the people are taken away’, Isabel still remembers her fear of the place and the ‘horrible things [that] had happened in that house.’<sup>41</sup> However, Isabel notes that ‘for months at a time [she] couldn’t get into the house’ (p. 85) which complicates her recording of the past 2 Buckingham Avenue. Her inability to access the house signifies her imaginative recollection of the past and what happened behind the closed doors of the in-between place of 2 Buckingham Avenue.

In both *VP* and *EDIMD*, Isabel’s narrative explores authenticity and the recollection of missing information from the past. The novels, and *EMOGS*, question their information sources as they attempt to record the past. Muriel’s missing file is an examination into how lost written knowledge easily moves between public and private archival spaces. Through Isabel’s inscribed account, *EDIMD* and *VP* negotiate the consequences of lost documentation and the processes of recovering what was lost. Isabel inscribes her personal history of the events of *EDIMD* via memory recollection. Mantel draws from her autobiographical experience as a social worker in a geriatric hospital in 1970s Britain.<sup>42</sup> Isabel’s recollection of *VP*’s past is analogous to Mantel making sense of her own past in the Welfare State.

In *EDIMD*, as part of Mantel’s scepticism of material records on the past, Isabel’s memory is constantly in question, which is at odds with her being ‘drunk on her past, she goes crazy on it.’<sup>43</sup> Subjective experience and personal memory are missing/misplaced materials. Both novels foreground the impossibility of finding out the truth about the past through the character’s ability to lose inscribed documents. Mantel’s first two works’ misplacement of archived, formal documentation is of concern because it questions public documentation’s safety when it concerns very private and domestic lives. The dwelling space acts as a material border between the individual and society, which the Social Service’s truth-seeking has breached.

However, Isabel Field represents the archival agent who subverts the spectral figure of the historian posited in Mantel’s Reith Lectures: ‘She placed her newspaper on top of it, and Muriel’s file. Would the neighbours know? Possibly, and possibly not; perhaps Evelyn was in

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<sup>41</sup> *VP*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Mantel, ‘Hilary Mantel, Richard Eyre, and others on their first jobs’, *The Telegraph*, (2012), [date last accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020], <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/9555343/Hilary-Mantel-Richard-Eyre-and-others-on-their-first-jobs.html>>.

<sup>43</sup> *VP*, p. 166.

the habit of locking Muriel up. If I have the only knowledge, she thought, I may also have the only evidence.’<sup>44</sup> Her archival double is Colin Sidney, a history teacher, whose lack of desire to inscribe/record the past undermines his authority to inscribe: ‘Being a history teacher you’d think he’d like to keep a record.’<sup>45</sup> His unfilled diary and drawer of temporary enthusiasms and old socks present an unprocessed and unrecorded archive of Colin’s life, affirming his belief ‘that he had no life worth recording’ (ibid). His photograph of Isabel symbolises the hidden evidence of his affair where previously he denies its existence in *EDIMD*: ‘there was no written evidence, and really no evidence at all, of that segment of his life.’<sup>46</sup> Colin’s preoccupation with the past is its displacement from the present, which he states ‘we only experience in retrospect’ (ibid). He refuses to make sense of the past, and he reappropriates the Axons’ house into his own familial archive, which hides the object that signifies his affair with Isabel Field. Colin’s refusal to understand the past emphasises the amount of buried evidence within 2 Buckingham Avenue over the years.

The female characters in *EDIMD* and *VP* also take the archival agent role: Isabel Field, Sylvia Sidney, and Muriel Axon. The characters’ recollections of photographs, coats, and memories are alternate documents that subvert the historian’s authority to record the past. However, each woman’s quest to understand the past reveals active silences in private archives. Sylvia, once finding the photograph of Isabel removes the photograph from the sock drawer and deliberately destroys the evidence of the affair and her own younger image: ‘ripped the photographs through and slipped them into the pocket of her jeans, meaning to drop them in the kitchen bin when no one was looking.’<sup>47</sup> The photograph’s removal from the Sidneys’ archive rejects Isabel’s past presence and is Sylvia’s refusal to accept her own self-knowledge. Peter Widdowson, remarking on Graham Swift’s *Out of this World* (1988), states that the ‘dominant motif of twentieth-century alienation is its own mode of self-representation or self-knowing: photography. This is at once a form of “mechanical” dehumanisation, a form of truth-telling, a form of lying – and an analogy, in all these respects, for the novel’s own attempts to “capture” how it was, to offer a “portrait” of a family, to “record” twentieth-century reality.’<sup>48</sup> Mantel’s photographs oscillate between truth-telling and lying according to whether their absence contributes to characters’ self-knowledge. The Sidney photographs at once ‘capture’

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<sup>44</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 198.

<sup>45</sup> *VP*, p. 83.

<sup>46</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 212.

<sup>47</sup> *VP*, p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Widdowson, ‘Newstories: Fiction, History, and the Modern World’, *Critical Survey*, 7.1 (1995), 3-17, p. 13.

the affair of ten years ago and alienate Sylvia from her self-knowledge of the period, her appearance, and her own marriage. *EDIMD* and *VP* then present inverted archival agents who actively hide recorded documents and evidence of the past.

Isabel introduces silences in the archive by misplacing the file ‘Muriel Axon, No. III/73/0059,’ (which is the property of the Social Services Department,) and her fact retrieval when she writes a narrative of the past.<sup>49</sup> Both novels explore the processes of silencing historical meaning in sources, archives, and the making of narratives. Michel-Rolph Trouillot states that ‘silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources): the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives): the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives): and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance).’<sup>50</sup> Muriel’s missing file symbolises the four crucial moments outlined by Trouillot. The file’s creation is fragmentary:

During the years following Mr Hutchinson, then School Attendance Officer, visited the house on several occasions but unfortunately these records cannot be traced in the files of the newly-constituted Education Welfare Department (Query check County Hall). According to Mrs Axon client was referred (by Mr Hutchinson) to the Gresham trust which prior to the takeover of its functions by the Local Authority dealt with the welfare of the subnormal in the community.<sup>51</sup>

Evelyn Axon denies information, which contributes to the ‘assessment’ problems by being ‘uncooperative and almost hostile [...] who seems to resent any intervention by welfare agencies’ (p. 15). Muriel’s fragmentary file’s missing evidence means ‘the file can never be put together again. It goes back too many years, too many people have been involved’ (p. 107). Muriel Axon’s file, the missing archive, has private information made public by the Welfare State of 1970s Britain’s public manoeuvrability into private dwelling spaces.

The exchange of Muriel’s personal knowledge breaks the borders of private and public archives, yet Evelyn perceives the social worker’s access as a literal (and allegorical considering the spectres which haunt 2 Buckingham Avenue) invasion. The social worker’s invasion of 2 Buckingham Avenue is detailed in epistolary form, contributing to a heteroglossic account of the Axons’ case alternately stored in the institutional, public archive. The intra-communication between social workers contains professional voices. A case file states that the ‘client has achieved basic literacy, but as she lacks concentration and motivation no occupational adequacy is envisaged for the future’ (p. 21). However, the social workers’ internal letters have colloquial language, ‘I should warn you that in my opinion the old woman

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<sup>49</sup> *VP*, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> Trouillot, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 14.

is completely gaga, but I don't see what we can do' (p. 22). The novel switches between professional and colloquial voices to provide private and public perspectives on the Axon family. Record-keeping rules reveal the institutional standards ascribed to archival processes, although this is where the intra-connected knowledge base of the Welfare's archives start to become inconsistent: 'Mrs Axon states that the visits of the Trust ceased after one year and there appear to be no records of client as it does not seem to have been the policy of the Trust to keep records for more than five years' (p. 15). The file is both the product of accidental slippage and the institution's deliberate silencing of Muriel's existence. Private documents state 'between you and me, I wouldn't mind if we could lose Muriel when we get demolished' (p. 27). The archival systems in place for the Welfare are unreliable and subject to bureaucratic temporality. Muriel becomes buried evidence within bureaucratic documentation.

The assessment of Muriel's care is a patchwork with multiple voices and perspectives, revealing how fact retrieval and assembly are contaminated to make the records lost/inconsistent/have gaps in them. Isabel directly contributes to the missing evidence within the public archive by misplacing the file: 'It was only when she got back from lunch, and felt no better, that she remembered that she had left Muriel Axon's file on the back seat of the car. She telephoned the garage, but of course there was no answer.'<sup>52</sup> Isabel's thwarted quest for knowledge reveals no reliable truth or historical knowledge to be found in Muriel's file.

The novel then explores how, in Hutcheon's words, 'there are only truths in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness per se, just other's truths.'<sup>53</sup> The information denial and fragmentary file contribute to Isabel missing Muriel's pregnancy and her future fact retrieval for her '*Confessions*': 'Her mind wandered as she tried to put events in order. Her *Confessions* kept straying off the point. I'll make an outline, she thought, and work from that.'<sup>54</sup> Arnold states that the textual significance of Isabel's inability to record her memories and interpretation of events is due to her gothic heroine role. In Arnold's words, the social worker's role 'leads them to bridge the gap between the public and private spheres, to infiltrate the space of the home as agents of State Care [...] the social worker's societal preoccupations mimic the textual preoccupations of the gothic, as they seek to expose family secrets, bring to light scenes of domestic violence and of enforced captivity.'<sup>55</sup> The social worker's desire to bring to light

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<sup>52</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 91.

<sup>53</sup> Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, p. 109.

<sup>54</sup> *VP*, p. 85.

<sup>55</sup> Arnold, p. 76.



hidden knowledge that is contained in 2 Buckingham Avenue ironically reveals their own attempts to bury Muriel in their quasi-public documentation.

*EDIMD* and *VP*'s setting between 1974 and 1984 then examines the Conservative policy on social care and welfare in Britain, which Rodney Lowe states was 'conceived to be an organ of the community whose role was to serve the welfare of its citizens and respect international law, as opposed to the tyrannical 'warfare' state.'<sup>56</sup> The social worker's role was key to the evolution of the welfare state despite a lack of public esteem for the profession. Lowe also states that 'not only were they caring directly for the most vulnerable members of society (by whose treatment the humanity of any country's social services should ultimately be judged) but they also raised fundamental questions about the proper role of the state and the individual and, in particular, about the respective "rights" and duties of the citizen' (p. 262). However, despite its positives to maintain an active and caring society, the duology satirises state provision as a spectral invasion into the private sphere of 2 Buckingham Avenue.

Evelyn notes that social workers and neighbours in *EDIMD* would sniff 'around with their implications that life could be improved [...] It was Florence Sidney, Evelyn thought, who reported us to the Welfare. As if persons in our class of life needed the Welfare.'<sup>57</sup> In such a perspective, Evelyn echoes Lowe's unanswered question: 'to what extent should social workers, as employees of the taxpayer, encourage their clients to conform to conventional norms?'<sup>58</sup> In Lowe's words, the 'idealistic objective of the democratic socialists to create an altruistic society is instantly attractive, but it is idealistic' (ibid). A disconnect between the Welfare's public influence and Evelyn's sense of private ownership reflects in the in-between state of Muriel's missing file. Fragmented knowledge reveals what Lowe believes to be the 'erosion of voluntary provision' (p. 262) the social workers cannot actively maintain. Isabel's narrated past is fragmentary and the absence of historical meaning within her own account is partly due to her invasive presence in the domestic sphere of 2 Buckingham Avenue.

*EDIMD* and *VP* resist the 'professional enquirer,' which is the archival agent.<sup>59</sup> Mantel signals the various silencings/acts of silencing the individual social worker contributes to Muriel's past and the potential dangers of narrativisation. Isabel's completion of the narrative 'had not brought her the release she had expected. The more she wrote, the less clear it had become [...] all the events of her life up to now muddied and confused by her fear and sickness

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<sup>56</sup> Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945* (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 19.

<sup>58</sup> Lowe, p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 110.

in the Axon's spare room.'<sup>60</sup> Alternate attempts to recall the Axons distorts the record further, such as Frank's hope to turn the file into a novel:

'He thinks it's got the makings of a good story.'  
'But it's not a story, it's just what people do. It's just a record of what they do.'<sup>61</sup>

Frank's historiographic metafictional utterance of 'You can't imagine the lives some people lead. I might turn it into a sort of allegory, you see, about the state of our society' further destabilises the archival authority of the Welfare state, and thus their authority over private, familial archives: 'I'm not sure that they're not the villains of the piece. Interfering do-gooders.' (p. 159). *EDIMD* and *VP*'s issue with archive and recording, however, is not only because the dwelling-as-archive cannot contain historical meaning. Instead, the novels reflect over the crucial problem of memory recollection.

The space between public and private memories in familial archives is another border Mantel breaks with her literary historical fiction. Memory materialises in written records or as pictures or moving images. The fact that these objects frequently disappear or struggle to form a coherent object is proof of memory's fragmented nature in *EDIMD* and *VP*. Isabel states: 'one day I ought to call Colin, and ask him how the past is catching up. Compared to her, he had nothing on his conscience. Errors personal, errors professional... memory with violence. Like a series of snapshots, or outline drawings, flip them through at speed and watch them move.'<sup>62</sup> Isabel's perception of memory correlates with her own written account of the past, which draws attention to how memory is needed to write about the past.

Evelyn, too, views memory as a picture through which she relives the past, for 'far back in her memory was a picture of another Christmas Day.'<sup>63</sup> Evelyn symbolically discards the material Christmas letters into the unprocessed archive in favour of her embodied memory of Christmas Day. Memory then is perceived as 'an alternative format for language, has changed from being a medium for reconstructing a world as it was perceived into a semi-opaque and self-referential activity.'<sup>64</sup> Charles S. Maier outlines the difference between a historian and a retriever of memory. In Maier's words, historians must:

Reconstruct causal sequences; they tell stories of before and after and explain events by their antecedents. This was one reason that Nietzsche feared history might undermine living in the plenitude of the present. But the retriever of memory does not have the same responsibility to establish causal sequencing.

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<sup>60</sup> *VP*, p. 221.

<sup>61</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 164.

<sup>62</sup> *VP*, p. 139.

<sup>63</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 116.

<sup>64</sup> Charles S. Maier, 'A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections of History, Melancholy and Denial', *History and Memory*, 5.2 (1993), 136-52, p. 141.

Triumphs, traumas, national catastrophes make their presence felt precisely by their re-presence or representation. Memories are to be retrieved and relived, not explained (p. 143).

Mantel's works represent Gabrielle M. Spiegel's trope of memory which is 'partial, fragmented, transient, and allusive,' and proposes itself as a counter-historiographical force, 'the newest embodiment of a historical consciousness characteristic of postmodernism.'<sup>65</sup> Mantel applies memory as a counter-historiographical force to her personal familial archive.

In her first Reith Lecture, she recollects her great-grandmother Catherine's life, which establishes interest in the familial and memory. Mantel states in this lecture that 'by studying history – let's say, the emigrant experience, or the textile trade – I could locate Catherine in the public sphere. But I have no access to her thoughts.'<sup>66</sup> Truth-ownership, and whether it should be believed, further problematises the loss of diaries or other personalised objects as well as the entropic fragmentation of familial memory in *EDIMD* and *VP*. Mantel recognises that the process of recollecting personal and collective memory is the act of fictionalisation. She states:

Commemoration is an active process, and often a contentious one. When we memorialise the dead, we are sometimes desperate for the truth, and sometimes for a comforting illusion. We remember as a society, with a political agenda – we reach into the past for foundation myths of our tribe, our nation, and found them on glory, or found them on grievance, but we seldom found them on cold facts. Nations are built on wishful versions of their origins (ibid).

Romanticising the past is a part of memory's fragmentation, reaffirming the postmodern trend to distrust the past. Michel de Certeau, in *The Writing of History* (1988), argues that 'History is probably our myth.'<sup>67</sup> The remembered dead then renounce Spiegel's claim that 'historians must draw a line between what is dead (past) and what is not, and therefore they posit death as a total social fact, in contrast to tradition, which figures a lived body of traditional knowledge, passed down in gestures, habits, unspoken but nonetheless real memories, borne by living societies.'<sup>68</sup> Spectres embody national and familial myths and are inscribed into Mantel's works to deconstruct modern society's obsession with the past and memory-retrievers.

With regards to the fictional treatment of myth-constructing, Eleazar M. Meletinsky argues that 'many modern authors in fact seem to be seeking refuge in mythification because of their disillusion with historicism as a theoretical or artistic point of view, which perhaps expresses their fears regarding cataclysmic changes and their scepticism that social progress can change the metaphysical basis of human existence and consciousness.'<sup>69</sup> Mantel's

<sup>65</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time', *History and Theory*, 41.2 (2002), 149-62, p. 150.

<sup>66</sup> 'The Day Is For The Living'.

<sup>67</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 21.

<sup>68</sup> Spiegel, p. 161.

<sup>69</sup> Eleazar M. Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 277.

fascination with the myth of her family history allows her a closer interrogation of familial history within the private spheres of *EDIMD*. Thus, the national and social ‘myths’ exist concurrently in the public spheres of the historical settings Mantel’s works investigate.

Mantel states in ‘No Passes or Documents are Needed’ that myth can be empowering and redemptive:

The stories we tell ourselves, or which we appoint writers to tell us, can show us a better self, a self in potential. Myths are concerned with making possible on an imaginary level that which is not possible in our empirical experience. Behind every nation or state there is the state-that-might-have-been. Myth expresses a need for rootedness and identity, but it also allows us to continue to exist when we are uprooted; it allows us to uproot ourselves and still live, to take a sea voyage from our own identity. Myth is in constant movement and change. It re-creates itself through constant multiple reinterpretation, through constant acts of telling and reading and writing.<sup>70</sup>

Meanwhile, in Mantel’s first Reith Lecture, Mantel’s interrogates the past and archives to explore how ‘we carry the genes and the culture of our ancestors, and what we think about them shapes what we think of ourselves, and how we make sense of our time and place.’<sup>71</sup> Mantel’s works explore the myths in her historical setting (usually through the gothic) to understand how rumours and speculation enters inscribed artefacts, and if it contributes to the silence in the archives. Mantel’s historical production then focuses on archival fiction, memory theory, and historiographic metafiction to uncover the marginalised, while at the same time reaffirming that historiographies are difficult to recollect if drawn from the dwelling-as-archive.

## II. Thatcherism and its influence over the Mantelian Decaying Dwelling

The theme of domesticity in the dwelling-as-archive in Mantel’s novels is frequently influenced by the historical and political contexts of the world outside the private dwelling. Arnold, in her chapter ‘Spectres of Margaret’ in *Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades*, explores the role of caregiving in 1970s Britain as presented in *EDIMD* and *VP*. The novels’ gothic motif and spectral invasion challenge a dominant political rhetoric provided by Conservative and Thatcherite reforms. Margaret Thatcher stated in various speeches that family life should be viewed as ‘the basic unit of our society and it is in the family that the next generation is nurtured. Our concern is to create a property-owning democracy and it is therefore a very human concern. It is a natural desire of Conservatives that every family should have a

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<sup>70</sup> Mantel, ‘No Passes or Documents are Needed: The Writer at Home in Europe’, *On Modern British Fiction*, ed. Zachary Leader (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 93-106, p. 105.

<sup>71</sup> ‘The Day Is For The Living’.

stake in society and that the privilege of a family home should not be restricted to the few.<sup>72</sup> Domestic spheres underwent a new kind of regulation through the Housing Act of 1980 that prioritised the right to buy from local authorities, the security of tenure, and the shift of family-orientated (rather than State) care.

Emily Cuming states that the Right to Buy policy that allowed ‘council tenants to purchase their own homes, was a key element in the attack on a fundamental form of working-class life and served to propagate the neoliberal doctrine of property ownership as a form of social mobility.’<sup>73</sup> The New Right placed the space of the, in Arnold’s words, ‘home and the status of the nuclear family, indeed motherhood and parenting in general, at the forefront of much of their rhetoric [...] the prime minister repeatedly used newspaper and broadcast interviews to reiterate the centrality of the family and the home to the nation’s success.’<sup>74</sup> The belief ‘in the primacy of individual effort’ is frequently echoed in *EDIMD* and *VP*’s respective narratives as a spectral representation of Conservative housing policies that reversed growing state power over the life of the individual.<sup>75</sup> However, the parenting models in the novels undermine the conservative idealisation of the familial domestic through the compiled failures of housing, parenthood, and caregiving.

The failures first occur through the decay of 2 Buckingham Avenue. Second, familial dynamics and the home repeatedly break down and cannot be trusted to uphold the Conservative ideals. Muriel notes that ‘the break up of their family life, the increasing dereliction of the family home, was happening around her, but perhaps not at her behest; it was not she who had arranged for Jim Ryan to impregnate Suzanne. Life just arranges itself’ (p. 192). Pregnancies outside of marriage invert the traditional family models and muddle the borders between mother and daughter, caregiver and dependent, due to their transitional representation: ‘it might be possible that she is Evelyn. That Evelyn is growing inside her.’<sup>76</sup> Thirdly, caregiving in the domestic space and home values are inverted by Muriel’s emotional and educational neglect by her mother (inherited from neglectful models of parenting in Evelyn’s past) and by nutritional neglect because the spectres repeatedly prevent access to the Axons’ kitchen. Instead, the Axons have tins of meat and revolting orange juice. Fourthly, 2

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<sup>72</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Speech to Conservative Party Conference (plus address to overflow meeting)’, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, (1981), [date accessed 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021] <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104717>>.

<sup>73</sup> Cuming, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Arnold, p. 45.

<sup>75</sup> *VP*, p. 75.

<sup>76</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 25.

Buckingham Avenue's multiple occupancies disable familial power of ownership, with frequent references to ownership as an invasion rather than an empowering act. Inheriting property becomes synonymous with inheriting familial, historical knowledge. Familial inheritance of property or objects is only attainable through continuous decays or Muriel's malicious background actions.

The construction of domestic spaces with the spectre of Thatcherism provides a contemporary fictional perspective on state provision in 1980s Britain, which Eleanor Byrne notes 'gestures, perhaps with a prescient eye, to the future unveiling of widespread state-enabled child abuse that would rock multiple institutions in the coming decades.'<sup>77</sup> The social institution's archived inscriptions create social spectres like Muriel and Miss Anaemia, which implies Mantel's concern of public institutions (Social Service's) selective inclusion of, in Michelle Caswell's words, 'some records in the archives [are] at the expense of others effectively silences those voices deemed unworthy of historical attention.'<sup>78</sup> Miss Anaemia's presence within public archives depends on her ability to inscribe her subjectivity into public forms: 'A hundred forms she must have filled in, two hundred; all this information spinning away from her, out of her head and off into space. The process was extracting something from her, filing away at her essence; she was no more than the virgin white space between two black lines.'<sup>79</sup> The multitude of documents which Miss Anaemia fills for state provision renders her historical significance within these archival documents moot. Arnold states that 'the process of claiming social security payments, implies that the external systems through which the State provides financial support are internalised entirely by their recipients [...] linguistically, the structures of State care-giving infiltrate and eventually obliterate individual subjectivity as the work of the DHSS increasingly dominates Miss Anaemia's internal world.'<sup>80</sup> The reality of state provision is far outside of the domestic places that Thatcherite Britain espouses. The characters struggle to maintain a home for themselves, which does not fit into the rhetoric of self-sustainability. Anaemia and Muriel are made vulnerable by the DHSS and failures of state care provision.

As such, Isabel's '*Confessions*' reveals the silencing of Muriel's subjectivity through her failure to recount the past. Isabel also defends social work's role in private lives: 'then

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<sup>77</sup> Byrne, p. 25.

<sup>78</sup> Michelle Caswell, *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> *VP*, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> Arnold, p. 74.

everyone would know how social workers operate and why things go so badly wrong.’<sup>81</sup> Inscription is then synonymous with power. The role of State and individual regarding who should be responsible for public records is questioned as is whether Isabel has the right to tell the Axons’ private lives. The interrogation of the public production of historical records facilitates the past’s circulation and recollection. *EDIMD* and *VP* question whether to store Muriel’s past in an archive or Isabel’s subjective interpretation of Muriel’s past. Through Isabel’s invasion of the domestic archive and the missing file, Mantel outlines the public authority’s inability to consign and preserve familial histories and memory. *EDIMD* and *VP* maintain their distrust towards narrated histories as truthful accounts of the past. The novels also do not trust public archives to accurately contain individual subjectivity and familial memory.

*EDIMD* and *VP* imply that objects and memories must be archived in domestic spaces. However, Thatcherite values of self-sufficiency cause domesticity and archives to collapse. Consequently, historical meaning disappears without the dwelling-as-archive represented in *EDIMD* and *VP*. Mantel directly navigates Thatcher’s ‘contempt for history’ through reintroducing the house as a decaying container of historical.<sup>82</sup> The artistic illusion of the disorienting house in fiction that engages with Thatcherism is a place not fully occupied by spectres yet furnished with historical meaning. The theme of neglect in the novel means Mantel inverts Thatcher’s statement in her 1981 speech that home is ‘where [the] individual matters, and, as we move into an economy where size seems to dwarf the individual, the home and the atmosphere there becomes more and more important, not less.’<sup>83</sup> Muriel, in turn, carries the memories of the house yet feels ‘a terrible sense of incompleteness, as if something that mattered to her had been abandoned in one of the rooms.’<sup>84</sup> 2 Buckingham Avenue acts as a symbol for self-identification for Muriel and the source of historical knowledge that she must regain.

At the same time, Muriel recognises motherhood as a model for achievement: ‘I’ll be perfectly fulfilled’ (p. 193). Muriel experiences the home as incomplete because of her depersonalisation in institutions that disconnected her from Buckingham Avenue, the neglect she experiences, and the absence/presence of Evelyn’s past haunting her. To regain the

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<sup>81</sup> *VP*, p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> Mantel and Isaac Chotiner, ‘No One Writes About Politics like Hilary Mantel’, *New Republic*, 245. 18 (2014), 22-27, p. 24.

<sup>83</sup> Thatcher, ‘Speech at Conservative Party Conference (plus address to overflow meeting)’.

<sup>84</sup> *VP*, p. 43.

dwelling, which contains the memory of her child, is to regain her thwarted motherhood. These are achieved through the rhetoric of occupancy and self-identification with the house. Such rhetoric frames Muriel's affective response towards the house. The spectres in 2 Buckingham Avenue draw attention to the placelessness of historical meaning should Muriel fail to regain her childhood home, and thus fail in being a self-sustaining, private dwelling owner.

2 Buckingham Avenue is a symbol for Conservatism's property-owning democracy, and the novel directly refers to Muriel's right to vacant possession. Keith Shaw defines vacant possession as how 'The Buyer [or party with the right to vacant possession] being able to actually enjoy their right of possession immediately on Completion.'<sup>85</sup> Muriel's spectral repossession at the end of *VP* reverts the house 'to itself; their occupation had been a temporary thing, the blink of an eye, a memory erased as soon as the door closed on them.'<sup>86</sup> Muriel, through vacant possession, regains the right to haunt 2 Buckingham Avenue, and thus access to the archive. Muriel's historical memory of her mother and past is similarly reinstated with the view of the future possession of the house inscribed as a genealogical ownership: 'I'd have liked to give it an inheritance. A lovely house like this' (p. 129). To own the dwelling means Muriel reintegrates into society and Thatcherite values, and she regains her familial history. The various occupancies of the house and its objects underline the significance of property ownership and inheritance when producing historical knowledge.

Mantel's *EDIMD* and *VP* presentation of decaying homes and ownerships also subvert ideas of the national myth and historical memory. Edmund Toye in *EDIMD* states 'You say history, but I wonder what you think history is.'<sup>87</sup> *EDIMD*'s presentation of porous dwellings-as-archives then undermines neo-conservative political desire to 'return to history' as Margaret Thatcher expressed in her run-up to the 1983 election: 'How can it be sensible to flout everything history teaches us and all that we have learned from our own experience?'<sup>88</sup> Thatcher links the national past's effect on the future by stating that 'our history is the story of a free people, a great chain of people stretching back into the past and forward into the future. All are linked by a common belief in freedom, and in Britain's greatness. All are aware of their own responsibility to contribute to both. Our past is witness to their enduring courage, honesty

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<sup>85</sup> Keith Shaw, *Vacant Possession: Law and Practise* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2010), p. 171.

<sup>86</sup> *VP*, p. 237.

<sup>87</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 158.

<sup>88</sup> Thatcher, 'Speech to Young Conservative Conference', *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, (1983), [date last accessed: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021], <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/105252>>.



and flair, and to their ability to change and create.’<sup>89</sup> Raphael Samuel notes that Victorian values in 1970s political rhetoric became a talisman for ‘lost stabilities’ and Thatcher’s attitude to how ‘traditional institutions, so far from being reverent, was iconoclastic.’<sup>90</sup> Samuel further explains that Victorian values are part of Thatcher’s publicised ‘personal mythologies’ (p. 13), presenting herself as ‘a grocer’s daughter from Grantham’ (p. 14) whom a Victorian grandmother brought up. In Thatcher’s words, ‘we were taught to prove yourself; we were taught self-reliance; we were taught to live within our income. You were taught that cleanliness is next to godliness.’<sup>91</sup> The spectral Thatcher’s grandmother and Mantel’s great-grandmother are part of their familial myths within the speaker’s memories, reflected in Muriel’s complicated relationship with the dwelling-as-archive.

The changing hands of ownership, and the Sidney’s attempt at renovation, are not the foundational cause that unsettles historical knowing for the Axons and their sense of home. The spectres’ invasion is a form of occupancy, which *VP* revisits as a memory. In Muriel’s recollection of events in *EDIMD*, Evelyn describes her pregnancy as a feeling that ‘you’re occupied’ (p. 38). The vocabulary of housing recalled through memory notes Muriel’s fixation with property ten years after she was institutionalised, and her desire to claim Susanna’s child as a replacement for her own lost one is paralleled by her reclaiming 2 Buckingham Avenue. The arrival of the bones of her changeling child reinstates Muriel’s motherhood via substitution: ‘displayed on the hall table, neat and sweet and perfectly articulated, was a skeleton [...] bones can be clothed. It was a miraculous transportation’ (p. 236). The bones of her child, which double as a metaphor for failed motherhood and for historical knowledge, are the object that cements Muriel’s return to her identity, which is paralleled by the house returning to itself. The decaying structure is upheld and follows the house being likened to a body in the form of what Anthony Vidler calls ‘anthropomorphic analogy.’<sup>92</sup> In the domestic spaces of *EDIMD* and *VP*, spectres need to find an architectural form to disrupt historical meaning and the border breaking processes inherent in Mantel’s conception of architecture and historical meaning.

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<sup>89</sup> Thatcher, ‘Conservative General Manifesto 1983’, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, (1983), <<https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110859>>.

<sup>90</sup> Raphael Samuel, ‘Mrs. Thatcher’s Return to Victorian Values’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 78, (1990), 9-29, p. 9, p. 11.

<sup>91</sup> Thatcher, ‘Margaret Thatcher and Peter Allen’, *The Decision Makers*, Radio Interview for IRN Programme, 15 April 1983.

<sup>92</sup> Vidler explores the architecture–body analogy in ‘Architecture Dismembered’ in *The Architectural Uncanny*, pp. 69–82.

The novel's domestic Gothicism mixes with the postmodern subject, a genre blend which Maria Beville says rallies 'behind the dispersal of constructed systems of meaning that function to impose hierarchies of being based on difference and silence.'<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the genre blend speaks to the analogue between genre and borders by exploring lived subjectivity in certain spaces, and how the dead and ghosts can impact experiences of dwelling. Muriel's valuation of traditional models of home and family becomes a grotesque inversion of Thatcherite and Conservative values and returns the narrative to a more object-focused idea of historical knowledge. Mantel then twists Conservative values in housing to ironically portray the spectre of Thatcherism in Muriel's identification with the house through domestic Gothicism.

Homi K. Bhabha further explains that an uncanny invasion in domestic spaces confuses the border between public and private:

Forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. In the stirrings of the unhomey, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomey is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world.<sup>94</sup>

The decaying house, and the disunified subjectivity that results from it, suggest alternative notions of marginal perspectives. The Mantelian dwelling remains on a borderland where the living and dead enact the private and public dramas within any given historical event. Since an individual's memories and identity are culturally inscribed, the world outside the house also invades the border. The interplay of the uncanny/unfamiliar dwelling also uproots historical artefacts that are hidden or made unseen. However, multiple representations of houses and dwellings in *EDIMD* and *VP* further uproot the Thatcherite ideals of universal security felt in dwelling.

There are architectural structures in Mantel's works that parallel the postmodern subject Muriel presents. The links between architectural theory and literary fiction often complicate the relationship between inhabitants and structures. Yet, the appearance of the spectral further dislocates dwelling and embodied experience as something more recognisably postmodern. Wigley states in *The Architecture of Deconstruction* (1997) that architecture is a translation of building and is a supplement that is 'always called for by structural failure, called in to provide

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<sup>93</sup> Maria Beville, *Gothic-Postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 41.

<sup>94</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, 'The World and Home', *The Domestic Space Reader*, ed. Chiara Briganti and Kathy Mezei (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 358-362, p. 358.

a particular image of building in its absence – not just an image of a particular building but also an image of the idea of building in general, the supposedly universal sense of building as the secure grounding of material structure.<sup>95</sup> Layers of representation produce the sense of a secure structure. Representing 2 Buckingham Avenue in various states of decay brings attention to the various readings of degradation in family dynamics, societal influence on housing and caregiving, and the complexities of historical knowledge in such domestic spaces and objects. These layers of representation are not limited to one house, for the dereliction of domestic spheres is further referenced in slums, squats, and dilapidated residences.

Muriel temporarily rents a room ‘condemned long ago, put on a schedule for demolition, but it seemed likely that before its turn came it would demolish itself, quietly crumbling and rotting away, with its wet rot and dry rot and its collection of parasites and mould.’<sup>96</sup> Places of occupancy, regardless of class, are unfit for dwelling. As Arnold states, these domestic spaces allow Mantel to articulate a ‘sense of homes of all kinds (not only the rented flat but the privately-owned home) as being riddled with flaws that are pernicious and endemic yet difficult to locate, exemplified by the various kinds of rot that affect the house where Muriel lives, undermining the structure imperceptibly until the moment of its collapse.’<sup>97</sup> The home is not unitary but plural and emits conflicting voices in its design and identity. The house’s structure is never fixed by time for it undergoes many renovations, structural changes, decorations, or is demolished to be replaced with new houses. The foundational site of a given architectural structure will have many different histories that either float abstractly on the surface or are buried in its foundation.

Mantel avoids traditional representations of domestic spaces as normally presented in middle-class fiction. Instead, by ‘creating a slum, here in this neighbourhood’, she points to working-class interiors as marginalised spaces in British middle-class fiction and consciousness.<sup>98</sup> Cuming states that ‘the slum interior – in all its inverted, oppositional form – becomes nothing but the projection of bourgeois anxiety about the urban poor, apparently rendering little actual material or historical evidence of the lived experience of those who inhabited these urban districts,’ and is characterised by ‘tropes of disintegration, pulpiness and forms of fluidity.’<sup>99</sup> The spectre’s destruction of the Axons’ material objects and the Sidneys’

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<sup>95</sup> Wigley, p. 25.

<sup>96</sup> *VP*, p. 69.

<sup>97</sup> Arnold, p. 48.

<sup>98</sup> *EDIMD*, p. 111.

<sup>99</sup> Cuming, p. 30, p. 40.

‘sympathetic renovation’ reaffirms the surface level of representation that forcibly erases the history of other occupancies and any inscription of their working-class identity on 2 Buckingham Avenue.<sup>100</sup> The inability for the working-class in *EDIMD* and *VP* 1970’s setting to create historical accounts of their lived experience.

The various representations of decay in multiple homes in these novels and their specific settings figure the Mantelian home as, in Marilyn Johns Blackwell’s words, ‘visual illusions capable of dissolution, the material capable of deconstruction.’<sup>101</sup> The thesis’ deconstruction of dwelling sites in Mantel’s works resist critics that initially read Mantel’s first several novels as merely ‘a domestic story’ written by a woman, something Mantel points out in a 2009 interview with Aida Edemariam.<sup>102</sup> Mantel’s multiple folds of architectural forms is then another facet to Ginette Carpenter and Eileen Pollard’s assessment that Mantel’s ‘work is united by this desire to penetrate beyond conventional limits or boundaries.’<sup>103</sup> The significance of socially inscribed interiors and domestic space’s sociality is central to how historical knowledge is embodied in, or forcibly erased from, Mantelian dwelling-as-archives.

2 Buckingham Avenue is portrayed as a porous dwelling-as-archive, decaying more rapidly through the course of *EDIMD*. Evelyn reflects a desire to live in bright public places such as shops and streets with plastic and wipe-clean surfaces rather than a house where ‘their precious foothold in the house was crumbling further’ (p. 186). Dirty rooms, shadows, and dark corners signify a build-up of decay, familial secrets, and hidden knowledge that Evelyn does not want people to witness or uncover. She states that ‘everyone who wishes could look in at my life; there would be no shadows, no dark corners, no locked rooms’ (p. 186). Evelyn desires a transparent and clean domesticity, an attitude echoed by Sylvia Sidney who states at Colin’s co-worker’s house ‘It’s an education what people have in their back. That kitchen makes me heave, all that Italian muck plastered all over the place. I’d have thought he could have afforded decent food. And cleanliness costs nothing’ (p. 175). The dwellings in *EDIMD*, despite the different living situations of the Axons, the Sidneys and Colin’s boss Frank all have certain dark, dirty corners that preserve secrets and sin. *EDIMD* also suggests that uncleanliness and neglect are self-generated and generational, partly due to the Thatcherite values of home

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<sup>100</sup> *VP*, p. 23.

<sup>101</sup> Marilyn Johns Blackwell, ‘The Deconstruction of Materiality and Innocent Spectatorship in ‘Spoksonaten’, *Scandinavian Studies*, 74.1 (2002), 19-46, p. 21.

<sup>102</sup> Hilary Mantel, and Aida Edemariam, ‘I accumulated an anger that would rip a roof off’, *The Guardian*, (2009), [date last accessed 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021], <<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2009/sep/12/hilary-mantel-booker-prize-interview>>.

<sup>103</sup> Pollard and Carpenter, p. 4.

owning and self-sufficiency that Colin Sidney reflects: ‘People were generally pretty self-sufficient, they kept their problems to themselves’ (p. 178). Therefore, the decaying dwelling-as-archive is caused by the notions of home ownership and self-sufficiency since these families cannot successfully perform self-sufficiency. The dwelling-as-archive in *EDIMD* and *VP* is an archive of secret lives, dark corners, and fragmentary memories. The dwelling-as-archive’s decay is still proof of unsustainable archival practices and documentation of 1970s dwelling experience. Under the metaphor of the decaying home, the ‘return to history’ is then an idealistic an unattainable view in *EDIMD* and *VP*.

The inscription of subjective experience, memory, and the experience of 2 Buckingham Avenue then explores the complex relationship between material facts and imaginative fiction. However, representing historical settings leads to a metafictional dilemma posed by Patricia Waugh: ‘if he or she sets out to “represent” the world, he or she realises fairly soon that the world, as such, cannot be “represented”.’<sup>104</sup> Waugh defines metafiction as a term ‘given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality (p. 4). In *VP*, the past’s embodiment in material objects is questioned by the processes of inscription, which in turn questions narration as a viable recorder of the past.

Isabel Field proves that 2 Buckingham is a decaying dwelling-as-archive that cannot be easily recorded or recollected. However, writing the past (the character’s present) into physical objects helps describe the interior and social drama of the character’s lives. As Carmel McBain explains in *AEIL*, the past is revised and rewritten into shapes the present can understand: ‘Our autobiographies are similar, I think; I mean the unwritten volumes, the stories for an audience of one. This account we give to ourselves of our life – the shape changes moment by moment. We pick up the thread and we use it once, then we use it again, in a more complex form, in a more useful garment, one that conforms more to fashion and our current shape.’<sup>105</sup> The constant generation of archives of historical knowledge appears throughout Mantel’s works, which parallels the recognition and cataloguing of missing information.

Self-conscious anxiety occurs when the characters question what they personally recollect, what information they do not know, and whether they can accurately represent their socio-historical environment to their satisfaction. Never in historiographic metafiction,

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<sup>104</sup> Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> *AEIL*, p. 50.

Hutcheon notes, ‘do we find a subject confident of his/her ability to know the past with any certainty. This is not a transcending of history, but a problematised inscribing of subjectivity into history.’<sup>106</sup> Mantel’s protagonists actively contribute to silences in the archive despite their attempts to contribute to a body of historical knowledge about 2 Buckingham Avenue. Mantel’s scepticism of the historical record frequently manifests in her works as problematised inscriptions of subjectivity or in decaying dwellings-as-archives, which often develop into the disastrous consequences that occur when certain people inscribe their pasts. Rather, the presentation of 2 Buckingham Avenue as a problematic representation of subjectivity and missing knowledge complicates the recording of history, both Isabel’s personal one and the Axons’ public one. At the same time, 2 Buckingham Avenue is the dwelling-as-archive that both is inscribed by, and resists inscription of, Thatcherite values of domesticity and history.

Thus, in *EDIMD*, the decay of architecture breaks down the borders between the mundane and spiritual. The physical decay allows the spectres to slip into dwelling spaces and disrupt any relational historical meaning inscribed into the architecture, which also doubles as the Axons’ archive. 2 Buckingham Avenue is a domestic dwelling site that is also an in-between place where historical meaning is dislocated and unable to find purchase because of the spectre’s continuous disruption. The depictions of physical and imaginary decay transform the corporeal inhabitants into spectral subjects. The Axons and the Sidneys are rootless because they lack historical referents that are preserved in domestic dwellings or the domestic archive.

Subsequent dwelling sites in Mantel’s future works, whether in the homes of the Revolutionary Figures in *APOGS* or the church in *Fludd*, are no longer a reflection of identity. Through the exploration of the decaying private home, private dwellings are sites of impermanence, discontinuity, and unseen histories. John Rajchmann paraphrases Michael Foucault’s discussion of space as a problem of visibility:

We are surrounded by spaces which help form the evidences of the ways we see ourselves and one another. Where we “dwell,” how we are housed, helps in this way to determine who and what we think we are – and so they involve our freedom. We are beings who are “spatialised” in various ways; there is a historical spatialisation of ourselves as subjects. Foucault’s analysis of “spaces of constructed visibility” brings out how they serve to “constitute subject,” the way they serve to construct the spatialisation of the subject of his “being in space”.<sup>107</sup>

Mantel’s characters, then, struggle with their identity and place in the dwelling-as-archive because of the unseen histories that haunt the sites of their dwellings.

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<sup>106</sup> Hutcheon, pp. 117-8.

<sup>107</sup> John Rajchman, ‘Foucault’s Art of Seeing’, *The MIT Press*, 44 (1988), 88-117, p. 103.

## Chapter Two: Transitioning Cities and Mutable Archives in Mantel's *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* and *A Place of Greater Safety*

We'll be remembered more for what we destroy than what we create.<sup>1</sup> – Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters* (1999).

In *EMOGS*, Frances is told during her move to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for the first time that the city's streets 'are never in the same place for more than a few weeks together', thus making her career as a cartographer 'redundant.'<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in *APOGS*, the fictionalised beginning of the French Revolution saw Parisian districts such as Titonville destroyed by the crowd, leaving 'nothing left of Titonville worth burning, smashing, or carrying away', with the city having 'three hundred corpses to shovel up off the street.'<sup>3</sup> In comparison to 2 Buckingham Avenue, the action of these two narratives feature unsafe and transitory cities and apartments that characters temporarily occupy. This chapter on Mantelian dwellings examines how characters and historical knowledge are 'housed' in Mantel's fictions when introducing themes of internationality, radical change, and migration in the city.

The characters' complicated interaction with the cityscape (and all its historical and international spaces) is due to their experiences of rented dwelling places. Character's experience changes in the roles of private and public dwellings, which shift between a domestic home and a place of business and governance. The characters' navigation of changing public realms is also investigated, for they are often awkwardly placed in these in-between places. The characters' international or regional status as they move into cities such as Jeddah or Paris means they cannot access the city's social and historical archives. The novels *EMOGS* and *APOGS* feature depictions of cities with polyvalent dwellings, cities that are never fixed entities. *EMOGS* is a narrative of Mantel's personal experience of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The representation of eighteenth-century Paris, however, is an archival collection where Mantel has pieced together facts and documents to create a fictionalised narrative that explores the events of the French Revolution.

The archival agent features prominently in these two novels as the characters Frances Shore, Camille Desmoulins, George D'Anton, and Maximilien Robespierre attempt to control narratives and create their own archival knowledge as a reaction to their experience of the

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 26-27.

<sup>3</sup> Mantel, *A Place of Greater Safety* (London: Viking, 1992), p. 176, p. 179.

cityscape. While *EMOGS* has a singular narrator, and *APOGS* has multiple narrators, perspectives and voices, the navigation of historical change and ever-changing cityscapes are central to their dwelling experience. Much like the decaying private dwelling in *EDIMD* and *VP*, inscribing these city experiences result in fragmented accounts, missing knowledge, and silences. Thus, the specific representation of the cityscape in Mantel's works are a larger scale dwelling-as-archive that experiences similar difficulty of consigning and structuring a coherent archive. Instead of decay and the invasion of spectres and social workers resulting in the private dwelling-as-archive in *EDIMD*'s loss of historical meaning, it is the transitory, international, and mobile nature of cities that impacts the ability to contain memory and historical meaning. Rather than focusing on one house as a character, the cities present polyvalent buildings with various functions, architectural styles, and the overlap of public and private.

Throughout her works, Mantel moves between rural and urban environments, suburban networks, cityscape margins, and transitory dwellings within international countries and/or territories. However, the themes of transition and migration are crucial when analysing the embodied experience of public and private buildings in *EMOGS* and *APOGS*' cities. Often, there are limitations in movement between private and public spaces because of social hierarchies and political influence, which affects whether information or historical meaning can also transmit within the cityscape. In *EMOGS*, the experience of dwelling is often a distorted mirror of values and laws inscribed by the dominant government policies and/or religious morals of 1970s Saudi Arabia. Investigating the city as an extension of the private domestic experience is then crucial to characters' experience of dwelling during historical events.

The Mantelian home exists as an in-between place where historical events are embedded and maintained (and then continuously disrupted by spectres). The outside environment of cities and public structures are also transitional spaces where historical meaning exists in a polyvalent unity. Historical interpretation of private dwellings must consider the social, political, and contextual limits imposed on an individual's mobility between public and private spaces. The direct or indirect restriction of the individual's movement between spaces then impedes the movement of historical knowledge, which Mantel points out (in fiction and memoir) is an experience seen more acutely in marginal subjects. As such, focus is paid to the marginal subject in the city and their ability to move between public and private dwellings. Due to the city and its streets acting as a transitional and unsafe place,



characters in *EMOGS* and *APOGS* consequently feel like they do not belong, or that they will disappear as forgotten memories in this in-between place.

In 2015, James Campbell described Mantel as having ‘always existed on the margins. Of her family, of her university group, of the expatriate communities in the Middle East and Africa, of literary London. The experience of being not quite at home, even when at home, has contributed to her life not only as a writer but as a reader.’<sup>4</sup> Out of her feelings of non-belonging, the displaced house couples with the uncanny dwelling to form the textual rendering of unhomeliness in multiple places and times. Mantel’s experience of her various placements in *GUTG* and later experiences in Botswana and Jeddah mean her fictions express a similar, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s words, ‘essential structure of our being as a being situated in relationship to a milieu.’<sup>5</sup> Geographical displacement frequently occurs in Mantel’s fictions with the overlapping themes of belonging, escape, exclusion, and entrapment. Silvia Garcia Hernandez notes these as postcolonial characteristics by writers with no true postcolonial experience, but ‘who have lived in former colonies, have also provided accounts of what happened when roles in the colonies reversed; that is, they have depicted life in former British colonies from the point of view of British citizens who went there after the countries gained their independence.’<sup>6</sup> In this way, Mantel is considered by critics such as Sara L. Knox as not-a-British-writer, ‘her novels described, with unromantic realism, a not-Britain. She portrays Britain and Britons abroad without mythologising or nostalgia, writing fiction in which the problem of belonging is most starkly drawn in those spheres that define it: home, neighbourhood, region, nation.’<sup>7</sup> Notions of home and homeland overlap and blur in Mantel’s fictions, particularly in cities and suburban places.

Susan Strehle defines the view of home as ‘settled, homogenous places of mythic origins’ and homeland as ‘the country-sized space of home, of kin and belonging’, which the thesis then uses to constantly question and refigure the homes of *EMOGS* and *APOGS* as dislocated spaces where Mantel’s protagonists are unable to belong.<sup>8</sup> Through the unsafe confinements of domesticity (which *EDIMD* also presents), the marginal subjects of Mantel’s

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<sup>4</sup> James Campbell, ‘Escape from the Margins’, *The Guardian*, (2005), [date last accessed: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/nov/19/featuresreviews.guardianreview12>>.

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 332.

<sup>6</sup> Silvia Garcia Hernandez, ‘Hilary Mantel’s ‘Eight Months on Ghazzah Street’: The Displacement of British Expatriates in Saudi Arabia’, *Atlantis*, 37.1 (2015), 85-100, p. 88. Pauline Leonard’s assesses the word expatriate as an exclusionary term in her book *Expatriate Identities in Postcolonial Organisation* (2010).

<sup>7</sup> Sara L. Knox, ‘Giving Flesh to the ‘Wraiths of Violence’: Super-Realism in the Fiction of Hilary Mantel’, *Australian Feminist Studies*, 25.65 (2010), 313-23, p. 313.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Strehle, *Transnational Women’s Fiction: Unsettling Home and Homeland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 2.

works constantly express the need for transition and mobility outside the home and homeland. The cityscape then acts as the locus for characters' feelings of dislocation, and thus the figure of the ever-changing city becomes an in-between place where even characters become lost and what they know can disappear. The lack of local referents in the ever-changing cityscape to situate the travelling subject is a common setting for Mantel's characters. For many characters, the concept of home and belonging in a place is always in question because of their transitional lifestyles and temporary dwellings.

Mantel's characters' perspectives are further emphasised by the borders between foreign and homeland, rooted in space and time yet symbolising process and fluidity. Early work on the anthropology of borders by Fredrik Barth (1969) and the work of state borders by John W. Cole and Eric R. Wolf (1974) demonstrates the growing importance of borders between nations, states, and localism especially since borders affect everyday life and domestic situations. The thesis argues that certain borders between domestic private homes and public streets are also present in *EMOGS* and *APOGS* as part of the constant invasion of violence in the cityscape into the everyday domestic concerns. The transitional spaces double as borderless or border-making places, questioning the characters' placement in international places and their identity as translocalised subjects without a home or a stable archive to call their own. The Shores do not belong in Jeddah, England, and Africa, and their sense of identifiable locations is continuously interrupted in *EMOGS* because of their inability to assimilate, either textually or culturally, into Saudi Culture. They are characteristic of translocal subjects, a term used by David Conradson and Deirdre McKay 'to describe the multiply-located sense of self amongst those who inhabit transnational social fields.'<sup>9</sup> Translocal subjectivities best describe Mantel's characters' domestic interaction in places other than Northern England. In Conradson and McKay's words, it describes 'the multiply located sense of self amongst those who inhabit transnational social fields' (ibid). Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta also confirm that translocality provides an actor-oriented approach that understands individuals as being simultaneously situated across different locales, which retains the groundedness between the migrant and their home place during migration.<sup>10</sup> Since the placement of things and people are not fixed, their absence within the cityscape is felt as a presence within the novels.

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<sup>9</sup> David Conradson, and Deirdre McKay, 'Translocal Subjectivities: Mobility, Connection, Emotion', *Mobilities*, 2.2 (2007), 167-74, p. 168.

<sup>10</sup> Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta, 'Introduction: Translocal Geographies', *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places, Connections*, ed. Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 13-29, p. 14.

## I. The Unlocatable in Mantel's *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street*

In Mantel's contemporary novel *EMOGS*, she plays with the visual aspects of international architecture in Jeddah and Botswana as part of the political and historical contexts that affect domestic interiority. The characters' movement between dwellings questions whether objects that embody their owners' memories are safely contained. Mantel often constructs objects of memory as either absent or present. The character's individual dwelling space is part of a historical archiving process that comes with the social and physical building of hegemonic cities and urban landscapes. Mantel's third novel depicts Frances Shore's fixed location in her apartment, contrasting with the constantly building city of 1980s Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Set in 1984-85, the novel's cityscape is mindlessly growing as Frances finds on her arrival to Jeddah:

They're always building, you see, money no object, but they don't think ahead. They build a hospital and then decide to out a road through it. Fancy a new palace? Out with the bulldozer. A map would be out of date as soon as it was made. It would be waste paper the day it was printed.<sup>11</sup>

Maps are considered useless to print because the landscape of the city is constantly changing, implying it is unrecordable. In the novel, the city acts as an in-between place where people, dwellings, and buildings slip as a result of an unnavigable (re)development.

Mantel perceives Jeddah in the 1980s as a place of significant political change, and architectural transformation due to the 'wicked West [...that] gave them all that rotten rotten money' (p. 116). The high oil price in the 1970s meant exponential wealth for Saudi Arabians. Mohamed Zayani states that 'the founder of the modern kingdom sustained a historical arrangement whereby the ruling Al Saud family wield political power while the Wahhabi clergy exert religious authority. This effectively engendered two spheres of influence, one pertaining to state policy, the other relating to social mores.'<sup>12</sup> Zayani further claims that the kingdom's vast energy resources 'put the country on the track of modernisation and change, it also engendered a deep unease emanating from the difficulty of insulating its conservative culture from incompatible Western influences and warding off the cultural excess of globalisation' (p. 311). The wealth affected the urban environment of Jeddah and thus the quality of architecture and built environment; buildings are crumbling and unstable.

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<sup>11</sup> Mantel, *EMOGS*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Mohamed Zayani, 'Media, Regional Politics and State Security: Saudi Arabia between Tradition and Modernity', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 39.3 (2012), 307-27, p. 310.

In Mantel's *EMOGS*, Ghazzah Street is unstable as a historical referent for the Shores because of its perceived performance of antiquity and its impermanence. Frances states that:

On every vacant lot in time appears the jumble of brownish brick, the metal spines of scaffolding, the sheets of plate glass; then last of all the marble, the most popular facing material, held on to the plain walls behind it with some sort of adhesive. From a distance it lends a spurious air of antiquity to the scene. When the Jeddah earthquake comes – and it will come – all-seeing Allah will observe that the buildings are held together with glue; and he will peel the city apart like an onion.<sup>13</sup>

The complexities of exponential architectural growth question the stability of built structures and urban planning as having a navigable and permanent place within Saudi culture. Historical knowledge cannot be easily contained in the city because its architectural foundations struggle to be a secure dwelling-as-archive. The expatriate and immigrant experience of places such as the rapidly growing Jeddah is confused due to the constant defamiliarization of architectural forms and streets. Saudi Arabia's uncanny urbanisation is shown in *EMOGS* to be dislocating, rendering the Shores placeless in an urban hinterland. Displaced from England because of the UK building trade recession, the Shores' sense of rootlessness in place is compounded by the slow erasure of their familial memory and inability to understand meaningful knowledge while in Jeddah.

Frances conceives Jeddah as 'the fossil city, the epic city, the trivial city' (p. 209). The fossil city represents Jeddah's traditional architecture: 'In the soul there are leaning buildings with latticed balconies, the wood rotting, the wood crumbling away: as even the glories of Islam may crumble to dust. This is the fossil city, dim, precarious, the lattices concealing other times, and dim, shadowy lives; you cannot escape the prison insignificance of your own nature' (ibid). The Epic city has flyovers and freeways, which convey constant movement and statistical grandeur. The Trivial city has streets where spectres inhabit, with 'figures in these streets, human figures, but they are not those seen elsewhere in the city. Distant, wide-shouldered, tapering towards the feet, they have the quality of those figures that architects use in their drawings; they are ghost-people, functions of scale' (pp. 209-10). The Trivial city particularly exhibits characteristics of an uncanny modernity which describes, in Jo Collins and John Jervis words, 'an experience of disorientation' which results from the 'transformation of the urban world into a visual and spatial spectacle inhabited also by the shadowy hauntings of the fleeting and insubstantial.'<sup>14</sup> The three types of architectural forms in the city present

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<sup>13</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Jo Collins and John Jervis, 'Introduction', *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties*, eds. Jo Collins and John Jervis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-9, p. 2.

Jeddah as a fleeting and insubstantial city, with echoes of previous architectural forms acting as phantasmal ghosts.

The various perspectives of Jeddah conceptualise the city as a Foucauldian heterotopic nowhere, which Michel Foucault defines as spaces ‘capable of juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.’<sup>15</sup> Peter Johns suggests that heterotopias contribute to unsettlement because they ‘draw us out of ourselves in peculiar ways; they display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we may feel at home.’<sup>16</sup> Frances’s previous career as a cartographer further constructs the perspective that Jeddah and its three cities are insubstantial and unmappable in place and time because of its buildings and freeways. Their flat similarly exists on a hinterland that renders the Shores as social spectres, for Frances says, ‘on this map we’re a vacant lot [...] We don’t exist.’<sup>17</sup> Maps are linked to geographic, economic, and sociohistorical meaning. Without them as a referent, the Shores undergo a loss of identity, for ‘in our minds each one of us draws a line between homeland and exile. Our identity depends on how we locate ourselves, in time and space, along this line.’<sup>18</sup> The lack of reliable maps also implies a lack of historical mapping, making them unreliable documents of the past. Questions of identity and the Shores’ placement in transitional spaces are heightened by a perspective on belonging that is structured at an ironic distance. Their apartment and identity are unlocatable, and so is their lived experience in Jeddah.

The multiple surfaces of Jeddah’s urban planning are not like the decaying Mantelian dwelling, but rather like the stairwell of the private houses in *The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher*. The exponential urbanisation constructs Jeddah as an in-between place that is unnavigable and inaccessible for expatriates and foreign workers. As seen from the Trivial city, Jeddah’s uncanny urbanity spectralises its inhabitants. The crowded cityscape is also unstable in physical structure and is an unreliable historical archive due to the mix of styles and building materials. The Shores’ environment loses meaning as a secure dwelling area. The measurement of time within the in-between place of Jeddah is obvious in the novel’s title; the Shores are in transit for eight months on Ghazzah Street.

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<sup>15</sup> M. Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, trans. J. Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (1986), 22–27, p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> P. Johnson, ‘Unravelling Foucault’s ‘Different Spaces’’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 19.4 (2006), 75–90, p. 84.

<sup>17</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> ‘No Passes or Documents are Needed’, p. 94.

In Mantel's article 'Once Upon a Life', she similarly stresses the four years she spent in Saudi as a constraint. The lived experience of Jeddah is in the present tense, reflecting the tensions of mobility and constrained movement Mantel underwent. The fictional representation of Jeddah echoes contemporary concerns of Saudi Arabian urban planners and architects. Under modernisation, contemporary residential architecture became, Abdulla Bokhari in 1978 states, 'a strange fusion of forms from different architectural styles and periods, indiscriminately combine in exotic shapes which belong nowhere [...] much of the new residential architecture in the city reflects bizarre features, trying to emulate flashy Western style architecture.'<sup>19</sup> The overall fear behind the criticism against Western influence on architecture (which *EMOGS* notes in the hiring of Andrew Shore for new-buildings) is fast new-builds, hizazi homes and other traditional Saudi architecture forms falling out of fashion and threatening the loss of Saudi Arabian identity and culture. Stefan Maneval states that Saudi architects and urban planners of the generation compared 'the contemporary with the traditional, and they all have a strong preference for the latter. They all agree that what had been abandoned in the previous decades were not simply old buildings but social ties, moral values and above all, a way of life that accorded with religion.'<sup>20</sup> Narratives of decay by these architects and urban planners centre on community, privacy, and identity within the cityscape of Jeddah. Such narratives are negative towards Western modernity.

*EMOGS* reflects on how modernity encroaches into Muslim private domestic life and threatens to uproot the gendered roles that Raji and Yasmin perform. In the novel, Yasmin directly admits the blurring of boundaries between domestic and social places: 'He is interfering with how I run the household. That is not what a man should do. [...] We have had some dispute. Because I want to wear the veil. Completely, you understand, like the Saudi women do. Because I feel it is right. But Raji says, 'We are modern.' He has forbidden me. And I am so unhappy.'<sup>21</sup> The processes of modernisation that split the city into different identities overlap within the private spaces, which then affects the 'internal city' of inhabitants that Frances describes: 'She has been looking at the external city; but the internal city is more important, the one that you construct inside your head. That is where the edifice of possibility grows, and grows without your knowledge; it is subject to no planners control' (p. 243). In

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<sup>19</sup> Abdulla Bokhari, 'Jeddah: A Study in Urban Formation' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1978), pp. 345-46.

<sup>20</sup> Stefan Maneval, *New Islamic Urbanism: The Architecture of Public and Private Space in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia* (London: UCL Press, 2019), pp. 113-14.

<sup>21</sup> *EMOGS*, pp. 207-08.

*EMOGS*, it is modernity that disrupts any commonality in architecture, the dweller's perspective on houses, or domestic roles.

Mantel's personal experience of dwelling in Saudi Arabia between 1982-1986 was also through three different structures. The apartments she and her husband lived, and a family compound, became sites where she wrote *EDIMD* and *VP*. Mantel explains in 'Once Upon a Life':

The apartment was on the first floor and the windows were made of frosted glass. The Saudis didn't much like windows. If you could see out, someone could see in [...] After a few weeks the company moved us to another place, smaller, better for two. It was dark and the lights had to be kept on all day, as if it were the English winter. Each room had many doors, double doors made of dark wood, so it was like a coffin showroom.<sup>22</sup>

The description of the window-less and light-less spaces fed Mantel's 'inner impoverishment' (ibid), which notes her own complex interaction between interior space and identity. The outside, unstable cityscape then encroaches on the affective experience of interior spaces of the flats. The domestic site is also made unstable as a mirror image, and direct consequence, to urbanisation. The Shores' apartment is then the fictional hinterland that Catherine Spooner says explores 'the interior spaces that overlie the exterior ones' and questions how far Frances feels dislocated in these foreign and overlapping private and public spaces.<sup>23</sup>

Hernandez argues that the Shores no longer consider England their home, yet 'their stay in Saudi Arabia has changed them so much that they have lost their identities; they do not know who they are or where their place in the world is.'<sup>24</sup> Their placelessness in the in-between place of Jeddah correlates to a sense of homelessness that constructs their apartment as strange and alienating. Objects that act as their personal historical signifiers show a constant struggle to belong to the new apartment. Diana Glenn, Eric Bouvet, and Sonia Floriani claim that 'the way migrants try to face and overcome their condition of being homeless is inevitably correlated to the ways that they try to reshape identity, recompose biographical disruptions and redefine their sense of belonging.'<sup>25</sup> The Shores make the apartment a home through their possessions to reclaim a sense of belonging to the private domestic dwelling. These objects remind them of their time in London and Africa, the enactment of home-making through rearranging furniture

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<sup>22</sup> Hilary Mantel, 'Once Upon a Life: Hilary Mantel' *The Guardian*, (2010), [date last accessed 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021] <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/feb/21/hilary-mantel-saudi-arabia>>.

<sup>23</sup> Spooner, "[T]hat Eventless Realm": Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* and the Ghosts of the M25', p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> Hernandez, p. 92.

<sup>25</sup> Diana Glenn, Eric Bouvet and Sonia Floriani, eds. *Imagining Home: Migrants and the Search for a New Belonging* (Kent Town: Westfield Press, 2011), p. 2.

reconfirms the familiar sense of domesticity. Madan Sarup echoes the importance of objects for preserving historical knowledge, and does not think of

the expensive commodities I have bought but of the objects which I associate with my mother and father, my brothers and sisters, valued experiences and activities [...] particular objects and events become the focus of a contemplative memory [...] Many homes become private museums as if to guard against the rapid changes that one cannot control.<sup>26</sup>

Memory is tied to objects, which need stable places to be in for meaning to be interpreted and reconfirm the domestic dwelling-as-archive.

However, the Shores' unpacking of their familiar objects does not overcome the internal or external feelings of displacement. Frances states: 'I was imagining myself when I packed the crates, thinking about the exciting future, which is now the dull present. I found places for the things around the flat. I imagined they'd make it seem more like home. But they didn't look right. They seemed to come from another life.'<sup>27</sup> Their homelife is further unsettled when their home is invaded and privacy threatened, much like the dual invasions of spectres and social workers into 2 Buckingham Avenue. The burglars remove 'small and valueless things that you cannot bear to lose' (p. 246), take their photographs of Africa, and appear to have ghostly help from inside the apartment: 'They had come through the big window with its sliding panel; the length of wood that should have blocked the track lay on the carpet. It had been removed from the inside' (p. 244). The invasion further unsettles their memory of their other domestic homes and social lives in Africa and England.

Those missing documents, removed from the domestic space, enter into an in-between existence where Frances's inner city further destabilises them: 'alive only in errant fallible memory, that private mirror, which distorts more and more as the years go by' (p. 264). The Shores' objects need free movement between physical structures to preserve historical meaning, but only by the Shores who understand their specific memories embodied within the objects. The Shores' objects removal by strangers renders their apartment an in-between place. The home invasion is further identified by Arnold as a 'scene of haunting in which the items that are damaged and stolen possess a symbolic value within a matrix of acts of vandalism and disruption designed to displace and disturb' the Shores.<sup>28</sup> The invasion points to the practices of invisibility and privacy in the novel.

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<sup>26</sup> Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 102.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold, p. 98.



The destruction of the Shores' alcohol (which goes against Saudi Arabian law), in Arnolds words, 'positions the invasion of the flat as spectral law enforcement, a disembodied yet potent force which is registered through the emphasis upon smell' which also figures the State itself as a censoring force on their dwelling and private vices.<sup>29</sup> The broken wine bottles hidden in their kitchen then display the vulnerability of prohibited materials and the eradication of Western hidden meanings within the apartment. Frances states 'but now even above the stench of fermentation she felt violence in the air, recognised the savage concentration with which the intruder had gone to work, smashing each bottle on the tiles, fragmenting it.'<sup>30</sup> The borders between private morality and public order are repeatedly dissolved under Saudi Arabia's theocracy, which constantly undermines the Shores' domesticity and the apartment's role as a dwelling-as-archive.

The Shores' experience of imagined intense scrutiny and resultant paranoia because of their movements between private and public places is further enforced by the gothic sense of the walls watching Frances, 'each separate tile with its own maleficent stare' (p. 214), and the lack of rooted community in the apartment building. The neighbourhood of Ghazzah Street is described by Sarah Knox as maybe having 'communal connection – the warmth of human proximity – but it is also the territory of suspicion and doubt.'<sup>31</sup> A suspicion of neighbourhoods is present in Mantel's others works. Mantel's memoir *GUTG* recalls the awareness of suspicion and threatened privacies within neighbourhoods when her preoccupation with other people's houses leads to a shift in perception from familial secrets to the secrets in her community:

Our house was like a million other houses in a million other streets, but our perplexities, our hesitations, were all our own; we had secrets, and we did not think other households harboured any. But I must have begun to know that every house was different, that every house had a secret life, because at the end of the summer of '63, after we moved into the avenue, I got into the habit of walking up and down, examining the facades of our neighbours.<sup>32</sup>

Identifying a 'truth' or the secrets of other families is signified by Mantel as an invasive presence, one that Frances fictionally replicates in *EMOGS* in her pursuit to know and understand Saudi culture from other migrant and Muslim neighbours. The neighbours often present conflicting accounts, rumours, and 'a floodtide of disinformation, [which] then reverts to its preferred silence.'<sup>33</sup> Silences are more prominent in the empty apartment above the Shores' flat, which is yet another in-between place because of the unknown footsteps that

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<sup>29</sup> Arnold, p. 99.

<sup>30</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 248.

<sup>31</sup> Knox, p. 316.

<sup>32</sup> *GUTG*, p. 125.

<sup>33</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 132.

Frances hears during the day, the living and dead bodies that move down the corridors of the apartment building and the closed doors. Mantel decentres the apartment building as a place of knowledge that makes sense of the disinformation and rumours Frances receives in her time in Jeddah.

Frances's experience of displaced identity and unsettled sense of home within Jeddah is Mantel's attempt to displace British and Western interpretation and retelling of Saudi Culture in *EMOGS*. Frances's inability to assimilate to Jeddah's social and political environment is symbolised by the amount of 'doors to lock and unlock' and walls to displace her from the public working sphere (p. 90). The many locked doors later echoed in *EDIMD* and later in *The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher* are characteristic of an in-between place where memory and meaning slip. However, the walls Frances frequently encounters act as symbols to describe life in Jeddah for women if they venture into the public sphere on their own. Hernandez confirms that 'the only thing [Frances] finds is a wall, both literally and metaphorically. Religious laws prevent women from doing what Frances considers the most common things. The truth is that everything is forbidden for women: they cannot go out alone, and when they do, they have to be completely covered.'<sup>34</sup> Frances experiences double displacement as an immigrant woman, and through the reversal of perspectives, for 'I knew there were restrictions, but I didn't know what it would feel like to live under them.'<sup>35</sup> Frances cannot work in Jeddah, she cannot walk the streets uncovered and without her husband, and Jeddah's newspapers dictate her place in the home as ruler and mother. Information filtered to her is either through rumours or part of the gender segregation she experiences: 'The woman's end was part of the woman's world; information was received at second hand, by courtesy through the mouth of one of the city's male keepers' (p. 291). There is a total scepticism towards newspapers and maps acting as homogenous sources of information, meaning the novel has elements of historiographic metafiction.

Frances's desire to learn more means she invades her neighbours' privacy with her trips to the rooftop, revealing her privileged and private total-view that inscribes her Western perspective on the phantasmal, moving city of Jeddah. Frances's viewing of other houses from balconies is another kind of unsettling invasion of domestic spheres. Hisham Mortada states that in Islamic culture, 'the privacy of the house is significantly stated in many places in the

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<sup>34</sup> Hernandez, p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 73.

Qur'an', which then inscribes strict borders between public and private spheres.<sup>36</sup> The Islamic principle of domestic privacy calls, in Mortada's words, the 'Muslim to separate his or her secluded private life from public intercourse. Meanwhile, it is a part of the Islamic system of sex segregation. As this system aims to protect the family and close those avenues between sexes in society, it prescribes significant rules for relationship, dressing, modes of behaviour and contact between females and males' (ibid). Islamic building practices and codes specifically centre around inaccessibility to balconies and windows. Mortada also claims that windows overlooking other people's houses 'are not allowed and should be prevented even if they are the source of light and air to the house' (p. 98). Frances's total inability to see other homes in the new house at the end of the novel is a total displacement from Saudi Culture, and all she sees are windows.

Peter Brooks explains that windows are regarded as the eyes of the house in fiction, for like the mirror, it is a 'traditional metaphor of realist vision directed at the world.'<sup>37</sup> The metaphor is inverted to double Frances's experience of her confinement, reinstate her neighbours' privacy, and emphasise her unknowability. Since historical meaning moves through passageways and streets because of the mobility of moving objects (including people), Frances views historical knowledge as confined and silenced within the Shores' apartment. Mantel then follows a nineteenth-century tradition of, in Susan Fraiman's words, 'British fiction by and for women as a discursive machine turning 'political information' into psychological information at the site of the domestic.'<sup>38</sup> The apartment and Jeddah are inhospitable to Western culture, allowing Western values of domesticity to be lost or rendered meaningless.

Frances Shore's role as an archival agent is made unreliable due to the faulty and contradictory information she receives from the city, government laws, and in the apartment. The apartment is not a stable site to collect information due to break ins and unknown people in the building. The instability is exacerbated by Frances's confinement to the apartment, which may require a reliance on memory and written documents about the outside world. Frances describes herself as someone who does not trust in memory, and is:

The sort of person who rings dates on calendars, and does not trust to memory; who, when she writes a cheque, does a subtraction and writes a balance on the cheque stub. She knows where all their possessions are, everything that belongs to her and everything that belongs to him; she remembers people's birthdays,

<sup>36</sup> Hisham Mortada, *Traditional Islamic Principles of Built Environment* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 89.

<sup>38</sup> Susan Fraiman, *Extreme Domesticity: A View from the Margins* (New York: Columbia Press, 2017), p. 6.

and retains telephone numbers in her head. She likes to make sense of the world by making lists, and writing things down. Perhaps, he thought, she will keep a diary.<sup>39</sup>

Frances frequently distrusts her subjective interpretation of the events and rumours of 1970s Saudi Arabia. However, her archival process is complicated while in Jeddah, and information denial further muddles her sense of the past because of the theocratic state's policy on censorship. In 'Once Upon a Life', Mantel notes her accumulated archival knowledge of Saudi Arabia: 'Since my first day in the Kingdom I had kept diaries, and they were in my bags when we locked that fourth house behind us and stood in the dawn waiting for the car. I intended, as soon as I arrived in a safe place, to begin to write a novel about what I or a fictional representative of me had seen and learned in Jeddah.'<sup>40</sup> The novel also details Saudi Arabia's innately conservative contribution to informational denial and censorship of non-Islamic knowledge.

The theocratic state employs strict control over lifestyle in private spaces, creates overlaps in secular and religious media, and controls the communications infrastructure within public spaces. Four methods that limit truth-seeking in *EMOGS* include censorship, tightly controlled newspapers, religious doctrine, and disinformation. British immigrant/expatriate Frances Shore perceives archived knowledge within the novel as fragmentary and lacking in clean data. The quick rumour transmission undermines Jeddah and the people who control the city's archives as a moral archival agent: 'a moral city [that] is just a network of pretences and counter-pretences? Is it possible that this holy city has the best liars in the world?'<sup>41</sup> Mantel states in an interview with Eileen Pollard that *EMOGS* 'is all about areas of mystery and areas of darkness, which are never penetrated. All the time that book is telling you, life is not like detective fiction.'<sup>42</sup> The ruling Al Saud family's political power and the Wahhabi clergy's exertion of religious authority contribute to silences in inscribed archives in the private realm (Frances's dairy) and the public sphere – through state-controlled newspapers, censorship, national historical narrative, and gender segregation. Through censorship and the potential of inscription as a politically subversive weapon, Mantel figures multiple inaccessible and silenced historical knowledge archives that preserve Saudi Arabia's stable hegemony in the Pan-Arabic world.

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<sup>39</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 43.

<sup>40</sup> Mantel, 'Once Upon a Life'.

<sup>41</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 213.

<sup>42</sup> Mantel and Eileen Pollard, 'Mind What Gap?: An Interview with Hilary Mantel', *Textual Practice*, 29.6 (2015), 1035-44, p. 1037.

The echo of a nation controlling their historical narratives also features in Mantel's Reith Lecture 'The Day is for the Living', for 'nations are built on wishful versions of their origins.'<sup>43</sup> Censorship contributes to missing knowledge, which in Saudi Arabia is defined by Magdala Thomas as 'the Islamic law (sharia) which governs all aspects of life, political, religious and legal.'<sup>44</sup> In *EMOGS*, newspapers mimic doilies because of the patchwork of missing knowledge. Andrew Shore notes that 'the Saudis seem very tense just now. They're trying to keep out news from abroad. I bought a copy of *The Times* this morning, and when I held it up it had holes in it.'<sup>45</sup> Newspapers are a dominant source of knowledge through which Frances, trapped in the apartment as she is, collects for her mental Jeddah archive and diary. However, Andrew reveals that newspapers are also unreliable: 'You have to understand that there's a lot of hypocrisy, Andrew said. You mustn't believe the picture you get from the newspapers' (p. 123). Coupled with censorship, the damage to newspapers' materiality, and deliberate elision of knowledge within the inscribed source, Mantel presents newspapers as unreliable containers of the past, and unreliable sources for Frances's own archive.

Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix claim that Saudi Arabia's royal family controls two of three 'international pan-Arab daily newspapers: *al-Sharq al-awsat* and *al-Hayat* [...] Domestically, the government has effective editorial control over all print and television news media.'<sup>46</sup> In her collection *Mantel Pieces* (2020), Mantel also reflects on the Salman Rushdie affair over the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and the fragmentary effect Islamic censorship has over documents:

After a time I realised that far from being unimportant in this society, as I had thought at first, words were in fact the most important thing of all. You cannot abolish the concept of pork from the world, but if you are assiduous you can unsay the word; if your felt tips are busy enough and numerous enough, you can take away its name and thus gradually take away its substance, leaving it a queasy, nameless concept washing around in the minds of unbelievers, a meat which will gradually lose its existence because there is no way to talk about it.<sup>47</sup>

Censorship of words like 'pork' records the powerful subversive potential of print culture which the Saudi government have maintained and regulated. A common theme in Mantel's non-fiction pieces reflect on the effect of censorship on historical and contemporary writings, remarking on the unseen 'army of highly trained human erasers' in her article 'Blot, Erase,

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<sup>43</sup> 'The Day Is For The Living'.

<sup>44</sup> Magdala Thomas, 'Hunt the Plot', *Index on Censorship*, 22. 2 (1993), 25-26, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 256.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix, *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Mantel, 'Bookcase Shopping in Jeddah', *Mantel Pieces: Royal Bodies and Other Writing from the London Review of Books* (London: Fourth Estate, 2020), pp. 21-28, p. 23.

Delete.<sup>48</sup> In her fiction, the denial of the symbolic and religious presence of Allah in print means it is without a corporeal existence, cementing the silencing effect of knowledge in Saudi Arabian print culture. Frances notes that ‘the faithful should not put their vegetable peelings into the *Saudi Gazette*, and throw them into the trash; that they should not tear up squares of *Al-Riyadh*, and hang them in a privy. For that newsprint may contain the sacred name of Allah.’<sup>49</sup> The effort taken to prevent international knowledge or influence in the deeply conservative Saudi Arabia erases meaningful knowledge for the Shores who are outsiders to the city.

Madawi al-Rasheed claims that in Saudi Arabia the ‘official narrative portrays the ruling group as a hegemonic force in the history of the country.’<sup>50</sup> The control of newspapers and words, then, controls historical meaning within the country, which Frances discovers in *EMOGS*: ‘Someone is in the flat, but it is not who we think. I have swallowed down the rumour. It is a rumour that was tailor-made. It was tailor-made for Westerners, with their prurient minds; it was a rumour that we cherished, because it said everything about the Kingdom that we wished to believe.’<sup>51</sup> The novel alludes to the carefully constructed narrative of Saudi Arabia’s hegemony which limits archival collection. al-Rasheed states that ‘state-sponsored representations of the past, embedded in official historiography, political rhetoric and festivities create a historical memory that serves to enforce obedience to the ruling group. Oil wealth has not only enabled the state to promote economic modernisation but has also created historical narratives that encourage a new kind of legitimacy.’<sup>52</sup> Narratives about the past, as al-Rasheed explains, ‘create a framework within which Saudi Arabia, people and the government, are situated. State narratives eliminate contentious facts and competing interpretations, to the extent that they create a vision of the past with its own images, rhetoric and symbols’ (ibid). The vision of the past heavily influences the present realities of Jeddah’s inhabitants.

The borders between cultures, and the ideas of multiculturalism in the city, are difficult for Muslims to blur. In *EMOGS*, Shabana states that ‘to Westerners, the veil seems ridiculous, but we cannot just fall in with your prejudices. It is simply not possible for us to look at the Western world, to look at other religions, and say, yes please, we will have this from you, we will have this, but we don’t want that. We cannot take your bits and pieces and fit them into

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<sup>48</sup> Mantel, ‘Blot, Erase, Delete’, p. 67.

<sup>49</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 185.

<sup>50</sup> Madawi al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 183.

<sup>51</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 220.

<sup>52</sup> al-Rasheed, p. 182.

Islam.’<sup>53</sup> The state-sanctioned control over print culture and newspapers is intertwined with Islamic fundamentalism, which further limits the information that moves between Eastern and Western archives. In Lawrence Rubin’s words, ‘the religious institutions provided the ruling regime with religious legitimacy in exchange for resources (nonmaterial and material) and a measured autonomy over society’s norms.’<sup>54</sup> The theocratic state uses inscription to control domestic and private spheres. Frances Shore states that the *Arab News* writes on religious matters every day, with doctrines such as ‘there is no original sin. People are naturally good, and they have free will, and Allah does not ask very much of them, certainly nothing unreasonable. The rules take account of human weaknesses; they are easy to keep. But the penal code does not reflect this optimism. Nor does the general tenor of society.’<sup>55</sup> The novel’s presentation of paper doilies and newspapers in the Shores apartment conceive religious doctrines as an invasion into the private realm.

Print culture also has a specific role in the enforcement of gender segregation to maintain Saudi’s stability over Pan-Arab culture, but also to maintain and preserve Islamic traditions. Newspapers dictate expectations of married life, as do letters from Riyadh (the political and administrative centre of Saudi Arabia) ‘here’s a letter from one Abdul Karim of Riyadh: The Kingdom’s social and cultural heritage does not allow women to mix with men either in life activities or in work. The right place for a woman is to look after her husband and children, prepare food, and manage the housework’ (p. 73). State-sanctioned knowledge then controls how information is gathered and scrutinised to preserve the status quo, which Frances cannot destabilise through her investigations as an archival agent. The social and religious subordination of women in private spaces is linked to the state’s own legitimacy narrative. al-Rasheed states in her essay ‘Caught Between Religion and State: Women in Saudi Arabia’ that ‘the state has projected an image of itself as a moral agent, guarding the chastity of women. Women are a frontier zone, a fixed boundary requiring protected against deviance, transgression, and violation – violation not of the female body, but of the body of the state.’<sup>56</sup> The control of inscription in private and public spaces leads the Shores to conclude that, under

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<sup>53</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 229.

<sup>54</sup> Lawrence Rubin, ‘The Power of a Weak State: Sudan’s Relations with Saudi Arabia and Egypt’, *Islam in the Balance: Ideational threats in Arab Politics*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2014), p. 69. This source is significant in Saudi Arabia’s internal idea of being the dominant Islamic force in pan-Arabic countries – Sudan questioned the ‘established Islam’ - and the country’s tendency for normative persuasion and coercion is posited as imperialist in nature.

<sup>55</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 150.

<sup>56</sup> Madawi al-Rasheed, ‘Caught Between Religion and State: Women in Saudi Arabia’, *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change*, ed. Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stephane Lacroix (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 292-313, p. 294.

their Western perspective, ‘this isn’t a free society. They haven’t had any practice at being free.’<sup>57</sup> *EMOGS* then explores how the enforcement of print culture in Jeddah is present in private and public spheres to further undermine the total assimilation of expatriate Western people into Eastern culture.

The Shores’ international free movement (and thus their ability to carry historically meaningful knowledge of Botswana and Jeddah) is prohibited and dependent on documentation. Inscription can represent a form of national bordering: ‘I have to carry my driving licence too. If the police stop you and you haven’t got your documents they take you off to gaol till it’s sorted out. They’re very keen on establishing who people are, you see, because of illegal immigrants’ (p. 49). Furthermore, documents and records of travel or passports (which signify the Shores’ past and identity as translocalised subjects) restrict their movements unless they apply for additional permissions by the State: ‘Having a passport wouldn’t be any use. You can’t go out of the country just like that. You have to apply for an exit visa. You need signatures. An official stamp [...] If you want to leave you need permission from your sponsor’ (p. 50). An accessible archive which would make sense of the Islamic policies, religious doctrines, and documentations is further muddled by rumours and speculations: ‘You can’t ever, ever, find out what’s going on in this bloody place’ (p. 51). The Shores lose their sense of identity and place because of documents, which affirms the institutional archive’s power to de-officiate Jeddah’s inhabitants. Social, domestic, and official documentations then control the Shores’ movements, and are a totalising and oppressive force within the novel. Through the presentation of controlled inscription, *EMOGS* constructs the unsettled unknowability of an Islamic archive that Frances’s Western gaze cannot easily penetrate or transcend. Frances’s diary then acts as a textual resistance of Saudi Arabia’s totalising control of print.

Mantel takes the novel’s themes of cultural difference and Islamic theocratic rule to undermine received ideas about received stereotypes of Eastern culture in Western media. Frances is told that ‘it is only in the West that they say, thieving Arabs. It is the Western media. Always they show us as thieving and ignorant and suffering from diseases’ (p. 126). Frances’s collection of oral sources from her female Muslim neighbours notes the resistance to Western ideology and truth-seeking. The destabilised western narrative of Islam means Mantel outlines the Westerner’s inability to accurately narrate the Muslim culture while offering new ways of understanding female ideals. Women ‘in the West are just exploited by men. They drive you

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<sup>57</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 50.



out to work in offices and factories, and then when you come home you must cook for them and look after their children' (p. 151). The other women's resistance to al-taghrīb (Westernisation) politically encourages, in M. al-Sha'fi and H. Hilmi's words, 'the introduction of Western political systems, political parties, and parliaments to the detriment of social cohesion and consensus. Westernisation promotes misery and suffering among Muslims.'<sup>58</sup> Noting the British immigrants/expatriates struggle to discover an Islamic perspective, Frances states: 'we should be more open minded, and not think that we are the ones who are right, and that we should contrive to be more pious about other people's cultures.'<sup>59</sup> Frances's view of Western media's perception of Islamic states (or the Pan-Arab world) examines the peripheral silences in both Eastern and Western media as an aspect of scepticism towards records.

Frances' aim to destabilise both silences through her documentary letters home is nonetheless useless in the face of the state's control of the movement of information. Missing or over-full post-boxes represent Frances's inability to receive or send information internationally:

Her letters home have already ceased to read like frontier dispatches, and now they are full of householder's complaints, and polite general inquiries: have you seen your sister lately, and how is the cat? It is difficult to describe to people the kind of life they are living. And she does not describe their surroundings anymore. She has almost ceased to notice them. If it were not for the empty flat, perhaps Frances would have stopped asking questions already (p. 131).

Frances cannot retrieve meaning from Jeddah because she cannot, in Bruno David and Meredith Wilson's words, 'seek to identify social codes and hegemonic practices that have resulted in the production of particular senses of place' attributed to inscribed accounts of foreign places.<sup>60</sup> The archival process in *EMOGS* has no structure for fear turns truth-seeking into paranoia and distrust. Frances states that:

There are things she was sure of, that she is not sure of now, and when her reverie is broken, and first unease and then fear become her habitual state of mind, she will have learned to distrust herself, to question her own perceptions, to be unsure – as she is unsure already – about the evidence of her own ears and the evidence of her own eyes.<sup>61</sup>

The novel reveals that rumours and disinformation confabulate meaning, and thus the landscape and in-between place Jeddah represents which Frances attempts to inscribe into her letters becomes transient even in text.

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<sup>58</sup> M. al-Sha'fi and H. Hilmi, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya wa tarikh al-dawla al-islamiyya* [The Prophet's Biography and the History of the Islamic State], (Riyadh: Wizarat al Ma'arif, 1993), p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> Bruno David and Meredith Wilson, 'Introduction', *Inscribed Landscapes: Marking and Making Place*, ed. Bruno David and Meredith Wilson (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 1-12, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 67.

Frances is confronted with her inability to collect, record, and interpret information accurately and authentically. *EMOGS* then plays with the truth and lies of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's newspapers and public historically meaningful knowledge, and within Frances's diary and letters she sends back to England. Her diary and letters are an archive of misinformation and thus become floating signifiers with no lines of communication to link them between Saudi Arabia and England. Frances concludes that it is 'better not to write things down. Anyway, the diary's original purpose seems to have dissolved. She couldn't write to Clare, or to any of her correspondents, the sort of thing she had been putting in her diary recently. She imagined their replies, which seldom even acknowledge the content of her own letters' (p. 237). Frances's documents' lack of movement from the apartment to the public sphere further destabilises the diary's identity as an alternate source of knowledge that would have resisted the state-sanctioned control over print culture in Jeddah. Consequently, Frances's voice and presence grow silent in the narrative and the theocratic law enforces its national myth over Western perspectives.

Despite the theme of discovery, without an archive to inscribe her voice Frances is a failed romance of the archive protagonist. Instead of Isabel Field's historical inquiry acting as a pastiche of Catholic atonement, Frances Shore's revelation of Saudi Arabia's rumours and lies blocks her attempts to preserve her dwindling voice as both a female and archival agent. Historical knowledge is not sent to England due to Frances's confinement to the private realm. Roberto Flores claims that 'the receiver of the story is invited to intimately participate in the narrated content, perhaps not exactly as a protagonist, although certainly as a privileged witness to history. The version of past events thus constructed takes the shape of a cognitive and passionate object.'<sup>62</sup> Thus, the lack of a receiver of Frances's story negates the intimacy that would be generated by the letters to her family, isolating her further from England and the homeland.

Mantel subverts the English privilege of truth-seeking and knowledge of Jeddah since such knowledge is misused in the British media. She destabilises the 'passionate object' which is historical knowledge by making it unable to pass between private/public or national/international borders. However, the burglary removes the photographs that document the Shores' time in Africa and their wedding. Their loss unsettles Frances because the invasion of their familial archive signifies Saudi Arabia's censorship within their private realm. Without the diary or the photographs, her memory becomes 'a private mirror, which distorts more and

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<sup>62</sup> Roberto Flores, 'Narration and the Experience of History', *Semiotica*, 219, (2017), 511-28, p. 523.

more as the years go by.’<sup>63</sup> Though Frances’s diary was neither damaged nor stolen, their personal object’s materiality contributes to a fragmented account of Jeddah. Saudi Arabia’s narrative of Pan-Arab dominance is then maintained. Exploring the theocratic state’s tight control is paralleled by the form of historiographic metafiction, which in Hutcheon’s words ‘paradoxically fits both definitions: it installs totalising order, only to contest it, by its radical provisionality, textuality, and, often, fragmentation.’<sup>64</sup> Through Flores’ assessment, the thesis finds a similar framework in *EMOGS* that ‘history is not merely a repository, but contemporary experience. It is heritage, not collective, but a matter of individuals who appropriate and transform it into a vital element, the centre of their existence. History is not a depository or sediment, but rather the raw materials of personal identity.’<sup>65</sup> Frances’ subjective experience of Jeddah loses its existence because she cannot inscribe it in either letters or her diary. The ‘I am whited out’ refers to her permanent displacement from Saudi culture and a white blank page absent of ink.<sup>66</sup> Frances’s voice and inscribed account are not added to any historical archive, and she is rendered silenced. Western female history in Saudi Arabia is symbolically rendered mute.

*EMOGS* reveals the limitations of free expression in historical narratives and archives by emphasising the totalising voices and perspectives that are more likely to exclude than include non-homogenous voices. Textual knowledge is removed, which Avril Horner says reflects the novel’s ‘clear anxieties concerning the way in which the Islamic faith can be used to constrain women’s life.’<sup>67</sup> As such, the Shores’ archive can no longer embody their past, nor their memories, while they remain in Saudi Arabia. Frances’s diary is a transient object, and her knowledge remains unprocessed through Saudi Arabia’s various techniques to preserve the legitimacy of their national narrative. Frances states that ‘curiosity is a transient phenomenon here. It is not that you learn everything; but you soon learn whatever you will be allowed to know. This is a private society, which does not publish its flaws, or disclose its reasoning, which replies to pressing inquirers with a floodtide of disinformation, and then reverts to its preferred silence.’<sup>68</sup> However, through Frances’s perspective, the narrative focuses on the absences of the societal flaws. Through examining theocratic state-controlled information and

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<sup>63</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 624.

<sup>64</sup> Hutcheon, p. 116.

<sup>65</sup> Flores, p. 513.

<sup>66</sup> *EMOGS*, p. 299.

<sup>67</sup> Avril Horner, ‘Women, Power and Conflict: The Gothic Heroine and ‘Chocolate-box Gothic’, *Caliban: French Journal of English Studies*, 27 (2010), 319-30, <<https://journals.openedition.org/caliban/2218>>.

<sup>68</sup> *EMOGS*, pp. 131-32.

knowledge, Mantel points to the various interventions in the production of archives, literature, and historical narratives.

Not only the production of books, Roger Chartier claims, but the production of,

Texts themselves is a process that involves, beyond the act of writing, various moments, techniques, and interventions: by copyists, bookseller-publishers, master printers, composers, and proof readers. The transactions between works or literature and the social world go beyond the aesthetic and symbolic appropriation of ordinary objects, languages, and ritual or daily practises.<sup>69</sup>

Historiographic metafiction, Hassan Abootalebi claims, then portrays the ‘implausibility of recounting the past without reconstructions and additions on the past of those who pretend to give a totally unbiased account of a given past event, and to raise awareness about the facts of which most readers are not conscious.’<sup>70</sup> In the case of *EMOGS*, such additions and reconstructions in the transference between text and the public sphere is further muddled and distorted by theocratic law. By exploring the dwelling-as-archive as a fluid place, Mantel asserts memory as spatially constituted and the primary method of historical recall even if certain memories have been silenced.

## II. ‘A Happy Ending is Ours to Write (?)’: Inscribing the Revolutionary City in *A Place of Greater Safety*

The novel *APOGS* examines the distinction of social and gendered experiences of domesticity and the urban city as part of the transforming consciousness brought on by the French Revolution. The novel, Arnold states, ‘is peopled by revolutionary revenants of the 1780s and 1790s.’<sup>71</sup> The distinct constructions and transgressions of public and private borders are redefined during the French Revolution. The narrative, Mantel writes in her ‘Author’s Note’, ‘centres on Paris; what happens in the provinces is outside its scope.’<sup>72</sup> Mantel also explains that ‘this is a novel about the French Revolution. Almost all the characters in it are real people and it is closely tied to historical facts – as far as those facts are agreed upon, which isn’t very far. It is not an overview or a complete account of the Revolution’ (ibid). Mantel reimagines the private and public lived experiences of historical figures Camille Desmoulins, Maximilien Robespierre, and Georges D’Anton. Their early domestic life is marked by their

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<sup>69</sup> Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to Eighteenth Century* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. ix.

<sup>70</sup> Abootalebi, p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> Arnold, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> *APOGS*, p. ix.

migrations from rural places to urban Paris. Robespierre is from the small capital Arras in the province Artois, D'Anton, the commune Arcis-sur-Aube in Champagne, and Desmoulins from another commune in Guise, Picardy. However, the presents these characters as historical people with little documented evidence of their early domestic or private lives.

The historical figures are geographic outsiders to the cityscape and marginalised by their peers because of their social backgrounds and other characteristics: Desmoulins's stutter, D'Anton's scarred appearance, and Robespierre's incorruptibility. Marginal urban experiences actively disrupt the order and conservative ideals that require the historical figures of Mantel's novel to compose their faces 'to its usual urbanity' (p. 214). The protagonists are revolutionary figures faced with rebuilding a moral society after the Fall of the Bastille. They ask 'if the people and their deputies were formed by a corrupt society, how are they to make good decisions? How are they to form a moral society when they have no experience of one? [...] we used to do it through the agency of divine grace. But the new constitution doesn't provide for that' (p. 388). The cityscape of Paris in *APOGS* is the centre of the Revolution because of the significant social transformation and disruption of France moving from L'Ancien Regime to the French Revolution. However, *APOGS* presents the historical figures' different methods of inscribing and archiving their experiences of the city as futile attempts due to the ever-changing nature of the urban cityscape and its effect on the private dwellings.

The urban space is a Burkean sublime and pictured as an object of fascination and terror because of Mantel's detailed research, which foreshadows the idea that 'Revolution is inevitable' (p. 216). Paris in the eighteenth century, Jose B. Monelon claims, 'had become the new measure by which social life was to organise its discourse – to become the model for the bourgeois world. Just as imagination had to correspond to reality, so too was the inverse required: reality had to conform to the conception that bourgeois society had of itself.'<sup>73</sup> The creation of the Bourgeois state in Europe then carved a new space that banished, in Monelon's words, the 'vestiges of the feudal worldview' (p. 24) and restructured materially the physical social space, a new geography, where such urban reformations meant 'people were thus controlled and confined to their concrete and respective coordinates within the Parisian map' (p. 25). The Bastille in the present day (2022) exists as ruins on the Place de La Bastille, the individual stones first displaced by Pierre-Francois Palloy as souvenirs or for the construction of roads. Frederick Baker explains that the miniatures of the Bastille blocks were physically

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<sup>73</sup> Jose B. Monleon, *A Specter is Haunting Europe: A Sociohistorical Approach to the Fantastic* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 25.

tangible and accessible emblems ‘of liberty, which irreparably united the regenerated body of the nation and gave it new energy.’<sup>74</sup> In *APOGS*, Mantel frames the displacement of the Bastille as metaphorically embodied in the governor, who ‘is dead and chopped up into little pieces.’<sup>75</sup> Perspective alters the historical meaning of these artefacts that signify the metaphorical and physical dismantling of the L’Ancien Regime and Paris’s urban geography.

The Revolution used the ideology of France as one whole nation rather than a series of small nations. Stephane Gerson claims that ‘the one and indivisible Republic, committed as it was to equality and unity, tolerated neither local prerogatives nor internal diversity [...] the revolution stifled expressions of local autonomy, association, and individuality.’<sup>76</sup> The people in *APOGS* mimic this ideology by unifying as ‘the anonymous many, the People.’<sup>77</sup> Their lack of individuality is explored in *APOGS*, for, before 1789, the aristocrats dehumanise the working class: “‘the poor feel nothing,” the Prince said. “Do not be sentimental. They are not interested in the art of government. They only regard their stomachs”” (p. 43). The increasing economic instability and social inequality in France further marginalised the working class. Michel Foucault states: ‘in the mercantilist economy, the Pauper, being neither producer nor consumer, had no place [in society].’<sup>78</sup> Their transformation into the crowd allows a spectral movement into dwelling spaces and urban places.

In the chapter ‘Killing Time (1789)’, the historical figure Camille Desmoulins narrates his ‘precipitate entry into history’ (p. 220). His address to the crowd transforms the urban spaces of the streets into ‘an armed insurrection, the conversion of the city to a battlefield’ (p. 222). The unified crowd is a spectral embodiment of unreason and terror during the ‘Age of Reason’. In Desmoulins’s perspective, the crowd disrupts the physical foundation of Paris as a personification of the disruption of L’Ancien Regime:

Something is happening underneath his feet; the earth is breaking up. What does the crowd want? To roar. It’s wider objectives? No coherent answer. Ask it: it roars. Who are these people? No names. The crowd just wants to grow, to embrace, to weld together, to gather in to melt, to bay from one throat. If he were not standing here he would be dying anyway, dying between the pages of his letters (p. 223).

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<sup>74</sup> Frederick Baker, ‘The Berlin Wall and the Bastille: Tearing Down Walls and Building Myths’, *European Review of History*, 1. 2 (1994), 157-67, p. 161.

<sup>75</sup> *APOGS*, p. 238.

<sup>76</sup> Stephane Gerson, ‘The Local’, *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, ed. Edward G Berenson, Vincent Duclert and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 213-22, p. 213.

<sup>77</sup> *APOGS*, p. 267.

<sup>78</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, ed. Howard Richard (London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), pp. 218-19.

Desmoulins notes his historical agency through his lived experience of the ‘living sea’ (p. 222), the claustrophobic masses.<sup>79</sup> July 14<sup>th</sup> 1789 is written by Desmoulins as having restored ‘to Frenchmen the rights of man, and declared all citizens equal, equally admissible to all offices, places and public employ.’<sup>80</sup> The collapse of social structures within France is directly marked by the physical storming and decimation of the fortress Bastille on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789. The dehumanisation of the working-class into the crowd is replicated in the personal and institutional dehumanisation of the imprisoned aristocrats: ‘as one man said, all aristos look the same to me, I can’t tell their faces apart [...] freedom is the last thing they know’ (p. 519). The working class dehumanises the aristocrats and nobles as an ironic parody. The crowd reclaims all spaces during the Revolution: the cityscape outside private spaces (‘the mob seethes beneath the windows’ (p. 266)), the working public spaces of offices and public employment, and their spectral occupation within governmental spaces such as the Convention: ‘They were in one of the little rooms, bare and dusty, entered from the warren of dark passages that led from the debating chamber. They were alone, but they did not feel it, because of the tumult and close press of the mob; it was almost possible to smell them’ (pp. 688-89). Throughout the novel, the crowd/ mob haunts the aristocrats and Mantel’s protagonists as a unified and unidentified spectre that threatens the physical and social structures of a transforming Paris.

Mantel’s spectral crowd is a body of protest. The crowd is present in many postmodernist texts. Don DeLillo in *Mao II* (1991) presents the counterpoint to Nietzsche when he writes, ‘the future belongs to crowds.’<sup>81</sup> Maria Beville states that in postmodernist thought, ‘individuality is null and void. Everything original has already been said and done. Totalising concepts of the real are abandoned and there is a general acceptance of a perpetual present dominated by repetition, simulation and the already experienced.’<sup>82</sup> The crowd ‘offers a sort of hall of mirrors in which identity is reduplicated in the repetitions of faces in the multitude. This simulation is the present, but it is also the future, and history is dead. [...] the city has moved from being a physical space to being effectively an ephemeral personal experience’ (ibid).

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<sup>79</sup> Jean Baudrillard refers to the implosive effects of new mass media, where ‘neither the contemporary public, workers, consumers, tourists, nor the anonymous crowd, the masses are a new conglomerate entity containing elements of all these social groups. They come into existence exactly at the point of implosion, here understood as the collapse of subject and object poles’ (John Johnston, ‘Mass Mediation’, *The Cambridge History of Postmodern Literature*, ed. Brian McHale and Len Platt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 95-111, p. 103).

<sup>80</sup> *APOGS*, p. 246.

<sup>81</sup> Don DeLillo, *Mao II* (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 16.

<sup>82</sup> Maria Beville, ‘Zones of Uncanny Spectrality: The City in Postmodern Literature’, *English Studies*, 94.5 (2013), 603-617, p. 609.

Mantel draws on gothic and postmodern influences in the novel to explore the city and the crowd.

Maria Beville claims that, from a gothic perspective, ‘cities are unseen, they are fluid, unmappable and temporal; they are made up of hundreds and thousands of individual subjective urban experiences’ (p. 611). Meanwhile, the city in postmodernism ‘will be presented as decentred, labyrinthine, discontinuous urban site that thrives on tension between order and chaos, presence and absence, reason and imagination’, with the strange and unknowable existing in memory and imagination (p. 604). *APOGS* is a genre-mix because of the representation of multiple perspectives on the city. The third-person narration affirms Mantel’s Paris as the postmodern city for, in Julian Wolfreys’s words, ‘it is an event of the present – based on perception and experience.’<sup>83</sup> Violence occurs sporadically and without order, which means characters ‘shall measure our survival by the clock.’<sup>84</sup> Paris in *APOGS* is on a constant level of visible and invisible threats from the violent crowd before and after the fall of Bastille.

The unidentified crowd, and the resisting royalists, undermine the city as a secure and safe space. The perpetual present, as the Revolutionaries outline, is simulated by the immediate peril to public and private spaces: ‘we have a populace that is enraged, we have a sea of futile unfocused hatred slapping at the institutions of state and washing through the public square, and we have victims, we have the focus for that hate, we have traitors ready, to hand’ (pp. 512-13). A character’s death is conceived spatially as a future event within an empty house: ‘their lives were being rolled away around them. They were like the tenants of an empty house; when the removers have finished, you are left with the bare floors, the forgotten bit of cracked china, the dust you have disturbed’ (p. 658). The empty and disturbed house marks the historical figures’ graves as similarly disturbed while grounding themselves as spectres that unsettle historical records.

The site of Paris is comprised of these unsettled dwellings. The identity and function of these dwellings are transformed. The riding school changes into new Assembly halls, later referred to by Parisians as the Riding-School. The Desmoulins’ new apartment is a transitional in-between place because it changes function from the domestic sphere into the highly politicised space that is constantly invaded by strangers and inscriptions trying to make sense of the Revolution:

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<sup>83</sup> Julian Wolfreys, ‘The Urban Uncanny. The City, the Subject and Ghostly Modernity,’ *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties*, ed. by Jo Collins and Jon Jervis (London: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 168-180, p. 172.

<sup>84</sup> *APOGS*, p. 467.



Since they had moved, it was possible to run the *Revolutions* from home. Inky men, short-tempered and of a robust turn of phrase, stamped up and down the stairs with questions to which they expected her to know the answers. Uncorrected proofs tangled about table legs. Writ-servers sat around the street door, sometimes playing cards and dice to pass the time. It was just like the Danton house, which was in the same building round the corner – complete strangers tramping in and out at all hours, the dining room colonised by men scribbling, their bedroom an overflow sitting room and general thoroughfare (p. 319).

The Desmoulins' apartment becomes the central focus for Camille Desmoulins's ordering of the chaos of the Revolution and metaphorically simulates the spectral movement of the crowd and information through domestic spaces without embedding themselves in the space. The Desmoulins' home is not a retreat from the public streets of Paris and is a stable vantage point that observes the outside world because of the intrusions of the freely moving spectral crowd. Laura J. Burkinshaw notes that in *APOGS*, the 'only safe place in this world is the grave' which further breaks down the marked borders of public and private spaces as sites for freedom and safety; the home is not the safe retreat from political change.<sup>85</sup>

Within Mantel's first-written (and then revised in the early 1990s) novel, the postmodern city of Mantel's fictional Revolutionary Paris is possessed by a gothic imagination. The Revolution actively traverses Parisian streets as the spectral reality of violence and terror during the historical events. Mantel writes: 'We say that everything we do is to preserve the Revolution, but the Revolution is no more than an animated corpse.'<sup>86</sup> Maria Beville claims that terror in a Gothic-postmodernist text offers 'a new kind of transcendentalism, seeking to re-evaluate our secular world through its sublime appropriation of the unrepresentable, unknowable, or infinite.'<sup>87</sup> The urban experience of cityscape is decentralised by the marginalised and polyvalent perspectives that invade spaces.

Paris's transformation during the Revolution is, in Eugenia C. DeLamotte's words, the 'figurative crossing of boundaries' between public and private spaces.<sup>88</sup> France, the marginal mirror of the urban centre of Paris, is physically and ideologically uninhabitable throughout the duration of the novel. The failure of the harvest increases the difficulty of lived experience and provision in Paris: 'the harvest fails – in 1770, say, or in 1772 or 1774 – an inexorable price rise begins, in the autumn of 1774, a four-pound loaf in Paris costs eleven sous, but by the following spring the price is up to fourteen. Wages do not rise' (p. 31). Monleon states that

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<sup>85</sup> Laura J. Burkinshaw, 'Some of These Things Are True, and Some of Them Lies. But They are All Good Stories: The Historical Fiction of Hilary Mantel', *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature*, ed. Richard Bradford, Madelena Gonzalez, Stephen Butler, James Ward, and Kevin De Ornellas (London: Wiley, 2020), pp. 311-22, p. 313.

<sup>86</sup> *APOGS*, p. 772.

<sup>87</sup> Beville, p. 199.

<sup>88</sup> Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 21.

rioting in ‘the French Revolution would incarnate, especially after 1792, the threat par excellence of unreason, since it ‘liberated’ and opened up the streets of Paris, the cultural capital of civilisation and Enlightenment, to the barbarous hordes.’<sup>89</sup> Ginette Carpenter reflects on Mantel’s historical fiction writing as an exhumation of the dead and historical figures’ collective memory of the Revolution. Imagination explores the liberated streets of Paris, and the private rooms of Mantel’s protagonists where historical knowledge is at its most elusive. Mantel’s imagining of the domestic lives of famous agents of history is an

insistence upon the private and personal alongside the public and political, [which] similarly disrupts any notion of history as securely anchored. Mantel convincingly casts loose the moorings that secure history as grand narrative (as overarching linear sequence of cause and effect) to offer varied and competing perspectives.<sup>90</sup>

Mantel explores gendered perspectives on domesticity and the Revolution in *APOGS*. In contrast with the nameless and identity-less crowds of the Revolution, the private dwelling spaces in the novel are highly politicised according to gender differentiation.

Desmoulins, D’Anton, and Robespierre move freely between the borders of public/private, rural/urban and revolutionary/domestic spaces. Their male privilege in the public sphere means they exert their influence and presence in the domestic sphere. Camille conceives of France as a transitional place, ‘and again, he is always in transit.’<sup>91</sup> He converts his new apartment with Lucile into a site of business and transition rather than a domestic one: ‘not exactly a love nest, as you see. Sit on the bed. Sit in the bed, feel free. Half of Paris was in here this morning while I was trying to get dressed’ (p. 320). Charlotte, Robespierre’s sister, notes Robespierre’s absence from the domestic sphere: ‘I can’t call it a home. We have never had a home. Some days you are so preoccupied that you hardly speak. I may as well not be here. I am a good housekeeper, what interest do you display in my arrangements? I am a fine cook, but you have no interest in food’ (p. 108). For D’Anton, moving to the city means social success: ‘A pushy and energetic boy who went to Paris would never come back – except for visits, perhaps as a distant and successful man’ (p. 48). D’Anton, unlike Desmoulins and Robespierre, relies on domestic spaces, for he ‘must have a home – I must have a wife, my children around me, my house running smoothly’ (p. 665). D’Anton’s self-affirming subjectivity is dependent on the material placement of women within dwelling spaces. Despite being described as an ‘honourable man, Georges- Jacques. An honourable, peaceable, domestic

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<sup>89</sup> Monleon, p. 38.

<sup>90</sup> Carpenter, ‘Walking the Dead’, p. 106.

<sup>91</sup> *APOGS*, p. 218.

sort' (p. 631), he often spent his nights 'in other women's beds' (p. 625) and is never at home for long. The three male protagonists do not easily belong to the domestic sphere and (though Robespierre never married) 'had all the convenience of marriage, and none of its obligations' (ibid). The male protagonists then do not dwell in private homes and are more active in the public sphere.

In comparison, women are confined to the domestic spheres of late eighteenth-century France and increasingly excluded from the political sphere: 'I know nothing of politics, it is not a woman's province' (p. 823). Mantel indirectly references Jean Jacques Rousseau's opinion on private life: 'The family may perhaps be seen as the first model of political society. The head of the state bears the image of the father, the people the image of his children' (p. 8). Rousseau popularised notions of biological difference between sexes from the eighteenth century onwards, which, Carol Blum states, enabled 'domestic ideology to find its expression in the sort of Revolutionary discourse which was ultimately used to keep women out of the public sphere.'<sup>92</sup> In *APOGS*, public spheres are wholly occupied by men while private spaces have men, women, and children. However, Mantel draws on the distinctions between private and public to explore the marginalised lived experience of women in the novel.

A textual border separates the private and public drama on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789. Camille speaks for insurrection and appears, through eye-witness accounts, to move between private and public space while the social and urban landscape of Paris undergoes historic transformation: 'Despite the fact that you were here, you were also there. Eye-witnesses saw you, one of the mainstays of the action.'<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, Lucille and Anette's (em)placement in the domestic Duplessis household means they only collect information of the crowd destroying the city via rumours, men such as M. Duplessis and newspapers which appear after the event ('you can read it in the morning paper – if there is one' (p. 226)). The information and political rhetoric are recreated within the domestic sphere. The domestic spaces become a pale imitation of revolutionary public spaces.

Investigating the confinement of women in domesticity during the French Revolution is, in Dorinda Outram's words, 'an investigation of the instability and contradictions of the

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<sup>92</sup> Lisa Beckstrand, *Deviant Women of the French Revolution and the Rise of Feminism* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), p. 40. For more on Blum's assessment of Rousseau's thoughts on gender, see Carol Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>93</sup> *APOGS*, p. 233.

revolutionary public realm itself.<sup>94</sup> Exclusion from Paris's political and public spaces denies female characters the ability to build as part of their experience of dwelling in Revolutionary space. Iris Marion Young states in *On Female Body Experience*: 'If building in this way is basic to the emergence of subjectivity, to dwelling in the world with identity and history, then it would appear that only men are subjects. On the whole, women do not build.'<sup>95</sup> Exclusion from building a new France away from the past means the female characters have a limited relation to the public space, affecting their sense of belonging to the fictional Paris's status as an in-between place. The female account of the Revolution is an absence, a slip in this ever-changing cityscape.

The Revolution then appears spectral because of Lucille's exclusion: 'One day she stirs from her reverie and says, do you know, Georges-Jacques, I sometimes think I might have fantasised the Revolution completely – it seems too unlikely to be true. And Camille – what if he is something I have simply fabricated, just a phantom I have called up out of the depth of my nature, a ghostly second self who works out my discontents.'<sup>96</sup> Mary Ashburn Miller explains that the metaphor of weaving is a means for women to retake spaces to build and dwell, and (historically speaking) to '[make] sense of the rapid and often overwhelming transformations taking place around them.'<sup>97</sup> Embroidery is the material evidence of Lucille's placement in domestic spheres during the Fall of the Bastille: 'she picked up some embroidery. She worked slowly, paying close attention to what she was doing. Later she intended to show people the meticulous work she had done that afternoon between a quarter past five and a quarter past six.'<sup>98</sup> Mantel's domestic image of weaving refocuses, metafictionally, on the marginal lived experiences during radical historical events:

What could be more soothing, more ordinary than a linen sheet? In a fractious world? There will be more need to darn and patch, to mend and make do, now that, as her husband puts it, 'the blow has fallen'. What is with these metaphors of domestic work? Does she resist them, or do they resist her? The centre is frayed, worn, gone to threads; so, turn edges to middle (p. 375).

The decentring of Revolutionary Paris as a male-dominated site of dwelling in *APOGS* then destabilises male perspectives of, in Outram's words, 'their conquest as being universalistic,

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<sup>94</sup> Dorinda Outram, 'Revolution, Domesticity and Feminism: Women in France after 1789', *The Historical Journal*, 32.4 (1989), 971-79, p. 973.

<sup>95</sup> Young, p. 137.

<sup>96</sup> *APOGS*, p. 641.

<sup>97</sup> Mary Ashburn Miller, *A Natural History of the Revolution: Violence and Nature in the French Revolutionary Imagination 1789-1794* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> *APOGS*, pp. 224-25.

involving as it did the values of liberty, citizenship, equality, virtue, and reason.<sup>99</sup> The feminine perspective of dwelling in *APOGS* completes Mantel's construction of the postmodern city, and fully decentres Paris as a male space of transformation.

Nick Bentley defines the postmodern city 'in terms of the narrative experience of both its material and imaginative spaces.'<sup>100</sup> Plural and partial perspectives complicate fixed definitions of the urban sphere, and 'the complexity of contemporary urban space is thereby rendered in the postmodern novel through a pluralisation of space, time, and social discourse, while the alienated modernist observer is replaced by multiple perspectives that produce heterogenous representations of the city' (ibid). Positioned, in Azade Seyhan words, 'in the fold of a paradox that represents both the security of home and the inevitability of migration, the city confronts the ethical imperative of settling its inhabitants as it allows for their differences.'<sup>101</sup> However, the privileged movement of male bodies between public/private borders defines the presence/absence of historical meaning in architectural structures within *APOGS*. These are paralleled by the movement from rural/small cities of France to the urban city of Paris. The changing cityscape unsettles any sense of established dwelling, which occurs again in *The Giant O'Brien* (1998). Mantel then constructs movement to the capital cities of Paris and London as inherently destabilising for an individualistic sense of identity and place within historical events, which is a common trope in nineteenth-century historical fiction. In *APOGS*, the character's methods of inscription to bring order to their chaotic surroundings represent another level of complication.

In 'Blot, Erase, Delete', Mantel states that 'the time comes when you take up the pen. It is mightier than the sword, you hear.'<sup>102</sup> The pen and themes of resurrection/reanimation of the past, then act as aids in Mantel's works to reconstruct the past which is, in Bozena Kucala's words, 'as if it were still the unfolding present, as if it had not yet happened.'<sup>103</sup> Characters experience neo-phenomenological moments when picking up the pen or sitting at a writing desk. In these moments, Mantel has a metafictional spectral presence. In her 2015 interview with Richard Lea, Mantel claims the present tense captures 'the jitter and flux of events, the

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<sup>99</sup> Outram, p. 972.

<sup>100</sup> Nick Bentley, 'Postmodern Cities', *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, ed. Kevin R. McNamara (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 175-87, p. 185.

<sup>101</sup> Azade Seyhan, 'The Translated City: Immigrants, Minorities, Diasporans, and Cosmopolitans', *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, ed. Kevin R. McNamara (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 216-32, p. 216.

<sup>102</sup> Mantel, 'Blot, Erase, Delete', p. 64.

<sup>103</sup> Bozena Kucala, 'Reanimating the English Historical Novel in the Twenty-First Century: The Case of David Mitchell's *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*', *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 53.1 (2018), 203-22, p. 212.

texture of them and their ungraspable speed [...] it is humble and realistic – the author is not claiming superior knowledge – she is inside or very close by her character, and sharing their focus, their limited perceptions.’<sup>104</sup> The characters in *APOGS* navigate the difficulties over writing the cityscape and acting as inverted archival agents. As inverted archival agents they control additions to the document or diaries because they are aware that a lack of control over the pen may delegitimise their account or acts of witnessing history.

In *APOGS* Camille Desmoulins reflects on his act of taking the pen as a fluid kind of knowledge:

When it was time to write, and he took his pen in his hand, he never thought of consequences; he thought of style. I wonder why I ever bothered with sex, he thought; there’s nothing in this breathing world so gratifying as an artfully placed semi-colon. Once paper and ink were to hand, it was useless to appeal to his better nature, to tell him he was wrecking reputations and ruining people’s lives. [...] Writing’s like running downhill; can’t stop if you want to.<sup>105</sup>

Desmoulins links inscription as a form of embodied knowledge, with the pen facilitating the knowledge’s movement: ‘As he left the café and headed home to his desk, he felt that singular fluid running in his veins; it was like the old days on the *Revolutions*, the power of words moving through his bloodstream like a drug.’ (p. 675). Through embodied knowledge via the pen, Desmoulins is restored as what Gabrielle Spiegel calls a ‘historical actor and his or her consciousness of the world, however thoroughly mediated by discourses of one sort or another, to the centre of historical concerns.’<sup>106</sup> Spiegel notes that analysis of the return of individual agency and experience of history aids in the establishment of ‘a philosophical and theoretical basis for the integration of memory and memorial testimony into the study of the past’ (p. 149). Neo-phenomenology under Spiegel’s assessment emphasises the mental and bodily acts undertaken by historical actors. Spiegel states

‘It is this actor-centered perspective, a belief in individual experience and perception as the agent’s own source of knowledge about, and action in, the world – a perception mediated and perhaps constrained but *not* wholly controlled by the cultural scaffolding or conceptual schemes within which it takes place – that I see as the return of a modified phenomenology’ (p. 156).

Neo-phenomenology features in Mantel’s works with her writing characters adopting the role of reanimated historical actors. Desmoulins’s experience of the past in present tense then lends to the sense of history being generated on a page through a pen.

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<sup>104</sup> Mantel and Richard Lea, ‘Make It Now: The Rise of the Present Tense in Fiction’, *The Guardian*, (2015) [date last accessed: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/21/rise-of-the-present-tense-in-fiction-hilary-mantel>>.

<sup>105</sup> *APOGS*, p. 277.

<sup>106</sup> Gabrielle Spiegel, ‘The Future of the Past’, *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 8.2 (2014), 149-79, p. 153.

In Mantel's works, the reanimation of people and archives is achieved through a narrated collapse between past and present. The pen in Mantel's works then resembles Gaston Bachelard's 'material imagination', which Steven Connor explains is an 'imagination that performs the traditional duty of taking us beyond the merely given or present at hand but does so in ways that seem designed to keep us on terms with its materiality, even as that materiality is itself something still to be imagined.'<sup>107</sup> The material pen contains its memory, for in Bachelard's words, 'material imagination learns from fundamental substances; profound and lasting ambivalences are bound up in them.'<sup>108</sup> The pen is an inscription technology which Christina Lupton states acts to 'unsettle and restore meaning in the same well-handled stroke of the pen by making paper and ink part of their reader's sensory environment.'<sup>109</sup> In Mantel's works, the past is produced by pen and paper, with the historical actors acting as a medium of historical consciousness. The pen facilitates her historical actors' imagined responses to the cityscape while maintaining an ambivalence in the historical record as she explores multiple interpretations of the private minds and homes of her historical characters.

In a 2015 interview, Mantel states that 'writing a contemporary novel was just a way to get a publisher. My heart lay with historical fiction, and I think it still does.'<sup>110</sup> Her exploration into archives concerning the French Revolution and the Tudor Period reveals more silences within her research and a dependency on imagination and the pen to fill in the gaps. Similar historical novels that explore the French Revolution are Daphne Du Maurier's *The Glass-Blowers* (1963), and Charles Dicken's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859).<sup>111</sup> Mantel's fictional narrative of the past leads her to have 'many arguments with myself, about what history really is. But you must state a case, I think, before you plead against it.'<sup>112</sup> Mantel's *APOGS* explores a self-reflexive account of the past.

Mantel's paratextual Author's Note reveals her self-conscious awareness of her method to gather 'as much historical evidence as she could find, then using the acts to stitch together a

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<sup>107</sup> Steven Connor, *Beckett, Modernism, and the Material Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, trans. Edith R. Farrell (Dallas: Pegasus Foundation, 1983), p. 11.

<sup>109</sup> Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 73.

<sup>110</sup> Mantel and Mona Simpson.

<sup>111</sup> Dicken's satirical social realism relies on Thomas Carlyle's acclaimed and stylistically unorthodox *The French Revolution: A History* (1837) for knowledge of the past.

<sup>112</sup> *APOGS*, p. ix.

narrative.<sup>113</sup> Mantel imaginatively recreates missing archives and documented evidence. The archival agent as a public figure in *APOGS* correlates to Giannachi's claim that 'modern archival thinking about archives as a form of public heritage can only be traced back to the French Revolution when, in 1790, the French National Archives were created, from various government religious and private records, and made public for the first time.'<sup>114</sup> Tom Chadwick identifies *APOGS* as a late-twentieth-century archival turn dissected by techniques such as historiographic metafiction. *APOGS*'s use of the historical record then frames 'an archive whose historical traces increasingly come to structure and produce the present.'<sup>115</sup> Archive fiction, Chadwick explains, 'focus[es] on the theme of archiving in its own right through the novel's setting at a key threshold within archival history; where, previously, fictions about the archive have recorded and reflected human subjects' engagement with the archive' (ibid). Furthermore:

Those moments at which processes of record keeping themselves mark history. Second, the form of the novel is directly influenced by the archival focus with Mantel's novel written explicitly from archival documents. Finally, the focus of the theme of archiving and the influence of the archive on the novel's form combine to highlight a particular archival agency (ibid).

The archival agency features throughout Mantel's works, yet *APOGS*'s form as a historical fiction investigates the effect of such agency in other archival documents.

However, the French Revolution's archival influence is part of Mantel's inquiry into the past and the pluralist voices missing within the archive. The dynamic archival agency means the writing of history always controls the perception of historical events that happen *de facto*, for 'they'll do it now and make it legal later.'<sup>116</sup> The instantaneous narration brings the past into the present, which allows Camille Desmoulins to embody the historical event of the Fall of Bastille as an immediate experience:

If he were not standing here he would be dying anyway, dying between the pages of his letters. If he survives this – death as a reprieve – he will have to write it down, the life that feeds the writing that feeds the life to come, and already he fears he cannot describe the heat, the green leaves of the chestnut trees, the choking dust and the smell of blood and the blithe savagery of his auditors; it will be a voyage into hyperbole, an odyssey of bad taste (p. 223).

Desmoulins, a significant revolutionary pamphleteer, struggles to make meaning out of his experiences directly and indirectly. Narrative, Ursula Tidd states, acts 'as a bridge between an

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<sup>113</sup> Mantel and Alexandra Alter, 'For Hilary Mantel, There's No Time Like the Past', *The New York Times*, (2020), [date last accessed: 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021], < <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/books/hilary-mantel-mirror-and-the-light-thomas-cromwell.html>>.

<sup>114</sup> Giannachi, p. 5.

<sup>115</sup> Chadwick, "'Documentary Evidence": Archival Agency in Hilary Mantel's *A Place of Greater Safety*', p. 166.

<sup>116</sup> *APOGS*, p. 470.



individual's private understanding of the world and the public world in which he or she articulates that understanding.'<sup>117</sup> Individuals writing their self-narratives become, Tidd states, a 'narrating subject through time, who becomes an agent in the act of narration' (p. 81). Desmoulins' experience of the crowd means he becomes a narrating agent who witnesses both the crowd and the historical moment. Identity production through the narrative is influenced by stories for, as Jean Paul Sartre says, 'a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story.'<sup>118</sup> Mantel presents the violent and bloody Revolution as absurd, with disinformation and lies becoming integral to historical knowledge of the French Revolution.

The events are narrated at an exponential rate within the novel. Information and knowledge – whether through official documents or rumour – are carefully scrutinised between Desmoulins, D'Anton, and Robespierre: 'But show me everything, won't you? Because I don't want you attributing to me things I haven't said, and foisting on me opinions I don't hold' (p. 765). *APOGS* argues that knowledge of historical characters, political figures, and the familial past is known and recorded through documents. Desmoulins is uprooted from his familial home at age seven for the sake of education, and 'as a consequence knew his family better on paper than he did in real life' (p. 25). Communication lines are extended to oral narration to emphasise the need for inscribed records to know the past and the myths arising from revolutionary discourse. Historical actions are 'being manufactured out of speech. How can words save a country? Words make myths, it seems, and for their myths people fight to win' (p. 516). Desmoulins' process of inscription is an embodied knowledge, which relies on being present in the historical record and archives. Whenever Desmoulins stops writing, he falls off the record and thus experiences a pseudo-death in the novel. When 'he was not writing, or engaged in a shouting-match, the life seemed to drain out of him; he felt passive, a husk, a ghost. Strange fantasies possessed him; the language of public debate took a violent, unexpected turn' (p. 675). The reader, then, acquires knowledge of Desmoulins through paper.

Inscription, then, carries weight in *APOGS* as a material record and echoes the themes of inquiry and the witnessing present in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747): 'Write you should, I think, if you cannot speak... for words leave no traces; they pass as breath; and mingle

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<sup>117</sup> Ursula Tidd, *Simone de Beauvoir: Gender and Testimony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 80. This source is a study of Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs, who represents herself as disruptive autobiographical subject within a collective, patriarchal history which would silence non-dominant witness accounts of history.

<sup>118</sup> Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 39.

with air, and may be explained with latitude. But the pen is a witness on record.’<sup>119</sup> Documents in *APOGS* are an intermix of formal, oral, and informal records. Desmoulins draws ‘little ships at sea in the margin of the encouraging letter he was drafting to the Jacobins of Marseille.’<sup>120</sup> D’Anton states that ‘the most bizarre aspect of Camille’s character is his desire to scribble over every blank surface; he sees a guileless piece of paper, virgin and harmless, and persecutes it till it is black with words, and then besmirches its sister, and so on, through the quire’ (p. 389). Desmoulins’s habit of constant inscription presents D’Anton’s speeches as his verbal double: ‘between now and the end of his career, Danton will make scores of speeches, some of them hours long. He makes them up in his head, as he goes. Perhaps you can hear his voice’ (pp. 389-90). D’Anton remains anxious of Desmoulins’s inscription immortalising his words and thus desires to be stricken from the record, untraceable.

A metafictional instance further separates D’Anton as an inverse archival agent who desires his record’s exclusion from the public sphere. In *APOGS*, D’Anton is metafictionally alluded to have one foot metaphorically in the novel’s text on account of his oral rhetorical preference:

Now we have a problem. It wasn’t envisaged that he should have part of the narrative. But time is pressing; the issues are multiplying, and in a little over two years he will be dead. Danton did not write. He may have gone into court with a sheaf of notes; we have represented such occasions, fictitious but probably. The records of these cases are lost. He kept no diaries, and wrote few letters: unless perhaps he write the kind of letters that are torn up on receipt. He distrusted the commitments he might make on paper, distrusted the permanent snare for his temporary opinions. (p. 389).

D’Anton’s anxiety becomes true, for signs at the City Hall proclaim him the representative voice of the Revolution: “‘In the name of the nation – DANTON.” “So Danton claims to speak for the nation?’” (p. 476). In *APOGS*, words and writings are immortalised by the public sphere.

Jurgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) marks the uncomfortable shift from representation in the eighteenth -century ‘in the sense in which the members of a national assembly represent a nation’ into the public sphere.<sup>121</sup> In his reflections on the history of seventeenth-century pamphlets, Pascal Verhoest claims that ‘the public sphere is a contestable communicative space, with the widest possible social coverage, articulated around fluid yet situated networks of discursive practices, in which different communicative styles are used and compete to influence perceptions so as to contribute to the

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<sup>119</sup> Samuel Richardson, *The History of Clarissa Harlow: In a Series of Letters*, vol 4 (London: James Carpenter and William Miller, 1811), p. 87.

<sup>120</sup> *APOGS*, p. 545.

<sup>121</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 7.

resolution of political conflicts of interest.’<sup>122</sup> As well as pamphlets, architectural spaces embody networks and rumours: ‘The walls and gateposts talk of you, M. Danton.’<sup>123</sup> Oral tradition and inscription in *APOGS* actively work against the protagonists, with communication networks within public and private spheres leading to disinformation: ‘I know what people call evidence these days. Hearsay and denunciation and empty rhetoric’ (p. 789). D’Anton and Desmoulins’ archival and oral freedoms, which are part of the public’s instantaneously generating archive of the French Revolution, do not account for the myth-making that orchestrates their downfall. D’Anton is a particular target of rumour: ‘You know you’ll be attacked as soon as you appear in public? Hebert has insinuated things about your Belgian venture. I’m afraid your illness was regarded as largely mythical. People were saying you had emigrated to Switzerland with your ill-gotten gains’ (p. 748). D’Anton’s pseudo-inscribed accounts reflect his unstable position in society and the Revolution.

In comparison, Robespierre embodies the Revolution: ‘I have a loyalty to the Revolution and the men who made it. But you are defaming it in the face of all Europe’ (p. 772). He carefully considers inscription’s effect on his private and public life. Robespierre too contributes to silences in the archive by campaigning for Camille’s writings to be burned: ‘These writings are dangerous, because they disturb public order and fill our enemies with hope [...] we must repudiate these writings, which even Brissot would not have dared acknowledge, but we must keep Camille amongst us. I demand that – as a gesture – the offending issues of the ‘Old Cordelier’ be burned before this society’ (p. 792). The historical figure of Robespierre participates in slippage in the historical record:

You see in his writings revolutionary principles side by side with the maxims of a thoroughly pernicious reaction. In one passage, he raises the courage of patriots, in another he increases the hopes of aristocrats .... In one phrase, he deals a mortal blow at our enemies; then, with biting sarcasm, he destroys the best patriots. He is a strange mixture of truth and falsehood, of statesmanship and ridiculousness, of sensible ideas and of selfish and absurd plans.<sup>124</sup>

Truth-seeking is contradictory in *APOGS*, and controlling the archive is prioritised within Revolutionary France.

Robespierre’s acts of print censorship place him between Desmoulins and D’Anton in terms of controlling the archive and the public sphere’s quickly generating knowledge. Robespierre’s refusal to let ‘the Revolution out of [his] own hands’ is a metaphor for his desired

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<sup>122</sup> Pascal Verhoest, ‘Seventeenth Century as Constituents of a Public Communications Space: A Historical Critique of Public Sphere Theory’, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 36.1 (2018), 47-62, p. 59.

<sup>123</sup> *APOGS*, p. 302.

<sup>124</sup> James Michael Eagan, *Maximilien Robespierre: Nationalist Dictator* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 136.

strict information control.<sup>125</sup> In his desire to root out conspirators, Robespierre collects information against D'Anton and Desmoulin: 'He was very quiet, in today's session. The others think it is because he's not over his illness yet, but it is more than that. He made a note of everything that was said' (p. 812). Chadwick states that the archive is never within the characters' control, and 'the same agency can, in turn, mark them' because of how historical productions affect public and political perception.<sup>126</sup> Information, news, and rumours run quicker than the protagonists can inscribe them:

Either we control it ourselves or it happens outside and beyond our control. It seems, as the unspeakable news comes in, hour by hour, that we have got the worst of both worlds. We will never, now, know an hour free from guilt; we will never, now, recover such reputation as we possessed; yet we neither planned nor willed the whole of it, the half of it. We simply turned away, we washed our hands, we made a list and we followed an agenda, we went home to sleep while the people did their worst and the people (Camille thinks) were translated from heroes to scavengers, to savages, to cannibals.<sup>127</sup>

As such, the protagonists' role as archival agents repeatedly fails to record or witness the events of the French Revolution or control the archive because the public sphere of information and knowledge moves independently from their perception or understanding.

Breaking away from L'Ancien Regime meant reconfiguring new legislation and documents that narrated new national self-determination. Alfred Cobban states that it was not until the French Revolution that the 'nation state ceased to be a simple historical fact and became the subject of a theory.'<sup>128</sup> Further acts of fictionalisation occur in *APOGS* through the mass print media of newspapers and pamphlets in the social sphere, and through diaries in the private sphere. Mantel's reconstruction of Revolutionary Paris is told through intertextual references to French newspapers, which have tension between freedom of speech and incoherence. Malcolm Cook explains that within the French Revolution, 'a score of new titles appeared in Paris alone in May and June 1789, with over 200 more starting later in the year in the kingdom as a whole, albeit many of them of short duration. The following year, 1790, represented the apogee for a pluralistic press.'<sup>129</sup> The revolutionary press supplied overwhelming political content, and in Cook's words, 'rather than merely recording events, many titles [...] deployed deeply critical comment and engaged in invective. Initially deferential towards the National Assembly, the press was increasingly prone to challenge the

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<sup>125</sup> *APOGS*, p. 810.

<sup>126</sup> Chadwick, p. 166.

<sup>127</sup> *APOGS*, p. 519.

<sup>128</sup> Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970), p. 33.

<sup>129</sup> Malcolm Cook, 'The New Regime: Political Institutions and Democratic Practices Under the Constitutional Monarchy, 1789-1791', *The Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution*, ed. David Andress (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 219- 32, p. 229.

constituted authorities' (p. 230). Journalists themselves experience more freedom, which the historical Camille Desmoulins notes: 'No longer is it a wretched and mercenary profession, enslaved by the government. Today in France it is the journalist who holds the tablets, the album of the censor, and who inspects the senate, the consuls, and the dictator himself.'<sup>130</sup> Newspapers shaped perceptions of the Revolution and made sense of its development, offering the public sphere ways to critique governmental policies and the monarchy.

In *APOGS*, there is an inner tension between whether newspapers create or reflect the public opinion, which then indirectly questions Louis Althusser's theory 'in which literature can produce individuals in order that the capitalist forces of production may continue. Ideas of the self, morality, propriety and subjectivity are, according to this picture, effects of literary production.'<sup>131</sup> Newspapers and pamphlets in the novel embody the polyvalent perspectives of individual and collective urban experiences. Mass-mediation enjoys similar access as the spectral crowd. For Desmoulins, his newspapers offer the opportunity to question and reshape society. Habermas states that the British public sphere's interactions with 'the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*, the public held up a mirror to itself; it did not yet come to a self-understanding through the detour of a reflection on works of philosophy and literature, art and science, but through entering itself into 'literature' as an object.'<sup>132</sup> John Thomas Gilchrist states that between 1789-92, France 'allowed an unprecedented freedom to the press, the press provides a remarkably varied and rich source of contemporary comment, exposition of ideas, and illustration of events. Second, the press was one of the prime movers of the Revolution, and one of the most important organisers of both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary propaganda.'<sup>133</sup> Through the archive of revolutionary newspapers, *APOGS* accesses the blurred boundaries of private and public knowledge of the French Revolution to investigate the effects of the commercialised press on rumours and misinformation.

The polyvalent, pluralist press, in Cook's words, 'divided along partisan lines did give voice to the views of those not represented on elected bodies.'<sup>134</sup> However, Desmoulins notes the rapid name changes of newspapers and emerging voices as a muddled heteroglossia for his

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<sup>130</sup> Camille Desmoulins (1789) quoted in Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 204. Translated from *Revolutions de France et de Brabant* (1789).

<sup>131</sup> Claire Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 18.

<sup>132</sup> Habermas, p. 43.

<sup>133</sup> John Thomas Gilchrist, *The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents taken from the Press of the Revolution for the years 1789-1794* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. xiv.

<sup>134</sup> Cook, p. 230.

newspaper goes through various name changes, beginning ‘as the *Courier du Brabant* – they were having a revolution over the border, too, and Camille thought it worth a mention. It became the *Revolutions de France et du Brabant*, ended up simply as the *Revolutions de France* [...] Everyone is starting newspapers, including people who can’t write and who, says Camille, can’t even think.’<sup>135</sup> In the exploration of multiple voices in the public archives, *APOGS* points to Fredric Jameson’s statement that the postmodern ‘historical novel can no longer set out to represent the historical past; it can only ‘represent’ our ideas and stereotypes about that past (which thereby at once becomes “pop history”).’<sup>136</sup> The polyvalent perspectives seen in the newspapers and the three revolutionary protagonists situates the reader, in Diana Wallace’s words, ‘within multiple and subjective points of view on the confusing and violent flood of events, rather than producing an “overview”.’<sup>137</sup> The archive details a confusion of voices as The People attempt to make sense of the Revolution and the new national myth built on ‘LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY OR DEATH.’<sup>138</sup> The polyvalent press in *APOGS* reveals the inequalities of voices and opinions as another way to show newspapers and pamphlets as unreliable records of events.

Censorship and regulation of print culture, then, haunt the ideals of freedom of the press within *APOGS*. Desmoulins grows ‘sick of deadlines and the printers’ tantrums and errors; his compulsion has gone freelance. This is no drawback, as long as he writes, every week, about as many words as Danton speaks’ (p. 389). *APOGS* explores the various interplay of the historical record as fixed/fluid and traced/untraceable. The missing records centred within *APOGS* also appear in the domestic sphere, where personal diaries and acts of inscription are destroyed to prevent hauntings or persecution of political beliefs. Gabrielle D’Anton haunts D’Anton through the objects she leaves behind. However, D’Anton resists inscribed accounts that portray him negatively, which means he censors her voice: ‘He turned up her journal, kept sporadically in a bold hand. He read each page, and the mechanics of his past were laid bare for him. Unwilling that anyone else should see the book, he burned it, putting it on the fire a leaf at a time, watching it curl and char’ (p. 612). The novel is an amalgamation of the interplays of the silenced public and domestic written records.

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<sup>135</sup> *APOGS*, p. 273.

<sup>136</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 25.

<sup>137</sup> Diana Wallace, *The Woman’s Historical Novel: British Women Writers, 1900-2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 205.

<sup>138</sup> *APOGS*, p. 760.

Lucille Desmoulins notes the distinction in tone between her private and public diaries. The little insignificant brown ones are a ‘feast of embarrassment, Lucile thought; she had taken to ripping the pages out, to burning them’ (p. 760). Her red diaries are her ‘official diaries’, representing her sanitised opinions and account of history: ‘The tone of the official diaries became more and more anodyne, with the occasional thoughtful or striking passage to titillate or mislead. The private diaries were for the dark, precise thoughts’ (ibid). Her awareness of the processes of history that would confiscate her story inspires the need to separate her writing topics into public and private. A neo-phenomenological sense of generating public and private stories occurs: ‘her life is rewriting itself for her; she believes this’ (ibid). Archiving their stories is out of their control, which parallels Mantel’s metafictional motif that ‘it might be like one of those novels where the characters take over and leave the author behind’ (p. 214). Lucille’s highly edited subjectivity and voice alter her personal accounts, contrasting with the public sphere’s rapid acceptance of freedom of speech and polyvalent voices. Domestic spheres and private thoughts from the past then remain inaccessible to Mantel.

D’Anton and Desmoulin’s detractors necessitate the burning of their official documents, which alludes to the deliberate erasure of inscribed accounts:

Go back to your apartment and burn anything you think might be incriminating. Be very careful, because you notice that as the Revolution goes on there are new crimes [...] When you get there sit down and prepare for me a very clear statement of how you want your financial affairs to be handled. But dictate it, it shouldn’t be in your own hand, my father-in-law will take it down for you and he will give you his advice. Don’t sign it, and don’t leave it lying around. Meanwhile, I’ll get you a passport and some papers (p. 462).

Prioritised is the active silencing of the past over truth-seeking in the private sphere, with references to ‘what comes of reading other people’s mail. You find out things you’d rather not know’ (p. 320). A similar silence occurs when writing about the ‘secret history’ of the French Revolution for public consumption: “‘The true history of the Revolution, he says. The secret ‘Secret History.’” “What does he mean to do with it?” “Burn it, probably. What else would it be fit for?”” (p. 795). The personal accounts of the Revolution are a significant gap within the archive of the past, which reluctantly celebrates the historical figure’s freedom from having their (his)story confiscated from them even as it lies as a crucial unknown in Mantel’s research.

Achille Mbembe states that destroyed archives are rather a displaced archive, ‘material destruction has only succeeded in inscribing the memory of the archive and its contents in a double register.’<sup>139</sup> Aside from the Revolutionary figures’ narrative, which the novel follows,

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<sup>139</sup> Achille Mbembe, ‘The Power of the Archive and its Limits’, *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Amsterdam: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 19- 26, p. 23.

the crucial ellipsis is located in the crowd. The people ‘are to you just the necessary means of insurrection; having served to effect a revolution, they are to return to the dust and be forgotten; they are to allow themselves to be led by those who are wiser than they, and who are willing to take the trouble of governing them.’<sup>140</sup> The silencing of the revolutionary crowd’s voice, coupled with the Revolutionary protagonists’ burned documents, allows Mantel to question Hutcheon’s statement of ‘which facts make it into history, and whose facts?’<sup>141</sup> The destroyed archive material is then displaced and reimagined into fiction. *APOGS* presents an overview of what Mantel says in ‘The Day is for the Living’: ‘the multiplication of the evidence of fallible and biased witnesses, combined with the incomplete accounts of actions not fully understood by the people who performed them. It’s no more than the best we can do, and often it falls short of that.’<sup>142</sup> Much historical knowledge of the Revolutionary figures’ private lives is left to the imagination, with Mantel stressing the disjunction between the little-known private lives and their public identities as historical figures. Mantel’s imagined archive reanimates the inscribed past while questioning whether all historical knowledge is within the material sources.

The haunted sites in Mantel’s decaying and transitory dwellings are then analogous to the missing spaces of the historical record. Meaning slips or disappears within the haunted spaces, which Mantel thus structures her historical inquiry of a given historical period. Haunted dwellings, and the uncanny experiences that occur within, become Mantel’s framing device for investigating missing historical meaning. From Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) to Sarah Waters’s *A Little Stranger* (2009), the haunted dwelling frames the characters’ experience of a missing past. In Mantel’s works, the dwelling as a container frames the missing spaces of historical knowledge that Mantel encounters in her research.

In Mary Anne Caws words, ‘the selective or framing look cuts out, concentrates upon, and centres on whatever is to be emphasised, by a decoupage, or circumscription.’<sup>143</sup> Through the haunted dwellings, Mantel employs dwellings as framing devices to break apart conventional methods of realism and her imaginative perception of the historical record. Frames, Verity Platt and Michael Squire explain, ‘serve to articulate boundaries: they apportion space, at once marking out a realm for representation and zoning that realm in relation to a larger visual or topographical sphere. In two-dimensional terms, frames can separate “field”

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<sup>140</sup> *APOGS*, p. 605.

<sup>141</sup> Hutcheon, p. 71.

<sup>142</sup> ‘The Day Is For The Living.’

<sup>143</sup> Mary Anne Caws, *Reading Frames in Modern Fiction* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 5. Also note the application of the term ‘frame’ from Erving Goffman’s *Frame Analysis* (1974), and Gerard Genette’s *Paratexts* (1997).



from “ground”, establishing the confines in which an image is understood to operate.’<sup>144</sup> However, the framing devices not only prioritise the dwelling space to concentrate discourse on, for as Beatriz Colomina claims ‘architecture is not simply a platform that accommodates the viewing subject. It is a viewing mechanism that produces the subject. It precedes and frames its occupant.’<sup>145</sup> The subjects in Mantel’s works gain immediate access to the past through the frame of the domestic dwelling.

The Desmoulins’ household in *APOGS* is a crucial example of Mantel’s imaginative framing. The household is the opening frame for the novel. The early life of the protagonist Camille Desmoulins includes his father’s financial difficulty and familial quarrels with building the New House: ‘Now that the dust has settled, we can begin to look at our situation. Now that the last red tile has been laid on the roof of the New House, now that the marriage contract is four years old. [...] The New House smells of resin and wax polish; it has the sulphurous odour of family quarrels brewing.’<sup>146</sup> The New House is a metafictional frame for Mantel’s approach to historical fictional writing. She offers the imagined domestic spaces as a new territory in historical discourse to examine the early lives – or ‘family stories’ – of Desmoulins, Robespierre, and D’Anton.

The last paragraph of the chapter ‘Life as a Battlefield’ marks the change from the domestic sphere into the public realm. Desmoulins and Robespierre’s movement into ‘the light of history’ (p. 29) shows how the protagonists’ lives is recorded in the historical record. Their movement is destabilised by the reminder of a common postmodern ideology of the historical record: ‘History is fiction’ (ibid). The novel posits that the historical record should not be valued more than Mantel’s imaginative accounts of their private or public lives. Eighteenth-century France and Paris in the 1970s (when Mantel first wrote *APOGS*) are an imagined space for Mantel, one in which she embeds historical meaning through writing. Mantel states in ‘No Passes or Documents Are Needed’ that ‘I had never been to Paris when I began to write.’<sup>147</sup> Mantel’s imagination overcomes the spatial limits of boundary and enclosure and direct first-hand experience:

In my dreams of Europe, I had found the keys to the gate of the unknown city. For the constant and passionate imagination, no documents or passes are needed. It did not seem to me that I was writing of dead people or events that were distant and frozen. I was working then the least alienated of beings. I was working at a transformative moment in the history of Europe. I was then the least alienated of beings.

<sup>144</sup> Verity Platt and Michael Squire, ‘Framing the Visual in Greek and Roman Antiquity’, *The Frame in Classical Art: A Cultural History*, ed. Verity Platt (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 3-100, pp. 12-13.

<sup>145</sup> Beatriz Colomina, ‘The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism’, *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New Jersey: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 73-130, p. 83.

<sup>146</sup> *APOGS*, p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> ‘No Passes or Documents Are Needed’, p. 97.

I was at one with the work I did. By writing a novel one performs a revolutionary act. A novel is an act of hope. It allows us to imagine that things may be other than they are (ibid).

The unknown, imaginary city Mantel traverses, in Nick Bentley's words, 'emphasises the city as a palimpsest of histories and narratives evoked in the psyche of the observer.'<sup>148</sup> Mantel then requires the revolutionary figures' perspective of domestic places and cityscapes to gain an immediate and reimagined account of her fictional Paris.

Mantel carries the historical record in her suitcase, which means she 'embodied traversing the space that is mobilised here to argue that Mantel walks history and its archived bodies differently.'<sup>149</sup> Mantel's 'Author's Note' points out the missing histories of her protagonists' private lives in the historical record: 'the main characters were not famous until the Revolution made them so, and not much is known about their early lives. I have used what there is, and made educated guesses about the rest.'<sup>150</sup> David P. Jordan in *Robespierre* (2010) confirms the distinction between Robespierre's public dealings and his unknown private record. Robespierre 'imposed, then imprinted, himself on the Revolution [...] he was its embodiment. He somehow was the Revolution incarnate, an act of faith that lay at the very centre of his thought and effectiveness.'<sup>151</sup> He left no memoirs, and his biography is scant. Jordan claims that, in fact, 'none of the revolutionaries, and certainly not the Jacobins, wanted to recall their lives before the Revolution' (ibid). Robespierre is viewed by Jordan as being 'at the centre of events, constantly in the public eye, making his opinions known, yet he remains as elusive a personality as he had been in pre-revolutionary obscurity' (p. 19). As such, the historical Robespierre is not a reliable witness for Mantel's fictional Paris because much of his life needs to be reimagined.

In *APOGS*, Robespierre's missing personality is then imaginatively re-constructed by Mantel: 'he was not quite sure what his fellow pupils thought of him [...] how can you be sure that the thoughts in your head have ever been thought by anyone else?'<sup>152</sup> The fictive possibilities of Robespierre's private life are then extended to Desmoulins's absence from the historical record as a direct result from Robespierre and Desmoulins's friendship. The private lives and public deaths of the Revolutionary figures are explored only by text, and thus the personal memory is lost to history: 'When this business is over, and Camille is dead, I shall not

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<sup>148</sup> Bentley, p. 176.

<sup>149</sup> Carpenter, p. 102.

<sup>150</sup> *APOGS*, p. ix.

<sup>151</sup> David P. Jordan, 'The Robespierre Problem', *Robespierre*, ed. Colin Haydon and William Doyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 17-34, p. 17.

<sup>152</sup> *APOGS*, p. 25.

want to hear your epitaph for him. No one is ever to speak of him again, I absolutely forbid it. When he is dead, I shall want to think about him myself, alone' (p. 862). Mantel also imagines the novel as a dwelling site that is constantly undergoing – and is destabilised by – historicization: 'In a few days' time, my abode will be oblivion. My place of residence will be History' (p. 850). The novel *APOGS* ends at the 'point beyond which – convention and imagination dictate – we cannot go; perhaps it's here, when the carts decant on to the scaffold their freight, now living and breathing flesh, soon to be dead meat' (p. 870). However, Mantel (retro)actively points out the limits of her imagination.

First within the paratext of *APOGS*, 'I have tried to see the world as my people saw it, and they had their own prejudices and opinions [...] I purvey my own version of events, but facts change according to your viewpoint' (pp. ix-x). Second, from historiographic metafictional incidences within texts such as *WH*: 'It's the living that turn and chase the dead. The long bones and skulls are tumbled from their shrouds, and words like stones thrust into their rattling mouths: we edit their writings, we rewrite their lives.'<sup>153</sup> Her examinations of dwelling sites, and places where historical knowledge originate, means Mantel's phenomenological hinterland is a navigable site of fictional possibility.

As Burkinshaw states, Mantel 'writes in the plausible: interweaving the fictionalised interior and the historical exterior, with the former legitimizing the latter.'<sup>154</sup> Mantel privileges imagination in her investigation, for as Diana Wallace explains 'imaginative fiction [is crucial] for its ability to go beyond the surface facts of history.'<sup>155</sup> Assimilating the past into the present is allegorised through Desmoulins's reimagined account of Tacitus's reign of Emperor Tiberius. Desmoulins states: 'Our lives now are what the annalist describes: whole families wiped out by the executioner, men committing suicide to save themselves from being dragged through the streets like common criminals; men denouncing their friends to save their own skins.'<sup>156</sup> Desmoulins' description of the Revolutionary events through allegory underlines the collapse of the past into the present. Desmoulins stresses the imaginative (re)interpretation of the past through the malleable text: 'It was enough to bring the text to the public's attention. Take out the names of these Romans, and substitute instead – in your own mind – the names of Frenchmen and women, the names of people you know, people who live on your street, peoples whose fate you have seen and whose fate you may soon share. Of course I have to

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<sup>153</sup> *WH*, p. 649.

<sup>154</sup> Burkinshaw, p. 316.

<sup>155</sup> Wallace, p. 205.

<sup>156</sup> *APOGS*, p. 770.

rearrange the text a bit' (ibid). Mantel stresses the existence of multiple readers who receive Desmoulins's new text. She remains sceptical of the record, and the absence of evidence in her research means she posits the multiple ways characters lie and destroy texts as similarly full of holes: 'This is a tissue of lies [...] It's nonsense, it is a complete fabrication' (p. 840). Mantel stresses the imaginative possibilities of different perspectives while offering reimagined documents, texts, and objects (which no longer exist) as a way to imagine multiple possibilities as to why they are absent.

Anjali Arondekar asks whether 'an empty archive [can] also be full?'<sup>157</sup> Drawing from Arondekar, Gilliland and Caswell state that 'the solution is not more records – real or imagined – but more creative ways of reading the elisions evident in such records.'<sup>158</sup> Lucille and Gabrielle's diaries are symbols for the imagined archive within *APOGS*, which reanimates the past that has been consistently erased or silenced in Mantel's works. Mantel's reanimation of the polyvalent perspectives of the reading public and the revolutionary figures then agrees with her argument in 'Blot, Erase, Delete' that 'erasure seems simple – blink and it's gone, overwrite the line. But nothing ever really goes away. The internet keeps regurgitating you. You can't bury or burn your traces.'<sup>159</sup> In Mantel's works, the destruction or censorship of polyvalent perspectives of the past allows her to provide additional content. Mbembe states that such content:

Is all the more 'unreal because it has been removed from sight and interred once and for all in the sphere of that which shall remain unknown, therefore allowing space for all manner of imaginary thoughts. On the other hand, the destroyed archive haunts the state in the form of a spectre, an object that has no objective substance, but which, because it is touched by death, is transformed into a demon.'<sup>160</sup>

Even as characters' private lives and thoughts remain unknowable, their traces still exist within the archive. Mantel destabilises the internalised image of a whole account of the French Revolution with her re-imagined public and private archives. Mantel then uses imagined archives to revitalise traces of the past and make what was lost present again within a material imagination. The cityscape of fictional Paris is reanimated along with the corpses in its streets.

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<sup>157</sup> Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*, ed. Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan and Robyn Wiegman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>158</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 70.

<sup>159</sup> Mantel, 'Blot, Erase, Delete', p. 66.

<sup>160</sup> Mbembe, pp. 23-24.

### Chapter Three: Vernacular Archives and the Vanished Irish in Mantel's *Fludd* and *The Giant O'Brien*

While *Fludd* is situated in the moors of northern England in 1956, Ireland appears as a ghostly trace for the characters. Sister Philomena, whose non-religious name is Roisin O'Halloran, is described by Father Angwin as a 'true daughter of the Irish soil', while the eponymous Father Fludd sees her as 'a displaced person' whose stigmata had her sent to an English convent.<sup>1</sup> Philomena is not the only displaced Irish person. There are other traces of an Irish sensibility and presence in the fictional Fetherhoughton. Irish traces manifest in the village's church, St Thomas Aquinas, hidden in the in-between place of the shared cemetery and the halls of the church. St Thomas Aquinas does not have its own cemetery for the church shares one with the neighbouring parish. The ground behind the garage is instead used for the statues' interment, which a visiting Bishop orders as part of a modernising process of the Catholic Church.

Whereas characters like Mother Perpetua note that the statues cluttered the church, their removal means the church seems 'smaller and meaner, its angles more gracelessly exposed' (p. 37). Philomena's Aunt Dymphna, who died in Ireland, appears in St Thomas Aquinas' halls proceeding the statues' burial as a trace. Father Angwin experiences her visitations as a memory. He thinks that the pictures Philomena has put in his mind are of her Aunt Dymphna and the memories of 'the decaying thatch of her aunt's cottage and of chickens, who enjoyed comparatively such liberty, scratching up the sacred soil of Ireland under a sky packed with rain-swollen rain clouds' (p. 38). Father Angwin also experiences her appearance phenomenologically, for 'as they left the church, he thought that a hand brushed his arm. Dymphna's bar-parlour laugh came faintly from the terraces; her tipsy, Guinness-sodden breath, stopped by earth these eleven years, filled the summer nights' (p. 39). St Thomas Aquinas then acts as a dwelling-as-archive that contains more than buried statues and hidden voices. The church evokes and reveals the displaced Irish people represented by Philomena and Aunt Dymphna. Aunt Dymphna's appearance at the time of the statues' burial also represents a growing confusion of local, religious, and personal memory felt in Fetherhoughton as the village community grows more rootless over time. St Thomas Aquinas is then an in-

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<sup>1</sup> Mantel, *Fludd* (London: Viking, 1988), p. 32, p. 67.

between place which both contains and loses religious archives and identity, but also is a place that refuses to consign Irish identity even as it reveals it.

Statues and Irish religious faith (let alone the villagers' pagan faith) have no place in the bishop's view of a modern church. Father Angwin considers the place of Ireland sacred and holy. However, the growing modernisation of Catholicism in the mid-twentieth century means that Irish mysticism is rejected. Philomena notes that the bishop's view towards her stigmata was dim for 'they won't hear of miracles nowadays. That's how I came to be here. Tossed out of believing Ireland to this God-forsaken place' (p. 100). Mother Perpetua expresses this view by stating that Irish attitudes towards stigmata contribute to an 'over-excited, unhealthy atmosphere' (p. 68). Irishness is ambiguously present and absent, often remarked in conversation, and never directly addressed in *Fludd*.

Despite being displaced, Philomena's choice whether to go back to Ireland is left unclear at the end of the novel. Her meeting Fludd and leaving Fetherhoughton is an act of transformation that does not limit Philomena to a certain place. She is free to live in transit, which Fludd explains: 'a soul is a thing in state of flux. Your fate is mutable. Your will is free' (p. 177). Philomena becomes a corporeal Irish ghost who can freely move in and out of England after leaving the convent, resembling her Aunt Dymphna. However, her leaving means she becomes another trace in the village. Fludd notes the decay in the church and the ruins on the outskirts of the village. He states 'on the left unfenced fields that had once been allotments. It was the railway workers who had rented them [...] they had abandoned the site, and told their wives to frequent the Co-op greengrocers; the fields were reverting rapidly to their wasteland character, and the only sign that the railway men had once been there was a red spotted kerchief' (p. 60). The land cannot support the inhabitants and the village is full of abandoned sites. These transient populations and Philomena express the displacement and rootlessness felt in Fetherhoughton. The village is an entropic community that cannot contain, and hides, the past and history. Domesticity and belonging are indirectly questioned in *Fludd*. Religious belief often disrupts and causes silences in the dwelling-as-archive that St Thomas Aquinas represents.

Themes of domesticity, and its ambivalent and disruptive presence in the dwelling-as-archive, draw attention to an Irish literary tradition that winds itself throughout Mantel's works. Outlining the overlap between dwelling and archive also demonstrates the complex and ambivalent aspects of Mantel's engagement with the past. Understanding the overlap also pushes at underdeveloped investigations into Mantel's works as part of a diasporic Irish

Literary Tradition. The thesis's understanding of the dwelling-as-archive, in-between places, and memory in Mantel's works explores new ways of thinking and writing about Mantel as a complex addition to the diasporic Irish literary tradition. Mantel's dwellings-as-archives are sites of ambivalent and porous memory containment that also contains traces of Irish fiction. The thesis argues that it is because of her own uncertain navigation of the Irish Diaspora and how she reimagines (not equivalates) her grandparents' migrant experiences in England.

Mantel's memoir *GUTG* explores her experiences of Irishness as a silenced gap in her family history. The unknown knowledge and secrets manifest as ghosts in her grandmother's home in Bankbottom, which means that Mantel felt displaced in her grandmother's domestic home. Mantel states that in the back bedroom of Bankbottom 'I have sometimes seen similar shadows, object that are unnameable, that float and are not solid, objects through which the wall behind them can be glimpsed [...] I spend a great deal of time there, mostly alone, pursuing no particular game there, just being.'<sup>2</sup> The family secrets become ghostly traces in her grandmother's house, which Mantel does not interrogate nor address as an Irish history that she needs to adopt. Instead, Mantel acknowledges a lack of Irish identity in her upbringing by stating 'as my great-uncles and great-aunts died one by one, I lost my consciousness of being Irish' (p. 152). The silences and gaps, expressed through in-between places like the stairwell in 'The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher', manifest in *GUTG* and other fictions with Irish themes are part of Mantel's uncertain navigation of her ancestral Irish identity and partial refusal to be labelled as part of the Irish diasporic literary tradition.

Mantel does not directly engage with traditional Irish motifs of homes or dwellings. These motifs include the 'nation-as-house', nationalist symbols in cottages, or representations of the culture of the Big House featured in Anglo-Irish Maria Edgeworth's novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800). The Big House is a more recognisable motif in Irish Literature. Pádraic Whyte outlines these Irish motifs as 'vehicles for the exploration of tensions between landlords and tenants, ascendancy figures and peasants, Protestants and Catholics, and between English and Irish cultures.'<sup>3</sup> While Mantel does not use Whyte's identified houses as structures, her homes nevertheless touch on similar themes of property disputes between landlords and tenants, Protestants and Catholics, English and Irish cultures, and even tensions between England and Europe. If Mantel does directly ascribe to a particular Irish dwelling-as-motif, it would be the

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<sup>2</sup> *GUTG*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Pádraic Whyte, 'House, Land, and Family Life: Children's Fiction and Irish Homes', *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Fiction*, Ed. Liam Harte (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 389.

missing Irish home which many diasporic figures can never return to except in memory. The home as a nationalist heuristic is a central motif in Irish Literature that Mantel constantly evades or makes complex through her use of spectres, silences, and gaps of memory. The Big House occurs in Mantel's works in a post-post-modern makeover due to the removal of several levels of Irish consciousness and belonging to these houses. Mantel never directly makes her novels Irish or set in Ireland, showing a lack of interest in directly engaging with an Irish literary past. Mantel instead explores aspects of the Big House which Kersti Tarien Powell identifies as 'the dilapidated house, the rise and fall of the gentrified family, the irresponsible absentee landlords, and the rise of the (frequently militant, and therefore threatening) peasant class,' with traces of a gothic Big House similar to Sheridan Le Fanu's novels.<sup>4</sup>

The tensions surrounding the Big House in Mantel's works are found as traces in 2 Buckingham Avenue in *EDIMD* which is Mantel's most distinctly Irish fiction-adjacent novel discussed in this thesis. Further examples appear in *Fludd* in the form of sectarian tensions, the rise and fall of a parodic gentrified family in *ACOC*, and the irresponsible absentee landlord in Thomas Cromwell in The Cromwell Trilogy. The rise of the militant peasant class in *APOGS* is another motif that is identified. The sense of a losing Irish-consciousness is expressed in Mantel's novel *AEIL* as Carmel McBain also navigates second-generation Irish immigrant experience in London, like Mantel did in her time at Law School.

Irish homes in fiction are usually vulnerable sites with ghostly threats from within and outside the walls. Underlying all Mantel's works is the threat from within (represented as ghosts and decay) and the threat from outside (social workers, the revolutionary crowd, Rome and the Catholic Church in The Cromwell Trilogy) which have multiple interpretations and forms that impact the characters sense of belonging and domesticity. While the context of Irishness and the fictional representations of the tensions attached to the Big House are mostly (if not completely) removed from Mantel's novels, the pastiches and traces of such contexts are both absent and present. As such, discussions on domesticity are necessary to frame any investigation of Irishness in Mantel's works. This chapter then investigates both *Fludd* and *TGOB* as Mantel's most overt Irish fictions possessing the dwelling-as-archive, but also as fictions with a complex presentation of the Irish-abroad.

The list of contemporary Irish writers navigating diaspora and the Irish-abroad features Colm Toibin, Sebastian Barry, and Edna O'Brien (who features as an allusion in Mantel's

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<sup>4</sup> Kersti Tarien Powell, *Irish Fiction: An Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), p. 155.



*AEIL*).<sup>5</sup> Only two Mantelian characters actively claims an Irish identity, yet notions of diaspora and displacement from the homeland are explored by all of Mantel's characters. As a running theme throughout her works, her displaced protagonists are receptables for Mantel's own ambivalence surrounding her second-generation Irish identity. By meshing memory and imagination through the porous and leaky dwelling-as-archive, the thesis offers new ways to investigate why dwellings are central to Mantel's historical investigations. The thesis also claims that Mantel has fixated on the home as part of an ambivalent and complex negotiation of her second-generation Irish identity that she comes to terms with in *GUTG*.

In her 2021 interview with *la Repubblica*, Mantel states 'it was my grandparent's generation who were immigrants; sometimes my life gets confused with my fiction, because a number of my characters have Irish parents.'<sup>6</sup> Mantel's interview shows her awareness that autobiographical readings confuse her fictional prose. Critical readings of her life tend to offer reductive readings of her characters' and her history writing. However, this thesis argues that the subject matters of dwelling, place, and memory are part of the Irish literary tradition neglected in critical and academic discourse on Mantel's works. The avoidance of an Irish mode in her works is surprising considering the multiple literary forms and identifications that mark her works as part of the Irish Diasporic. For one, some of Mantel's fictional characters have Irish parents or family members. Meanwhile, notions of threatened and dilapidated domesticity are another crucial identifier. The dwelling-as-archive then draws from Eileen Pollard's reading of the ellipsis in Mantel's work to suggest that one possible interpretation of an ellipsis in Mantel's dwellings and archives is the Irish Literary Tradition, which is both unspoken and central within these dwellings in Mantel's works.

The Irish tradition is invisible in existing material on Mantel or features indirectly due to Mantel's background. An Irish literary tradition also does not unify the complex ambiguities in Mantel's works. The sense of Irish national belonging never fully manifests in Mantel's works and thus remains a disunifying concept throughout. The focus of domesticity and sense of belonging to all-kinds-of-homes in Mantel's works is thus a partial reconciliation with the lack of engagement into Mantel's Irish literary tradition markers. The dwelling-as-archive also serves as a stepping off point into future analysis of the underlying traces and motifs of Irish literary traditions in Mantel's works. The awareness of the Irish tradition in Mantel's fictional

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<sup>5</sup> *AEIL*, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Mantel and Antonello Guerrera, 'Hilary Mantel: Why I Feel ashamed in England, and I will be an Irish citizen soon and European again', *la Repubblica*, (2021).

dwelling then adds to the multiple and ambiguous meanings that defines the dwelling-as-archive throughout her works.

Part of the reason that Irish consciousness is a trace in *Fludd* is because of the lack of archival practices in the church and the community. Historical knowledge found in architecture is difficult to interpret if it has multiple meanings inscribed on its surface, especially if the community cannot maintain and preserve those multiple historical meanings. In *Fludd*, the breakdown of familial histories, decaying housing, and sectarian difficulties in the community means the society is on the verge of collapse and cannot generate coherent historical knowledge. The village itself evades historical fixity because of its fictional ('the village of Fetherhoughton is not to be found on a map') and northern status: 'They turned their faces in the fourth direction, to the road and the railway that led them to the black heart of the industrial north.'<sup>7</sup> *Fludd* follows the Literary North, which is literature set in northern England such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854). This literary tradition maps the North as, in Katherine Cockin's words, 'grim, polluted, industrialised and demonic; the northern cities have been regarded not as centres of innovation, like the southern metropolis, but rather as dehumanising places of production.'<sup>8</sup> Fetherhoughton is underdeveloped in housing and its inhabitants have 'primitive' historical knowledge: 'they were still gossiping about the Abdication; not that of Edward VIII, but that of James II. Their quarrels stretched back to time immemorial; they had grievances that predated the Conquest.'<sup>9</sup> They are 'heathens' (p. 22) with multiple and conflicting voices speaking from a variety of differing power positions that impart a heteroglossic experience. Though coined by Mikhail Bakhtin, Vyacheslav Ivanov states that 'heteroglossia is the simultaneous use of different kinds of speech or signs, the tension between them, and their conflicting relationship within one text.'<sup>10</sup> There is no living word that relates to its object in a singular way.

Rhetoric concerning occupancy and ownership outlines power relations over houses and domestic spaces. The Fetherhoughtonians have various historical and religious perceptions of their public buildings and sites of dwelling. The living utterance has tension with the muted – but nevertheless present – dead voices that makes up the socio-ideological environment of the fictional village. For as Bakhtin says, language, 'having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against

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<sup>7</sup> *Fludd*, p. 1, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Katharine Cockin, *The Literary North* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Fludd*, p. 86.

<sup>10</sup> Vyacheslav Ivanov, 'Heteroglossia', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 9.1/2 (1999), 100-02, p. 100.

thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.’<sup>11</sup> Exploration of the language used by the Fetherhoughtonian community in *Fludd* outlines their collective interpretation of their dwelling and religious significance. Exploring their language use reveals the levels of societal decay the villagers experience as a result of the removal of the statues, the alchemical influence of Fludd, and the literal decay of the St. Thomas Aquinas church.

The village is consistently reinforced by heteroglossia in language and setting, meaning the village has a hinterland existence. The speech of the Fetherhoughtonians ‘is not easy to reproduce [...] Some current had caught them unawares, and washed the Fetherhoughtonians far from the navigable reaches of plain English; and there they drifted and bobbed on waters of their own, up the creek without a paddle.’<sup>12</sup> The distinctions between gender and religion are more pronounced: Catholic women occupy doorframes, the ‘men were shut away in the mills [... and] religion, and the public library, were for the children’ while the Protestants are separated, ‘sprinkled through the terraced rows’ (p. 15). Women are the main generators of discourse in the community, for ‘women only talked. They analysed motive, discussed the serious business, carried life forward. Between the schoolroom and their present state came the weaving sheds; deafened by the noise of the machines, they spoke too loudly now, their voices scattering through the gritty streets like the cries of displaced gulls’ (p. 13). Because Catholic women are on doorframes, their voices move easily between public and private places. The weaving sheds are part of the industrialisation that dominates the women’s every day, which positions their ongoing dialogic struggle of individual voices against production and postwar industry. The Moors’ landscape is not talked about, and instead, ‘the moors were the vast cemetery of their imaginations. Later, there were notorious murders in the vicinity, and real bodies were buried there’ (p. 12). Bodies, like the church’s statues, are voiceless because they are buried, representing the importance of burying as a silencing practice in Fetherhoughton. Unlike *EDIMD*, *BB*, and *WH*, the dead are not allowed to talk in *Fludd*.

Meanwhile, Fludd with the ‘corpse-like pallor’ speaks language used by alchemists such as ‘Nigredo’ and ‘albedo’ for blackening and whitening (p. 106). Fludd is a reincarnated historical figure, the seventeenth-century physician, alchemist, and mystical philosopher

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<sup>11</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 259-422, pp. 276-77.

<sup>12</sup> *Fludd*, p. 13.

Robert Fludd. His alchemical language acts as a vocal intervention that inspires alchemical change in the village. Joining him are the ghostly figures of Philomena's Aunt, 'Dymphna's bar parlour laugh came faintly from the terraces' (p. 39), whose voice is summoned by Father Angwin and Philomena. The dead utterance of Dymphna is juxtaposed by the 'mute representatives' (p. 84) of the statues of Catholic saints who represent the tension between absence and presence characteristic of the uncanny.

Muted symbols communicate the sectarian differences in the community in their houses. Catholic houses have the figure of Christ, which symbolises a violent incursion of his religious and bodily presence and the memory of his suffering embodied in the Catholic home: 'Over the mantelpiece, Christ hung in a heavy gilt frame, thin yellow tongues of light streaming from his head. His ribcage was open, neatly split by the Roman spear, and with a pallid pointed finger he indicated his exposed and perfectly heart-shaped heart' (p. 64). In contrast, the protestant houses do not have 'a coloured picture of the Pontiff with a calendar beneath' (p. 15), which marks them as a distinct religious other in the Fetherhoughton community. Religious identity is inscribed through objects, and their presence outside the church overlaps the private and public spheres of worship while marking a sectarian difference in the community.

Arnold reflects upon the heteroglossic style in *Fludd* through the multi-layered treatment of intertextual material concerning the 'biblical, alchemical, literary, and visual text, and places historical narratives alongside folk devils.'<sup>13</sup> In a 2009 interview, Mantel contemplates her own regional accent as occupying a similar in-between experience that influences her stylistic choices regarding the writing of historical fiction: 'I accept to an RP speaker my broad slow vowels are evidence of stupidity. What bothers me is that nowadays, to a northern ear, I sound southern: that is to say, insufferably posh and affected. I don't belong anywhere. And this gives me a problem: which bits of English history are my history?'<sup>14</sup> Mantel was born in Hadfield, Derbyshire, so the Fetherhoughtonians share her mix of working-class origins, Irish roots, and (for the Catholic community) education in a convent. The various voices in and out of the text in *Fludd* present a dialogical landscape that indicates 1950s Northern England. The lived experience is accounted for by, in M. Folch-Serra's words, a 'historical moment and situation (time and space) of a dialogue whose outcome is never a

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<sup>13</sup> Arnold, p. 174.

<sup>14</sup> Mantel, 'Author, Author: Which Bits of English History are My History?', *The Guardian*, (2009), [date last accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jul/11/author-hilary-mantel-british-history>>.

neutral exchange. The landscape becomes not only “graphically visible” in space but also “narratively visible” in time, in a field of discourses all attempting to account for human experience.<sup>15</sup> Fetherhoughton’s location in differing time-spaces is, again in Folch-Serra’s words, ‘all located in a real, unitary, and as yet incomplete, historical world in the text’ (p. 262). Fetherhoughton is in constant decay and instability due to its position on a linguistic and historical borderland. The village is a dialogic space that presents the church’s various architectural styles as heteroglossic, linking language to the collective understanding of architectural forms and representing inscribed meaning.

The architectural structure of the decaying house in *EDIMD* is transfigured into the decaying Catholic Church of St. Thomas Aquinas. The conceptualised space and furnishings of the Church are strategic and representational in the novel’s presentation of unstable historical knowledge. Though the church does not signify traditional domesticity, it presents similar arguments concerning the borders between public and private spaces and its influence as a dwelling site for (marginal or displaced) communities. Cuming states that invocations of home are too often ‘predicated upon narrow models of housing: the self-contained home of one family, as opposed to multiple occupancy; home ownership rather than renting; the house as a site of leisure of the expression of personality rather than a workplace’ and extends the range of housing to ideological frameworks of dwelling.<sup>16</sup> Studies of the home have, in Cuming’s words, ‘radically expanded in recent years to encompass non-normative domestic spaces (including attention to the institutional domesticity of asylums, prison and missionary settlements), traditional and even conservative ideas surrounding the function of the dwelling continue to hold sway’ (ibid). *Fludd* challenges the multiple forms of housing by presenting the church as a complex and different form of the dwelling-as-archive.

The borders of traditional and conservative ideals of the Catholic faith are broken down by the bishop’s dismissal of historical meaning within local communities. An architect constructed the Church in question:

Less than a hundred years old; it had been built when the Irish came to Fetherhoughton to work in the three cottons mills. But someone had briefed its architect to make it look as if it had always stood there. In those poor, troubled days it was an understandable wish, and the architect had a sense of history; it was a Shakespearian sense of history, with a grand contempt of the pitfalls of anachronism [...] had begun in a vaguely Gothic way and ended with something Saxon and brutal.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. Folch-Serra, ‘Place, Voice, Space: Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dialogical Landscape’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 8.3 (1990), 255-74, p. 258.

<sup>16</sup> Cuming, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Fludd*, p. 16.

Like 2 Buckingham Avenue, the church needs ‘quite extensive structural renovations’ (p. 125) and has spectres embedded in its corridors: ‘But we used to get feet walking up and down overhead, and various banging noises, and you would feel that someone had come in. Or the door would be kicked open, and no one would enter. [...] Agnes was of the opinion that the house was full of discarnate entities’ (p. 126). The church houses many voices and bodies within its corridors that contribute to its decay. The church exhibits multiple forms of historic architectural movements and the interpretation of those movements by the architect who designed it.

The church is another ahistorical site in the public sphere representing Frederic Jameson’s ‘weakening of historicity’, enabling historical consciousness to achieve freedom from material foundations.<sup>18</sup> The iterative and repetitive process of historical knowledge constructs architectural form in Mantel’s novels. The presence of the spectral and the absence of embodied historical consciousness then examines what Peter Boxall claims is:

The materiality of our cultural reference points more generally, and which tended to regard historical knowledge as a function of narrative: history no longer seen as original event, which a secondary narrative strives to recount, but as itself the outcome of narrative forms, which are accorded as a result a primary originating power. History, according to this postmodern orthodoxy, is not truth, it is story, and as such can be retold and reshaped an infinite number of times, under any particular historical regime that comes to power or dominance.<sup>19</sup>

The architectural form of St. Thomas Aquinas does not dominate Fetherhoughton’s historical consciousness. Instead, its furnishings of statues do, as they hold the inhabitant’s social memory, thus making the church a complex archive of Catholic and Pagan knowledge.

The Fetherhoughtonians’ social consciousness is tied up with the statues: ‘all my life, Father, I have known those statues. I cannot think how we will find our way around the church without them. It will be like some filthy barn.’<sup>20</sup> The statues, which predate Father Angwin’s memory of Fetherhoughton, affect the social interpretation of the church’s identity and function. Their removal signifies a further decay when considering the church as Lefebvre’s representational space and destabilises the Fetherhoughtonian’s Catholic identity. The statues’ direct placement within the church holds a specific historical meaning of Catholic practice and Fetherhoughtonian identity, and ‘without the statues the church seemed smaller and meaner, its angles more gracelessly exposed’ (p. 39). The statues are a double concealment that frames

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<sup>18</sup> Jameson, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Boxall, *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 40-41.

<sup>20</sup> *Fludd*, p. 26.

the unseen element in Fetherhoughton because their burial summons Fludd, and their unburial marks his departure and the end of his alchemical influence over Fetherhoughton.

Kenneth Gross states that statues ‘serve the project of the deconstruction of materiality by marking absence through presence’, which means the statues in *Fludd* structure historical meaning instead of the decaying Church.<sup>21</sup> They are another phantasmal object that needs an architectural structure for their historical meaning to be embodied. The church depends on their historical memory within its representational space; without the statues, the dominant Catholic voice in the dialogic landscape is further hushed. Their removal as part of the modernising process of Northern England’s religious culture reinforces their historical importance within the community. Their status as mute representatives, then, reaffirms their disruptive potential to the Church’s physical structure and the Fetherhoughton identity. These statues support Jacques Derrida’s architectural theory where structure becomes ‘erected by its very ruin, held up by what never stops eating away at its foundation.’<sup>22</sup> The statues become subject to Catholicism’s institutional power. The Fetherhoughtonian’s communal memory relies on the visually present statues: ‘All my life, Father, I have known those statues. I cannot think how we will find our way around the church without them. It will be like some big filthy barn.’<sup>23</sup> Miss Dempsey compares them to her family, which echoes the sentiment of the village. The statues are thus an archive of Fetherhoughton’s communal memory. Despite being contained within the church as processed communal identity, they are removed and buried alongside the church’s corpses.

Mantel notes the deliberate removal of the statues as another missing evidence of the past. Michael Moss and David Thomas state that ‘silencing archives creates the power to define what is and what is not a serious object of research and therefore of mention.’<sup>24</sup> The Fetherhoughtonian’s church, St. Thomas Aquinas, represents a displaced archive of communal memory with its buried statues in the ground. The Catholic Church’s modernisation of St. Thomas Aquinas hides the historically meaningful objects that occupy the church and construct the communal archive of Fetherhoughton’s pagan beliefs as inaccessible and missing. The bishop states that ‘somehow, Father Angwin, I shall drag you and your church and your

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Gross, *The Dream of the Moving Statue* (Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Jacques Derrida ‘Fors’, trans Barbara Johnson, *The Georgia Review*, 31. 1 (1977), 64-116, p. 80. See also Mark Wigley’s *The Architecture of Deconstruction* where ‘Buildings are erected on and by cracks. There is no more stable ground to be found, no unflawed bedrock. Consequently, the subversion of structure does lead to a new structure’ (p. 43).

<sup>23</sup> *Fludd*, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Moss and Thomas, p. 22.

parishioners into the 1950s, where we all quite firmly belong. I cannot have this posturing, Father, I cannot have this idolatry.’<sup>25</sup> The bishop perceives the statues’ meaning as ornamentation, which has become crucial to Fetherhoughton’s faith, which Father Angwin disputes: ‘But they are not idols. They are statues. They are just representations’ (ibid). The visiting bishop perceives the statues and the church’s sense of anachronistic history as unfaithful representations of archived Catholic history.

The iconoclasm the bishop proposes ironically echoes sixteenth-century religious upheaval. Siobhan O’Connor explains that ‘the Reformation practise of iconoclasm brought about the destruction of Catholic artefacts. Because these were associated with the communal life of the Church and were experienced visually, they embodied a public history that was collectively understood.’<sup>26</sup> Fetherhoughton’s statues have a similar meaning of public history under threat from the modernisation of religious life: ‘If saints, I said, will not come to Fetherhoughton, may I not have their mute representatives? Are they not the spurs to faith, and is not faith my business, and are the statues not then the tools of my trade? I said to him, why do you take away the tools of my trade?’<sup>27</sup> Objects which embody the past are not impervious to progress, and the statues’ burial reveals how inconsistencies in the public and religious records affect communities (religious or otherwise). The statues then alert the villagers that, in Hutcheon’s words, ‘the past once existed, but that our historical knowledge [...] is semiotically transmitted.’<sup>28</sup> The importance of objects as historical metaphors or traces must then be catalogued or held within a structure for preservation.

The unseen statues in most of the novel continue an enquiry first posed by spectral inhabitants of 2 Buckingham Avenue, which in Mantel’s words is ‘an enquiry into the nature of seeing and the nature of believing, and into a grey area of illusion and subjectivity that lies between.’<sup>29</sup> The nature of seeing and believing history via objects’ placement is complicated by the borders between public and private spaces. In Graham Swift’s words, ‘the problem is what you don’t see. The problem is your field of vision [...] the problem is selection [...], the frame, the separation of the image from the thing. The extraction of the world from the world.’<sup>30</sup> The specific selection of religious signs in the public and decaying space of the church contrasts with the religious or absent objects in the private spheres. The movement of objects embedded

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<sup>25</sup> Fludd, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> O’Connor, ‘History, Nation and Self’, p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Fludd, p. 84.

<sup>28</sup> Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> Mantel, ‘Portrait of an Age: Selected Books’, *London Magazine*, 27.12 (1988), 101.

<sup>30</sup> Graham Swift, *Out of this World* (London: Viking Press, 1988), p. 114.



with historical meaning between private and public spheres illuminates what David Conradson and Deirdre McKay refer to as the ‘complex forms of subjectivity and feeling that emerge[s] through geographical mobility.’<sup>31</sup> The missing personal objects within dwelling spaces, such as the statues in the public church, demonstrate an active movement of language and historical knowledge in English communities like Fetherhoughton despite the fact that objects are often unseen.

Mantel’s exploration of unstable historical knowledge in the domestic structures of *EDIMD*, *VP*, and *Fludd* challenges a view of 1970s British literature held by Frederick Bowers in ‘An Irrelevant Parochialism’ (1980); all that is striking about the contemporary British novel is ‘its conformity, its traditional sameness, and its realistically rendered provincialism. Shaped only by its contents, the British novel is the product of group mentality: local, quaint, and self-consciously xenophobic.’<sup>32</sup> Instead, the introduction of alchemy through the spectral *Fludd* undermines the Literary North’s appearance of being, in Cockin’s words, ‘trapped by its relationship to realism’ into the quasi-fantastical and gothic-postmodernist.<sup>33</sup> Mantel’s earlier novels note a transformation in aesthetic needs concerning the domestic novel, novels covering Thatcherism and Conservative policies, and the Literary North.

Combining the decaying structures of the house and church with the spectral then follows what Hayden White conceives of historical narratives. White states that ‘we can only know the actual by contrasting it with or likening it to the imaginable. Thus conceived, historical narratives are complex structures in which a world of experience is imagined to exist under at least two modes, one of which is encoded as “real,” the other of which is “revealed” to have been illusory in the course of the narrative.’<sup>34</sup> The spectral element in the house, then, mimics the interplay between history and fiction within historical narratives. Such interplay, then, emphasises the objects within the house, and the house-as-object, as historically meaningful. The spectral subverts the home into a mirror-like, unreal reality, which deconstructs the materiality of life and historically significant objects. Mantel’s novels establish traditional literary structures to quietly subvert the house as a powerful archive and investigate the foundations of formal conventions of archival preservation through the

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<sup>31</sup> Conradson and McKay, p. 167.

<sup>32</sup> Frederick Bowers, ‘An Irrelevant Parochialism’, *Granta*, 3 (1980), 150-154, p. 150.

<sup>33</sup> Cockin, p. 248.

<sup>34</sup> Hayden White, ‘The Historical Text as Literary Artefact (1974, 1978)’, *Critical Theory: A Reader for Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. Robert Dale Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 2012), pp. 477-92, p. 491.

symbolic device of the decaying dwelling sites. Thus, *Fludd* also contains aspects of historiographic metafiction.

Mantel's focus on archiving-as-process in her inscription follows on from the archives-as-things: the body and the house are repositories of memory, and so are archival objects. David Woodruff Smith's explanation of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological philosophy states that 'meanings are, like essences, ideal, i.e., not in space or time. But they are not essences; they are contents of intentional experiences, embodying ways in which objects are presented in consciousness.'<sup>35</sup> Historical meaning reveals itself in historical books or archived objects in a museum. Inscribed texts are the perceived embodied objects of literary and historical meaning. A mix of intertextual references appears in Mantel's *AEIL*. Carmel McBain's navigation of the male educated plan is a muddle of various intertextual references, featuring *Jane Eyre* (1847), T. S. Eliot's 'Whispers of Immortality' (1918), Thomas Campbell's 'Hohenlinden' (1875), and a brief reference of Edna O'Brien. Within one sentence of the novel, Mantel mentions Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798) in 'Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?/ Is this mine own countree?', and Christina Rossetti's reflections on silence in 'The Thread of Life': 'The irresponsive silence of the land/ The irresponsive sounding of the sea.'<sup>36</sup> The intertextual references are frequently hidden, or without quotation.

In *Fludd*, communal memory has trouble finding objects or spaces to be deposited, which means the Fetherhoughtonians or outsiders cannot interpret the historical meaning, whether it is part of an Irish or Northern consciousness. The allusions to biblical, alchemical, literary, and architectural texts note the multiple intertextual resources that derive religious or communal meaning. Arnold claims that intertextual allusions in *Fludd* and *AEIL* 'serve to disorientate, acting as they do as sudden apparitions, whose appearance disturbs the narrative through their implications of a textual space beyond the primary text.'<sup>37</sup> In *Fludd*, the moors and statues hold collective memory. However, the historical meaning within the moors of fictional Fetherhoughton is unreliable:

The people of Fetherhoughton kept their eyes averted by the moors with a singular effort of will. They did not talk about them. Someone – it was the mark of the outsider – might find a wild dignity and grandeur in the landscape. The Fetherhoughtonians did not look at the landscape at all. They were not Emily Bronte, nor were they paid to be, and the very suggestion was enough to make them close their minds and occupy their eyes with their shoelaces. The moors were the vast cemetery of their imaginations. Later, there were notorious murders in the vicinity, and real bodies buried there.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> David Woodruff Smith, 'Mind and Body', *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, ed. Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 323-93, p. 331.

<sup>36</sup> *AEIL*, p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> Arnold, p. 174.

<sup>38</sup> *Fludd*, p. 12.

The moors are an embodied archive broken up by corpses (which Arnold states is an implicit reference to the Moors Murders of the 1970s).<sup>39</sup> The inscribed (and silent) histories in the Fetherhoughton moors allude to an intertextual reference to Emily Brontë, signifying a struggle to record the local community and the failure to capture their cultural memory or local voice. Historical knowledge remains uninterpreted by the Fetherhoughtonians because there is no attempt to process knowledge through inscription or speaking of it. The ground maintains the transmission of knowledge even as their language becomes muddled. Oral communication then becomes synonymous with inscription in *Fludd*.

Oral narratives and knowledge figure as a more porous sign of historical knowledge than the statues and the eponymous Fludd, as Miss Dempsey exemplifies: ‘She herself was the judge of what anyone needed to know. For Miss Dempsey occupied a special mediatory position, between church, convent, and everyone else. To acquire information was her positive duty, and then what she did with it was a matter for her judgement and experience. Miss Dempsey would have eavesdropped on the confessional, if she could.’<sup>40</sup> The Fetherhoughtonians, however, have a slight grasp of English, let alone Latin, which complicates the bishop’s plans to introduce Vernacular Mass. The Fetherhoughton speech challenges the bishops attempt to catalogue and modernise their faith and the church-as-archive.

The unprocessed archive of oral and landscape history contrasts with the processed religious knowledge of the Church, which takes control and precedence over the Fetherhoughtonian’s public and material imagination: ‘In the times we live in, Father Angwin, everything that can be done to improve their material welfare shall be done’ (p. 11). Fetherhoughton’s perceive Catholic knowledge as totalising by Father Angwin, whose views on the book *Faith and Morals for the Catholic Fireside: A Question-box for the Layman* satirically questions the total authority of their faith: ‘a treasury of scruple, what a cache of conservative principle. Here it is, the old faith in its entirety; the dear old faith, with no room for doubt or dissent. The rules of fasting and abstinence; no mention or record of hops. Diatribes against impure thoughts; no mention of relevance’ (p. 157). Mantel’s *Fludd* presents the distinctive features of the Catholic Church which Joaquin Martinez Lopez defines as the ‘vastness and structuredness of its hierarchy and organisation, and the strength of these may be

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<sup>39</sup> Arnold, p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> *Fludd*, p. 7.

reached at the cost of individual freedom and happiness’, a view which the book confirms.<sup>41</sup> Father Angwin is forced to abide by the Church’s principles despite their views on modernising the church and removing the statues.

In contrast to Muriel’s file in *EDIMD*, the statues remain historically meaningful objects despite their absence. Mantel’s missing objects then ask, in Gilliland and Caswell’s words, ‘how we treat imaginary objects as if they are real and ascribe all sorts of affects, beliefs and characteristics to them.’<sup>42</sup> However, the historical knowledge and beliefs attributed to the statues and other Catholic signs remain muddled so long as they are buried in the ground. Lopez states that in Mantel’s fictional community of Fetherhoughton ‘the complex systems of Catholic signs have become ineffectual, and the referential capacity of Catholic signs is inevitably undermined.’<sup>43</sup> As with Philomena’s book, Catholic signs have become distorted over time: ‘He preached a good vigorous sermon, stuffed with well-chosen texts; Father Angwin had thought it on the whole dangerous to disabuse his flock of the notion that the Bible was a Protestant book, and had tended to leave his quotes unattributed.’<sup>44</sup> Father Angwin’s religious teachings are not homogenous which contrasts with the sectarian differences within the community.

Concerning the Catholic faith, Lopez states that ‘the profusion of rules (codes) has not made communication (application and understanding of rules) any easier, but rather more complex; Catholicism has let entropy enter its language as distinctions do not work easily.’<sup>45</sup> Mantel, then, satirises the removal of the statues by the bishop, coupled with the muddled signs, to point to how, in Ted G. Jelen’s words, ‘religiously motivated religious leaders seek to enhance the public importance of religion beyond simple passive compliance, policies that restrict competition of alternative perspectives may be self-defeating.’<sup>46</sup> Jelen also states that the reification ‘of religious belief and practice in coercive legal terms is beset with problems of its own, beyond the fact that religiously-based coercion is often incompatible with liberal priorities involving individual liberty and autonomy’ (p. 584). Their wavering faith and sectarian disputes cause Fetherhoughton’s implied communal and local entropy and the increasingly muddled Catholic signs as the institution seek to remain relevant in the modern

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<sup>41</sup> Joaquin Martinez Lopez, ‘Parody/Satire and Perverted Catholic Signs in Hilary Mantel’s *Fludd* and Torrente Ballesters *Cronica Del Rey Pasmado*’, *Atlantis*, 18.1 (1996), 241-67, p. 258.

<sup>42</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 58.

<sup>43</sup> Martinez Lopez, p. 258.

<sup>44</sup> *Fludd*, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> Martinez Lopez, p. 260.

<sup>46</sup> Ted G. Jelen, ‘Religion and Self-Governance: Catholicism, Islam, and the Issue of Censorship’, *Politics and Religion*, 10.3 (2017), 567-96, p. 584.

world as per the advent of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Mantel unsettles Catholicism's control over the communal archive through active muddling and de-signification of historical objects. There are 'protestant bones in a Catholic grave' within the ground, which demonstrates the mess of religious signs that cannot impart their true origin accurately.<sup>47</sup>

The uncovering of the buried statues is analogous to uncovering a hidden archive, with Fludd playing the role of the unsuspecting archival agent. He states 'he seemed not to feel her own urgency to uncover one particular set of features; his efforts were general, unspecific. But then, she thought, he did not know the statues, not as individuals' (p. 136). The distinctions between how Miss Dempsey, Philomena, and Fludd approach the unburial and perceive the statues as signs of communal memory makes apparent the need for the statues to preserve communal memory. Petr I. Grishanin states:

Collective memory is stable, whereas historical cognition is selective. In that regard, historical memory emerges as a means of preserving and transferring the past to an era bereft of tradition. Tradition, in contrast, emphasises certain past events until they account for the lion's share of historical research. Works of historical commemoration force one to rethinking the connection between the recollection of the past and the historical understanding of that past.<sup>48</sup>

The literal recollection of the statues also prompts a new understanding of the characters' pasts.

The statue's unburial inspires a new meaning for Philomena and her position within the church. Her role, with Fludd and Miss Dempsey, as an archival agent aids in recovering pagan beliefs and memory for the Fetherhoughton community. The unburial also marks the beginning of Philomena's transition back to her Irish name and identity. Thus, in recovering the statues Philomena recovers the Irish traces that have been hidden in the convent, the church (seen in Aunt Dymphna) and in the text. The novels *EMOGS* and *Fludd* then warn, in Avril Horner's words, 'how the growth of fundamentalism – whether Christian or Islamic – might result in the disempowerment of women.'<sup>49</sup> The unburial then reveals Catholicism's dwindling control over local communal memory, Irish mysticism, and how a culture of silence permeates Fetherhoughton's dwelling-as-archive at all levels. The ground that surrounds Fetherhoughton remains a contested space through which memory and meaning actively usurp institutional control over the past, even as the Fetherhoughtonians cannot inscribe historical meaning accurately.

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<sup>47</sup> *Fludd*, p. 120.

<sup>48</sup> Petr I. Grishanin, 'The White Movement and the Civil War: Historical Phenomenology and Historical Memory', *Russian Studies in History*, 49.1 (2010), 26-36, p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> Horner, 'Women, Power and Conflict: The Gothic Heroine and 'Chocolate-box Gothic'.

Mantel's destabilisation of the church's authority over the communal memory and archive is her metaphoric de-authorisation of the grand narrative: 'Two thousand years' experience [...] Oh, Fludd, he thought, you sorcerer's apprentice, you've gone and got it wrong this time. You've worked a miracle in reverse. You've doused the celestial fire, you've taken the divine and made it merely human.'<sup>50</sup> In 'The Day is for the Living' Mantel states the rise in becoming 'sceptical about great men, dismissive of heroes. That's how our enquiry into the human drama has evolved – first the gods go, and then the heroes, and then we are left with our grubby, compromised selves.'<sup>51</sup> In *Fludd*, Mantel decentres the grand narrative by critically examining religious authority over archival agents and uncovering the presence of silences within the heteroglossic landscape.

*Fludd* features the first resurrected (though imaginary) archive that actively challenges the authority that sought to bury it. In doing so, Mantel makes mundane the figures of God and the alchemist Fludd. Oral history contributes to a confusion of historical meaning for the Fetherhoughtonians, a repeated trope in Mantel's later novels concerning British settings and Irish themes. Oral history and archives of scientifically inscribed bodies actively silence historical meaningful objects (such as statues), which is a metaphor for the erasure of marginalised societies. In the nine years that separates *Fludd* and *TGOB*'s publication, there is a significant shift from Mantel's examination of the material archive into the recollections and narrativization of the immaterial archives. The presentation of material and immaterial archives further complicates the understanding of private archives as a more stable repository of memory than the public sphere. At the same time, Irishness remains a trace in the in-between places that the dwelling-as-archive represent in both novels.

### **I. Alternate Archives, Oral Story Telling, and Scepticism in *The Giant O'Brien***

In *Fludd*, the villagers refuse to talk about the bodies in the moors. In *TGOB*, Charles Bryne – the titular Giant O'Brien' – finds that folktales cheer up the Irish people who are 'far from home.'<sup>52</sup> However, in the face of his death and his body being sold off, the Giant believes that stories cannot save him nor the Irish people who were hanged in London and haunt the Giant as ghosts. Irish communal memory is missing in *TGOB*. The Giant is then an archival

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<sup>50</sup> *Fludd*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>51</sup> 'The Day Is For The Living'.

<sup>52</sup> Mantel, *The Giant O'Brien* (London: Viking, 1998), p. 40.

agent tasked (and then paid) to collect and perform oral knowledge in Ireland and England.

The Giant states:

But now that all Ireland is coming down to ruin together, how will giants thrive? He had made a living by going about and being a pleasant visitor, who fetched not just the gist of his giant presence but also stories and songs [...] many hearths had welcomed him as a prodigy, a conversationalist, an illustration from nature's book. Nature's book is little read now (p. 5).

The dwindling influence of the oral tradition in the rise of eighteenth-century print culture leaves an auditory silence concerning marginalised accounts and local histories. The Giant and his group flee Ireland to escape cultural decline and the landscape's deprivation, but also to preserve the Irish language and culture.

However, The Giant's stories are allegories of the Giant's and Irish people's experience of London's cityscape. The Giant's stories have a reoccurring theme of uncanny dwellings, greed, and trickery. A mother is lured into splendid halls of kings for gold coins and her baby disappears. Tannikin is hidden because of her hog face and left forgotten in the Skinker family home. Conaire and his foster brothers are predicted by a giant woman to be trapped in Da Dergha's Hostel. The Giant dreams of the Edible house and how 'the travellers who arrive at the house begin by eating it, but it ends by eating them' (p. 121). The dwellings in the Giant's houses are dangerous traps. London is allegorised as a house that at first offers opportunity yet eventually 'eats' its inhabitants or gives them diseases, for 'the people are dying of dropsy, quinsy, tisick, measles, croup, gout canker, teething[...]' (p. 58). The London cityscape represents a mythic in-between place where bodies and memories disappear. Historical meaning or memories cannot be recovered in London or for the English, unlike the cityscapes of Paris and Jeddah in Mantel's other works. Whereas *EMOGS* and *APOGS* offer narratives to recover and reimagine these lost histories, *TGOB* offers no recovery of bodies or histories because of the oral narrative tradition and London's status as an entropic yet heterogeneous dwelling-as-archive.

The thematic vanishing of Irish local attachments and regional culture reoccurs in Mantel's works. The Giant experiences placelessness and homelessness in late eighteenth-century Ireland and London. The novel describes the lived experience of historical figures Charles Byrnes and John Hunter, who pursued Brynes's corpse. The Giant and John Hunter move to central Georgian London to pursue knowledge and social betterment. The narrators are from Ireland and Scotland, which are places with historical and political disputes against English Nationalism. Thus, the novel explores the attempts of cultural preservation as people move to London, recognising that there is no stable archive to contain outsider knowledge. The

representation of London as an ‘Edible House’ in *TGOB* that hides and devours corpses and historical meaning challenges the notions of London’s historical origins. The cityscape is entropic and does not preserve historical meaning. London’s identity and historical origins are, in Roger Luckhurst’s words, ‘lost in semi-mythical or visionary accounts, and historiography is further mocked by the patterns of disappearance and return that crumple linear time into repeating cycles or unpredictable arabesques.’<sup>53</sup> *TGOB*’s London and the Giant’s stories of uncanny dwellings places the novel amongst contemporary Gothic London literature such as Iain Sinclair’s *Lud Heat* (1975) and Peter Ackroyd’s *Hawksmoor* (1985). The Irish and Scottish perspectives critique English accounts of the past and conception of myths as having no origins and no basis in fact, allowing Hunter and the Giant to offer alternate archives of knowledge to replace London’s lack of sustainable archives.

In the eighteenth century, English nationalism focused on self-assertion, what it could become, and international ascendance. In *TGOB*, Mantel notes the sense of English self-assertion as oppressive: ‘the Englishman craves novelty, as long as it will pack and decamp by the end of the week. He does not like his peace disturbed – it is the English peace, and he thinks it is sacred. He magnifies his own qualities, and does not like anyone to be bigger than himself.’<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, Nicholas Hudson claims that the ‘Scots claimed a 2,000-year-old heritage of unmixed and unsubdued independence; the Irish and Welsh, while pushed to the peripheries by barbarian invaders, had the dignity of being indigenous peoples with an ancient legacy of language and community. The English, on the other hand, lacked precisely this sense of a continuous and distinct heritage.’<sup>55</sup> Mid-to-late-eighteenth century Britain was a new world of the socially mobile, ethnically diverse, and ambitious, with London playing a significant role in the culture of Georgian Britain.

The conception of myths and fantasy differs between nations within the novel. In *TGOB*, the English ‘do not have werewolves,’ whereas John Hunter reflects on accounts of antiquity ‘stories of [vampires] and ghouls and hauntings; of voices from underground, and the earth welling with fresh blood.’<sup>56</sup> The Giant imparts stories of Conaire, changelings, and fairies as part of his Irish historical heritage. However, the Giant depends on dwellings to deliver his stories. The disappearing dwellings of Ireland, and the lack of clear dwelling to call his own in

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<sup>53</sup> Roger Luckhurst, ‘The contemporary London Gothic and the limits of the ‘spectral turn’, *Textual Practice*, 16.3 (2002), 527-46, p. 531.

<sup>54</sup> *TGOB*, p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> Nicholas Hudson, *Samuel Johnson and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 135.

<sup>56</sup> *TGOB*, p. 159, 21.



London means that these stories cannot be easily told. Mantel then plays with the Giant's conception of dwellings and homelessness to reflect the absence/presence of Irish stories and British historical heritage within the London cityscape.

Declan Kiberd states that Ireland became, in the late sixteenth century, 'a utopian no-place into which the deepest fears and fondest ideals might be read.'<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, John Hunter's early memories of Scotland are a similar lived experience of deprivation: 'The house is built of stone, a farmhouse, built on ground that is thin and poor.'<sup>58</sup> For the Giant and Hunter 'fortunes are made in cities' (p. 33). Hunter's quotation of Samuel Johnson's sarcastic quip that 'the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England' ironically underlines how London was the centre of commerce and social betterment in eighteenth-century Great Britain.<sup>59</sup> However, Hunter is a man of science and is not interested in preserving Scottish knowledge. He leaves his Scottish ancestry behind in favour of bodies and pathology. In comparison, the Giant is a nomadic storyteller who aims to safely carry Irish knowledge around Ireland. He 'had made a living by going about and being a pleasant visitor, who fetched not just the gift of his giant presence but also stories and songs [...] and many hearths had welcomed him as a prodigy, a conversationalist, an illustration from nature's book' (p. 5). In England, hearths are hostile to those far from 'home'. The Giant's restriction of movement and displacement from the 'hearth' (where historical knowledge is symbolically free to dwell in the novel) is foreshadowed as a homelessness from the Irish landscape as he continues to live and work in London.

Mantel marks in *TGOB* the eighteenth-century transformation of dwellings within London due to the growing markets of leisure and pleasure. Benjamin Heller states that, in Georgian London, public places are 'commercial spaces outside the home, most notably museums, theatres, concerts, coffee houses, pleasure gardens, and tea houses.'<sup>60</sup> However, Mantel also makes oblique reference to the transformation of domestic private dwellings into sites of recreation and commercialisation. Exhibitions of the Giant and other freaks are held in boarding houses and cellars, replacing the traditional domestic sphere. Anywhere the Giant and his business partners dwell or visit has been converted into a commercialised space. Mantel's construction of London's public and private spaces in *TGOB* is slippery, with the Giant able to

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<sup>57</sup> Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>58</sup> *TGOB*, p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> See James Boswell's *The Life of Dr. Johnson*, ed. by George Birkbeck Hill, 4 vols (London: H. Baldwin and Son, 1799), I, p. 493. Stated on p. 55 of *TGOB*.

<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Heller, 'Leisure and the Use of Domestic Space in Georgian London', *The Historical Journal*, 53.3 (2010), 623-45, p. 623.

go in and out of these commercial and non-domestic places. Boarding houses, lodgings and cellars are in-between places where the Irish language and culture, the Giant's folk stories, and bodies slip and are silenced.

Through the boundaries of ownership and hospitality, Mantel reflects the complex relationship the migratory inhabitant has with materiality and transitional dwellings (such as lodgings or university halls) and how it affects the movement of marginalised heritages. The dwelling experience of lodgers within the city conceives interior thresholds as extremely permeable. The lodger's space is never entirely their own. The Giant O'Brien and his co-workers find themselves lodging in various places: barns, St. Clements Lane, Slig's cellar, Spring Gardens, Piccadilly, Hampshire Hod, and Cockspur's street. The variety of new 'homes' are spaces that must be flexible in function, yet there is the limited mobility of bodies because of the rooms' small size. One lodging's multi-functional purpose invites the public to interact within the Irishmen's domestic spaces to observe the exhibition of the Giant: 'their exhibition room, above the cane shop, was airy and lofty, their own quarters, at the back, were meaner, and yet ostentatious.'<sup>61</sup> Their lodging is inhospitable, and the Giant, Claffey, Joe Vance, and Pybus are displaced from any stable home in London through their lodging and the associated contract with the landlords or landladies. In Heller's words, 'a lodger was in the home of another and had to behave according to expectations of the landlord or landlady.'<sup>62</sup> The Irishmen's living situation in London directly mirrors their foreign experience of Britain. The Giant, in these multiple lodgings, takes up 'too much floor space' while Vance, Claffey, and Pybus transform within London's commercial space: 'my brother says he's seen it before, in men who've been in London six months or a year. A sort of addling begins in their heads, a scrambling, he calls it, in the senses.'<sup>63</sup> The Irish consciousness and identity become muddled the longer they go without a safe domestic place.

Reflecting his ability to move between the in-between places of London's commercial spaces, the Giant is also a quasi-spectral figure who moves between the borders of material and supernatural. The Giant states that 'Giants are not subject to the rules that govern other mortals' (p. 141). The Giant's physical body – a metaphor for the Irish body politic – embodies the stories and histories of Ireland. The Giant is, in Jean Richardson's words, 'a touching, childlike freak who finds that his immense height is only a five-minute wonder, and that he is worth

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<sup>61</sup> *TGOB*, p. 67.

<sup>62</sup> Heller, p. 633.

<sup>63</sup> *TGOB*, p. 41, p. 178.

more dead than alive' while he is also caught between the conflict between poetry and materialism.<sup>64</sup> The Giant's growing body, and its capacity to carry Irish knowledge, is a threat to the physical foundations of the London cityscape: 'the Giant's voice is shaking the beams, he is smashing the glass from here to Fleet Street. He is setting up quivers in the foundations [...] vibrations that will blow London apart.'<sup>65</sup> His height is a disruption of Londoner's private and public spheres: 'you can see over the buildings, Charlie [...] you can see into the back courts and over walls, and look into the high-up windows [...] Londoners at their supper were surprised by the giant face of an Irishman appearing behind the foggy glass' (p. 118). The Giant's presence represents the unwanted presence of the Irish consciousness and Irish bodies in London. Thus, the Irish population is a haunting that is rejected by the London public. The Giant's mobility and autonomy are restricted the moment his Giant frame ceases to be a novelty to the London public. Hunter also restricts the Giant's body when he steals his bones and displays them to the London public. The suppression and quasi-burial of the Giant's body represents the Londoner's desire to silence and bury Irish bodies in the London cityscape. The Giant's body is more susceptible to disappear in the in-between places.

The city destabilises Vance and the Giant's sense of safety, and both desire the return to Ireland as a mythical escape from the uncanny city. The Giant says, 'I must remove or die. I cannot be here in this city. The streets are thronging with opportunity, the stones running with gore. I have read the bible of the strangling necks, their handbooks and their lore, and I feel the pull of England's fatal cord' (p. 177). The Giant recognises the displacing effect of the city on his individuality and language. The Giant notes that his companion's speech 'is now a compound of vileness. We abandon our own language because we need extra words' (p. 136). *TGOB* then figures London as a commercial space that removes the individuality and voices of the Irishmen. Louis Wirth states that 'if the individual would participate at all in the social, political and economic life of the city, he must subordinate some of his individuality to the demands of the larger community and in that measure immerse himself in mass movements.'<sup>66</sup> The Giant then views his and other freaks' exhibition as an exploitation as the city attempts to both assimilate marginalised bodies and flaunt them.

The commercial space profits from the bodies of freaks and foreigners, and cellars are fitted to contain them. The cellars are porous dwelling-as-archives because of the bodies they

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<sup>64</sup> Jean Richardson, 'Hilary Mantel: The Novelist in Action', *Publishers Weekly*, 245.40 (1998), pp. 60-61, p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> *TGOB*, p. 190.

<sup>66</sup> Louis Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', *The City Reader*, ed. Richard T LeGates and Frederic Stout (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 115-23, p. 120.

exhibit and hide from the London public, ‘each fitted with a freak, and each freak bringing in a pound a day.’<sup>67</sup> The life of the freaks is not long, ‘not once it has been brought to London and been worked’ (p. 184) and the glut in the market of freaks and savages means the cellars in White Hart Lane and Befordbury are packed for exhibition. Access into other buildings is revoked, and the freaks are social spectres relegated to private spaces that are not necessarily domestic. The Giant’s landlord Kane owns ‘a garret where the pinheads clustered, and – by extension – owned the pinheads’ (p. 194). The freaks’ bodies represent how transnational histories are bought and reappropriated for profit, but also how London easily benefits and forgets about this profit and entertainment. Their short lifespans also mean that these bodies soon become corpses, their individual memories and pasts disappearing into these cellars. The cellars are then in-between places where the past and bodies containing historical meaning disappear. These bodies in the cellars contrast with the nameless and spectral crowd that moves through Parisian streets in *APOGS*, representing social change as the Revolution changed the function of the rooms. Instead, *TGOB*’s bodies and rooms underline the growing fixity of eighteenth-century social and scientific values which marginalise different cultures and histories.

*TGOB* directly explores the processes by which people and their bodies become part of archives with their individual historical and cultural meaning silenced by the collector. The interplay of material and immaterial archives affirms the ease of losing historical meaning if not preserved correctly. John Hunter’s pursuit of knowledge appears in his collection of bodies which erases the cultural memories and the embodied pasts of his objects. The Giant becomes ‘the pagan object’ (p. 127) to Hunter’s collection. The historical figure of John Hunter, an anonymous article reports, ‘understood that all progress mainly depends on the power of grouping and uniting for some new purpose facts that have been discovered independently and that are daily being revealed yet with little or no reference to the principles they are found to support.’<sup>68</sup> Mainly, the ‘memory of Hunter, like the memory of the greatest men of every age, is imperishably enshrined [...] his name is stamped in indelible characters on the records of human progress’ (p. 380). Hunter’s passion for collecting, which includes ‘illustrations of life in all its aspects, in health and in disease; specimens of botany, zoology, palaeontology,

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<sup>67</sup> *TGOB*, pp. 183-84. Con Claffey and other characters in Mantel’s *TGOB* refer to people with bodies that are perceived to deviate significantly from the norm as ‘freaks’. (For more on the term ‘freak’ and its discourse see Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s Introduction in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996)).

<sup>68</sup> Anonymous, ‘John Hunter’, *Nature*, 35. 903 (1887), 379-80, p. 379.

anatomy, physiology and every branch of pathology' (p. 379), is well documented. Hunter's cataloguing of bodies and the past means he is preserved in archives just as he preserves the Giant's body in history. As another archival agent in her works, Mantel once again stresses Hunter's obsession for the discovery of truth at the expense of his own comfort and others: 'Experiment will bring me to bankruptcy; I'll go barefoot for knowledge.'<sup>69</sup> Hunter, however, is not a reliable recorder or cataloguer of information or historical meaning.

Despite his pursuit of knowledge and the discovery of the truth, he does not fit a romance of the archive protagonist because, in history and the novel, he is neither a professional scholar nor historian. An anonymous article states, 'he would have recorded the results of his labours in better order, with more light and greater effect, and we should have had the advantage of a clearer revelation of his thoughts. But all this is very far from saying that Hunter was not, in the strictest sense, an educated man.'<sup>70</sup> In Mantel's *TGOB*, all Hunter knows, 'all he needs to know, he feels under his hands, or through the knife's blade. Flesh and steel; they are their own encyclopaedia.'<sup>71</sup> Hunter's knowledge is phenomenologically and physically acquired, and he rejects print as his main form of information gathering: 'He thinks of the dead. His mind turns to them often. Corpses are my library, he would say, when an importunate bookseller pressed on him the vast Death Encyclopaedia (illustrated) of Doctor Knogus-Boggus' (p. 96). Hunter has created a dwelling-as-archive in his private home that gives him a unique vantage point on bodies and the historical meaning they carry. His buying and stealing of the Giant's body further complicates Hunter's unreliability as an archival agent.

Hunter's obsession for bodies extends to his illegal use of grave robbers. He is a parodic eighteenth-century figure of the wealthy private book collector. Allan describes these book collections as 'a comparable pattern of impressive antiquarian acquisitions on a necessarily less ambitious scale, again informed by special interest in the history of authorship and printing technologies and driven by an insatiable desire for valuable and rare items.'<sup>72</sup> Hunter is specifically interested in a library of rare and valuable bodies. Hunter desires Eskimos, giants, dwarfs, and other rare specimens for his Hunterian Collection and his 'physiognomist's memory.'<sup>73</sup> True to historical records, the Hunterian Collection remains 'unreadable' and inaccessible because Hunter silences his scientific meaning from competitors. There are 'the

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<sup>69</sup> *TGOB*, p. 126.

<sup>70</sup> Anon, 'John Hunter', p. 379.

<sup>71</sup> *TGOB*, p. 56.

<sup>72</sup> David Allan, 'Book-Collecting and Literature in Eighteenth Century Britain', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 45 (2015), 74-92, p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> *TGOB*, p. 102.

skulls, in no particular order; or rather, in a chosen disorder, artfully hodge-podged so that no one can eavesdrop on his thoughts. He possesses the skull of a European man, an Australian aborigine, a young chimpanzee, a macaque monkey, a crocodile and a dog' (p. 103). Hunter's archives are presented as internal knowledge that he chooses to not share with the rest of the scientific community.

Hunter's records of his findings mean he constantly generates knowledge of bodies. The process of his writings is preserved in his archive: 'Disbelieve everybody, even Aristotle. Write down your methods. Experiment, do it over and over. Cut finer. Distrust general rules. Cut finer still' (p. 66). Mantel reveals the relationship between scientific research and acts of fictionalisation. She also prioritises the material presence of historical research in official archives compared to oral archives. Walter Ong states that 'behind even the abstractions of science, there lies narrative of the observations on the basis of which the abstractions have been formulated. Students in a science laboratory have to 'write up' experiments, which is to say, they have to narrate what they did and what happened when they did it.'<sup>74</sup> Unlike the Giant, the historical Hunter's knowledge has been transcribed and appears as intertextual references. In *TGOB*, the line 'I would like to get a nest, an old cuckoo and a young cuckoo' draws from a transcript of the historical Hunter and Edward Jenner's letters to each other.<sup>75</sup> John Baron's *The Life of Edward Jenner M.D.* contains 'I hear you saying, there is no end to your wants' which is echoed in the novel.<sup>76</sup> The intertextual references further establishes Hunter's inscribed presence in the historical records and evidence is not presented as traces. However, the history and the lives behind the bodies Hunter collects are made into traces of the past.

Hunter ascribes his individual meaning to the surface of bodies while generating the appearance of an unprocessed archive. The ellipsis Hunter generates parallels the immaterial archive of the dead which haunts him. Hunter seeks the discovery of truth in the dead through the dissection of bodies: 'Gone where? This is what anguishes him: the question where. He wants to haul them back, with iron hooks. He wants to question them: where? He wants to know is there a soul and if the soul can split from the body and if so what is its mechanism for getting out – a usual orifice, or permeation through the skin?'<sup>77</sup> The dead have their silences, and their memory is not inscribed on their bodies' surface because bodies prove to break down in *TGOB*. In history and outside of the text, the Hunterian archive has its literal gaps of missing

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<sup>74</sup> Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 137.

<sup>75</sup> *TGOB*, p. 70.

<sup>76</sup> John Baron, *The Life of Edward Jenner M.D.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 30.

<sup>77</sup> *TGOB*, p. 97.

artefacts which another anonymous article explains: ‘the original collection comprised some 13,682 specimens’ and in 1941, ‘a high-explosive bomb destroyed two-fifths of the original Hunterian specimens and three-fifths of the 60,000 specimens including the valuable collection made in the First World War.’<sup>78</sup> Despite his continuous recording and archival preservations, the novel explores the slow erasure of John Hunter from historical records. An unnamed narrator states ‘Sir Joshua Reynold’s portrait of John Hunter ... is gradually disappearing ... fading has advanced unchecked.’<sup>79</sup> John Hunter then abstractly ascribes his own scientific meaning onto the Giant’s body when he puts it on display in London (paratextually revealed by Mantel in ‘Notes’). Thus, the Irish knowledge and meaning is erased in Hunter’s Museum collection, which is an in-between place that rewrites the past as well as containing traces of them. Hunter becomes a trace too because time erases any material archives in *TGOB*. The novel shows the multiple ways material archives are erased over time, compounding the Giant’s sense of loss culture and dying body.

The commercial space and Hunter’s Museum confines migratory bodies, and the Giant’s poetry and myths are trapped within his memories. Like Paris in *APOGS*, the cityscape does not easily contain marginal heritages or marginal bodies unless they are dead. London is a foreshadowed graveyard in *TGOB*: ‘London is like the sea and the gallows. It refuses none’ (p. 25). London city, then, imposes its status as, in Lewis Mumford’s words, ‘a geographic plexus, an economic organisation, an institutional process, a theatre of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity.’<sup>80</sup> The Irishmen are effectively homeless, displaced both in London’s cityscape and rural Ireland. The erasure of Irish culture in *TGOB*’s London then questions the Irishmen’s ability to mediate and transmit Irish historical knowledge in the city.

Meanwhile, eighteenth-century Ireland is a ruined country in *TGOB*, with its settlements in various states of decay: ‘A league or so on they came to a settlement, or what had been so recently; what was now some tumbled stone walls, the battered masonry raw, unclothed by creeping green. A few months after the clearance, the cabin walls were already disintegrating into the mud around; their roofs had been fired, and they were open to the sky.’<sup>81</sup> Towns are rickety huts with sagging roofs, and ‘it was a town with no pride left, no muscular strength to mend matters, no spark in the heart to make you want to mend’ (p. 12). Irish towns

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<sup>78</sup> Anonymous, ‘John Hunter’s Museum’, *Nature*, 210. 5031 (1966), 71-72, p. 71.

<sup>79</sup> *TGOB*, p. 208.

<sup>80</sup> Lewis Mumford, ‘What is a City?’, *The City Reader*, ed. Richard T LeGates and Frederic Stout (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 110-14, p. 113.

<sup>81</sup> *TGOB*, p. 9.

are imagined as a body that cannot contain Irish people or Irish heritage. The decaying Irish landscape cannot contain heritage and historical knowledge, which encourages a renovation of Irish consciousness in the Giant.

The Giant hopes to rebuild the decayed Ireland he has left behind into a stronger dwelling-as-archive to contain his stories: ‘this time in dressed stone, with columns. That don’t fall down. With marble fire-places, decorated with urns and wreaths [...] with looking-glasses surmounted by gilded swans’ (p. 119). The Giant then reflects Kiberd’s claim that ‘two kinds of freedom were available to the Irish: the return to a past, pre-colonial Gaelic identity, yet yearning for expression if long-denied, or the reconstruction of a national identity, beginning from first principles all over again.’<sup>82</sup> The Gaelic language and dwellings, however, signify the little source left for Irish nationalism. The vernacular house the Giant imagines facilitates an interface which Barry O’ Reilly explains is ‘between human and supernatural worlds and that its portals – doors, windows and chimneys – were liminal zones or points of contact between these worlds.’<sup>83</sup> His tales often centres around haunted dwellings such as the Edible House or mythic figures such as High King Conaire. The telling of these dwellings marks his attempts to verbally recreate dwelling spaces to embed historical knowledge and didactic warnings. Within the traditional vernacular dwelling (which works in *TGOB* as both the Giant’s Irish dialect and architecture concerned with the domestic and functional), the Giant can maintain the movement of myths and historical knowledge within the human world.<sup>84</sup> Thus, this vernacular dwelling becomes an immaterial dwelling-as-archive in *TGOB* for the Giant as a response to the displacing effect of London and England.

Irish knowledge disappears without the vernacular dwelling, especially since traditional folklore would conceive the Giant’s new construction of Mulronee’s tavern with non-traditional ornaments as, in O’ Reilly’s words, ‘a disruption of the natural and supernatural worlds.’<sup>85</sup> On the subject of homelessness, Jeremy Waldron draws links between dwelling and agency: ‘No one is free to perform an action unless there is somewhere he is free to perform it. Since we are embodied beings, we always have a location. Moreover, though everyone has to be somewhere, a person cannot choose any location he likes. Some locations are physically

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<sup>82</sup> Kiberd, p. 286.

<sup>83</sup> Barry O’Reilly, ‘Hearth and Home: The Vernacular House in Ireland from C. 1800’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 111C, (2011), 193-215, p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> See Matthew H. Johnson’s *English Houses 1300-1800: Vernacular Architecture, Social Life* (London: Routledge, 2010) for English definitions of vernacular architectures, which are of traditional forms, built by traditional materials, are common within limited parts of the country, and are small in comparison to other houses (p. 11).

<sup>85</sup> O’Reilly, p. 199.



inaccessible.’<sup>86</sup> Drawing on Waldron, Young outlines that a person without a home is ‘literally deprived of individual existence. However minimal, home is an extension of the person’s body, the space that he or she takes up, and performs the basic activities of life [...] the individual is not allowed to be if she does not have places to live and to perform the activities of life, with basic routine and security.’<sup>87</sup> The Giant’s placelessness in a decaying Ireland and urban England troubles his individuality and the preservation of the vernacular dwelling he tries to preserve. He is reduced to bones, which facilitates his transformation into a commercial pagan object owned and placed by Hunter. Hunter states ‘just there shall the Giant hang. I will move that armadillo three feet to the left, and the giant bones will sway, suspended on their wires, boiled and clean.’<sup>88</sup> The fictional Giant’s bones in Hunter’s private rooms are a metafictional reminder of the real-life bones that hang in the public place of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Mantel notes the Giant’s permanent displacement in ‘No Passes or Documents are Needed’. She states that ‘his bones are hanging up even today in a London museum: an awful symbol to remind us of how the body of Ireland is cut apart.’<sup>89</sup> Through Hunter’s collection of transnational and trans-species bodies in one space at Earl’s Court, Mantel notes an archive that mostly lacks English heritage. Mantel writes the Giant’s rootlessness from London’s public and private spaces as a permanent exclusion and reappropriation of marginalised histories within English archives. The novel then considers the foundations of Great Britain as unstable for permanent, heterogeneous historical embodiment. Hunter and the Giant present significant disruptions to the English archives. History is dispersed by time because it does not have a structure to be contained safely within. An unknown narrator states at the end of *TGOB*, ‘you will be changed to a pool of water. To a worm, a fly. And a wind will blow the fly away.’<sup>90</sup> Migrating bodies and decaying/transitory dwellings then symbolise the fragility of memory containment within *TGOB*.

Eileen Pollard and Ginette Carpenter state that in *TGOB* ‘the grand narratives of science and enlightenment rationalism are juxtaposed with the transformative possibilities of fiction, the soulless, corpse-strewn existence of John Hunter with the world-enriching tales of the Giant. The novel astutely addresses the paradoxes of storytelling whereby it can be mobilised

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<sup>86</sup> Jeremy Waldron, ‘Homelessness and the Issue of Freedom’, *Liberal Rights: Collected Papers: 1981–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 309–38, p. 310.

<sup>87</sup> Iris Marion Young, ‘House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme’, *On Female Body Experience: ‘Throwing Like a Girl’ and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 162.

<sup>88</sup> *TGOB*, p. 127.

<sup>89</sup> ‘No Passes or Documents Are Needed’, p. 101.

<sup>90</sup> *TGOB*, p. 209.

to both reinforce and interrogate dominant discourses.’<sup>91</sup> Within *TGOB*, archived knowledge of the past appears in language and acts of fictionalisation. The novel presents both material print culture (which normally acts as an archive) and immaterial archives to underline how historical meaning is silenced.

Mantel then explores alternate archive sources that do not solely depend on print culture and book collecting, which David Allan states ‘was integral to the world in which eighteenth-century English literature functioned. Indeed, it helped create the market for printed texts, increasingly broad as well as deep, that made authorship and publishing not merely viable but also profitable.’<sup>92</sup> Instead, Mantel employs the Foucauldian archive in the collection of Irish oral and mythical stories and the Hunterian Collection as marginal archives in eighteenth-century Britain. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault states:

Instead of seeing, on the great mythical book of history, lines of words that translate in visible characters thoughts that were formed in some other time and place, we have in the density of discursive practices, systems that establish statements as events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use). They are all these systems of statements (whether events or things) that I propose to call *archive*. By this term I do not mean the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity; nor do I mean the institutions, which, in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation.<sup>93</sup>

Michel Foucault’s definition of the archive is that it is not limited to a place, real or imagined: ‘The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events’ (p. 132). Suzanne Keen states that his definition of an archive is placeless, for “‘the domain of things said” claims the word for something other than collections of books and paper [...] Intrinsically placeless, but rather distributed through many locales and times, these discourses elude pinning-down in a particular spot or individual.’<sup>94</sup> The Foucauldian archive is not in a particular place because ‘it must contain all of us and all of our statements and actions (past and present), whether we speak professionally, or as sisters, mothers, consumers, citizens. To attempt to confine this discourse (made up of all the practices and communications within a social institution) in a limited set of sites can only be to act on a fantasy of power and control’ (ibid). Thus, *TGOB* acts as a Foucauldian archive that transmits information and historical meaning in alternate forms: the archives of Irish oral tradition and the body.

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<sup>91</sup> Pollard and Carpenter, p. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Allan, p. 91.

<sup>93</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Alexander Street Press, 1972), pp. 131-32.

<sup>94</sup> Keen, p. 50.

The role of oral tradition is never simply one thing, for the maintenance and performance required in oral narration means it is, in Penny Fielding's words, 'an agent in the creation and re-creation of cultural norms and values. The oral is always the other: of writing (speech) of culture (the voice of nature), or the modern (a pre-modern) past.'<sup>95</sup> Walter Ong states that in the oral tradition, what is forgotten will be lost permanently, and stories 'must constantly be talked about or sung about, else they vanish from consciousness.'<sup>96</sup> *TGOB* then explores the careful maintenance of oral tradition through the constant interruptions and editorial remarks of the Giant's mythic tales and in the disintegration of his body.

Pollard and Carpenter state that 'stories in *The Giant O'Brien* are porous things, flexing and bending to accommodate audience and location; the "truth" of the tale is relative.'<sup>97</sup> The ease of transmission and the retention of memory are common characteristics of the oral tradition form. The Giant's storytelling acts as a (re)collection of folklore. The storytelling reflects a time when, in Vito Carrassi's words, storytelling was 'for the members of a certain community, an ordinary rather than an extra-ordinary event, yet embedded within a more or less ritualised framework; something connected to a narrative tradition coming from the past – a specific lore – but also reshaped according to present tastes, needs, uses of a specific folk.'<sup>98</sup> In *BB*, the psychic Alison Hart reflects on her mediumistic performance similar to the oral tradition: 'suit your outfit to the audience, to the town, had always been her watchword.'<sup>99</sup> Narrating the past requires reading and responding to an audience who wants to discover the historical meaning of the past. In *TGOB*, the Giant struggles to adjust to his English audience, who cannot relate to his Irish oral tradition.

The Giant's storytelling is a shifting archive with no dwelling to contain the stories. However, the novel is a framed narrative of multiple folklores. Once collected, Carrassi states, 'an oral narrative is extrapolated by its storytelling context, in order to be recorded, archived and published, so as to become a cultural (immaterial) heritage, whose importance depends on its preserving, representing and also enhancing a piece of a declining (or declined) past.'<sup>100</sup> Oral narrative's trustworthiness is in question in *TGOB* due to the Giant's reliance on memory

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<sup>95</sup> Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 4.

<sup>96</sup> Walter Ong, *The Presence of the World: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 204.

<sup>97</sup> Pollard and Carpenter, p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> Vito Carrassi, 'Between Folk and Lore: Performing, Textualising and (mis)Interpreting the Irish Oral Tradition', *Estudios Irlandeses*, 12.2 (2017), 32-46, p. 35.

<sup>99</sup> *BB*, p. 176.

<sup>100</sup> Carrassi, p. 35.

and the migrant's inability to preserve intergenerational transmission (whether by language or historical knowledge) in England: 'It's the slaughter of a nation.'<sup>101</sup> *TGOB* stresses the dissolution of language and memory as a collapse of the Irish spoken archive and historical meaning: 'where meaning evaporates into air like ether' (p. 190). The Giant's refusal to retain English demonstrates his priority to preserve Irish knowledge within his oral narratives, and not to take on English tales: 'I have learned it and forgotten it [...] I have sealed it up in a lead box, and I have sunk it in the depth of the sea' (p. 6). The foreshadowing of his ideal gravesite alludes to the future burying of Irish traditional and historical knowledge as preservation.

Irish oral narratives told by Giants are not as profitable as books in England, exponentially increasing the dissolution of the Irish language. The Giant states that his fellow Irishmen's speech is 'now a compound of vileness. We abandon our own language because we need extra words, for things we had never imagined; and because there are superfluous words in it, for things we cannot imagine anymore' (p. 136). Rather than the buried archive of the statues in Fetherhoughton, the Giant's body is an archive of Irish oral knowledge. The Giant's failing body means immaterial Irish knowledge is not spoken, which constructs Irish historical meaning as a silenced gap within the Foucauldian archive: 'I have griping in my brain and my ears, where language is destroyed by slow attrition day by day; where thought is bombinated, as if my skull were a besieged city' (p. 142). Neither the landscape (which muddles historical meaning) nor storytelling preserves the Giant's memory or knowledge. The Giant then disappears, meaning that bodies eventual wear away and all knowledge is lost to time:

He is a stench in the nose for a day or a week, so he is a no-name, so he is oblivion. Stories cannot save him. When human memory runs out, there is the memory of animals; behind that, the memory of the plants, and behind that the memory of the rocks. But the wind and the sea wear the rocks away; and the cell-line runs to its limit, where meaning falls away from it, and it loses knowledge of its own nature. Unless we plead on our knees with history, we are done for, we are lost. (p. 205).

Irish communal memory and oral tradition, embodied in the Giant's body, vanishes within the imagined ground. Like Mother Purpit in *Fludd*, the memories of people disappear into time: 'Purpit's face was growing dim: as if time and experience had consumed her, burnt her like a wax doll.'<sup>102</sup> Memory is reinforced as unreliable whether contained in the ground or the body. The Giant cannot recollect or continue to be an archival agent in part due to the shifting and fluid nature of his sources (communal memory or myths) and because his body breaks down, reappropriated for Hunter's scientific archive.

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<sup>101</sup> *TGOB*, p. 53.

<sup>102</sup> *Fludd*, p. 170.

Alternate forms of archives that do not include print demonstrate an immaterial archive within Mantel's works. Patricia MacCormack states that immateriality 'may be suggestive of the materiality of the space between, the threshold of affect, as the node of matter rather than the dividuated surfaces of individually constituted subjects as surfaces.'<sup>103</sup> The novel explores the perpetual awareness that the characters are, in Mantel's words from the interview 'Mind What Gap?', 'not being told the end of stories and of the ellipsis', which follows the binary of im/materiality that marginalised archives present.<sup>104</sup> However, through the incoherent oral archive, Mantel posits that orality is worth more dead than alive, and the pursuit of the dead's memories and thoughts remains part of her historical inquiry. At the same time, the lack of a material dwelling-as-archive proves that memory and knowledge need a place to be stored even though it slips in the immaterial dwelling-as-archives.

Mantel's conception of Irish consciousness and bodies manifest as traces, silenced voices, and in ambiguous and alternate archives in *Fludd* and *TGOB*. However, these Irish traces are in tandem with other buried evidence such as statues and bodies in the cellars of London. The Irish consciousness never dominates Mantel's works due to Mantel's awareness of other voices that have been silenced in archives. Philomena and the Giant never return to Ireland despite their nostalgia for the place and their memory of the culture. *Fludd* and *TGOB* then present voices as the only traces that are reliably preserved in the in-between places of her works (even as their reliability is always in question). The novels acknowledge that there is no possible return to Ireland or the past unless in imagination or in oral narratives.

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<sup>103</sup> Patricia MacCormack, 'Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation', *Information, Communication and Society*, 17.5 (2014), 651-52, p. 652.

<sup>104</sup> Mantel and Pollard, 'Mind What Gap?', p. 1037.

## Chapter Four: The Renovated Past and the Body-as-Archive in Mantel's *Beyond Black*

History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.<sup>1</sup> – James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1920).

In *Beyond Black*, Alison Hart describes the spirit world as a ‘garden, or to be more accurate a public place in the open air.’<sup>2</sup> In this regard, all public places in *BB* are considered the spirit world, where ghosts frequently visit. Alison and her companion Colette find that their garden in the suburban neighbourhood of Admiral Drive is open to Morris and Co., who dislike the new move. Morris’s complaint about Admiral Drive is that ‘when you looked out of the window all you could see was turf and fence: and him’ which means the suburban garden has ‘no cover for his nefarious activities’ (pp. 243-44). The move to the new-build is an uncomfortable change for these spectres, who act as poltergeists yet do not have corporeal forms of their own and try to hide in old objects to carry out their nefarious activities. Thus, suburban houses and the spirit world both reveal spectres and the dead to Alison, who works to mediate the dead through other corporeal people. However, the spirit world and suburbia are also dislocating in-between places that confuse the dead, muddle their sense of place and memory, and are places where the dead can no longer hide. Thus, as a dwelling-as-archive, suburban places at first seem ideal for uncovering historical meaning because suburbia overlaps with the spirit world and public places in the open air.

However, the suburban landscapes signify other potential buried evidence of the past. Close to the millennium, the play area in Admiral Drive is closed by the local environmental health department, who only admit to ‘some sort of blockage, some sort of seepage, some sort of contamination the nature of which they were unable as yet to confirm’ (p. 252). The contamination is knowledge that the suburban neighbourhood wishes remained buried. Radiation, seepage, and white worms are claimed to be buried underground, unseen. Alison notes that ‘nobody wanted news of the problem to leak, in case it affected their house prices. The populace was restless and transient, and already the first “For Sale” signs were going up, as footloose young couples tried their luck in a rising market’ (p. 252). The suburban neighbourhood prioritise their house prices for the future event of selling their new-builds, while young couples are already changing neighbourhoods due to the pollution. The immediate presence of decay so close to the millennium then posits the suburban places as transitory

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<sup>1</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses*, introduction by Declan Kiberd (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *BB*, p. 43.

places. The transitory suburban neighbourhood is also determined by the residents' affective response to their environment. Admiral Drive is a suburban place in *BB* that signifies some sort of leakage of the past which the suburban residences do not want to interact with. Alison also desires new-builds as ahistorical sites, 'somewhere clean. Somewhere new. A house that nobody's lived in before' (p. 199). The past is frequently rejected in suburban neighbourhoods, with the houses often either refusing or secretly cataloguing and archiving traces of the past. Alison states that often 'memories are short [...] in house sales' (p. 440). Thus, in *BB* the dwelling-as-archive is an ambivalent archive of past traces. The past traces are represented as unclean environmental seepages or dirty surfaces in the present which offers an unwanted neo-phenomenological experience considering how the suburban neighbourhood do not want to re-experience the past.

Meanwhile, Mart is a living secret who hides in Alison and Colette's garden shed due to his homeless status. The garden exposes Alison to the suburban neighbourhood as she ferries food between kitchen and shed: 'she couldn't rule out, of course, being seen by spectators from an upper window' (p. 293). Suburban neighbourhoods and windows then allow a certain vantage point of the gardens. The presence of unseen spectators negates feelings of privacy in Admiral Drive, with the Neighbourhood watch becoming a verbal archive of gossip and rumours on how the inhabitants of the neighbourhood dwell: 'all watch each other, and report each other's movements' (p. 275). While the neighbours are an uncomfortable reminder that everyone is being watched, suburban houses can access the past and the spirit world since suburban gardens are considered an in-between of public and private. Mart's move to Alison and Colette's garden shed cements the in-between status of the garden, for 'all Mart's jobs seemed to have involved hanging about in public places' (p. 299). Mart's hidden presence is eventually revealed to the neighbourhood due to the exposing effects of the suburban neighbourhood. His death becomes another seepage that represents a past that the neighbourhood cannot tolerate: 'we will be in the local paper as that place where the tramp topped himself, and that won't be very nice for our resale values' (p. 409). The past is unsavoury to Admiral Drive, no matter how it attempts to reveal itself.

Despite the exposure of public places and gardens, Morris and Co. 'are so tenacious of existence that they will assume any form, however debased, ridiculous and filthy' (p. 270). Thus, Morris and Co. can return as filth and dirt to Admiral Drive to murder Mart in the shed, transforming him into a ghost which haunts the garden shed. Morris and Co.'s actions confirm the garden shed and Alison's house as a dwelling-as-archive which still contains the memory

of Mart, and Alison's own past memories of the shed in her childhood home. Alison states: 'I might be temporarily muddled by the ingress of memory, some seepage from my early life. I feel I was kept in a shed. I feel I was chased there, that I ran in the shed for refuge and hiding place, I feel I was then knocked to the floor, because in the shed someone was waiting for me' (p. 317). Thus, the hidden living, dead, and memories are exposed in these in-between suburban places despite the neighbourhood's desire for them to remain secret.

Like Ghazzah Street in *EMOGS*, Admiral Drive is in the grips of rapid renovation and exponential building, and uncanny domesticity. *BB* shows another Mantelian in-between place where the rootless communities and exponential increases in new dwellings destabilise historical meaning even as traces of the past are retained. Mantel visits the margins of the modern cityscape as medium Alison Hart and her assistant/co-habitant Colette travel on motorways 'looping London' (p. 1) to attend psychic fairs in surrounding commuter towns. These commuter towns often have no identity or history due to their transient occupants and thus have a hinterland status. Within these suburban hinterlands, in Patricia Waugh and Jennifer Hodgson's words, a 'conurbative sprawl unfurls the distressed Georgian facades and the bright nursery acrylics that serve as camouflage for the loss of history and the loss of hope.'<sup>3</sup> The communities in *BB* then subvert Raymond Williams's 'knowable communities' in the novels of Jane Austen and George Elliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-1872) because of their lack of historical referent and transitory populace. Alison and Colette are social outcasts in suburban and marginal lands around London's orbital roads, a 'landscape running with outcasts and escapees, with Afghans and Turks and Kurds; with scapegoats, scarred with bottle and burn marks, limping from the cities with broken ribs' (ibid). Alison and Colette struggle to assimilate with the various populaces, communities, and suburban landscapes. *BB* explores the effect of transience on the dwelling-as-archive, and the difficulties archival agents such as Alison and Colette experience as they travel along London's orbital.

Mantel reimagines the suburban dwellings in the novel as the placeless and borderless backgrounds of the rootless societies in *BB*, which mirrors *TGOB*'s nomadic placelessness in London. These Mantel novels are preceded by several British novelists' investigations into the geo-spatial importance of British identity, including John Fowles, Julian Barnes, and Graham Swift. Mantel's gothic imagination and mobility usurps these novelists' pastoral revolution as a definitive feature of postmodernism in Britain. Rootlessness, the temporal turn of the late

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Waugh and Jennifer Hodgson, 'Introduction', *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 32. 3 (2012), 9-29, p. 20.



1990s to early 2000s, and the historical events of Princess Diana's death and the crumbling Twin Towers in 9/11 that feature in *BB* complicates feelings of belonging in British communities. Alison notes that the twentieth century 'seems another era now, another world: before the millennium, before the Queen's Jubilee, before the Twin Towers burned' (p. 140). Within the wasteland of motorways and suburban communities are the homeless, travellers, immigrants, the dead, and her characters' permanent fixity in transit: 'I spend my sodding life on the M25, with you throwing up in the passenger seat' (p. 254). Both familial and communal memory is constantly missing in this part of Britain as a result of the turn of the millennium and the development of London's suburbia.

In her psychic events, Alison claims 'it was not uncommon to find family memory so short, in these towns where nobody comes from, these south-eastern towns with their floating populations and their car parks where the centre should be. Nobody has roots here; and maybe they don't want to acknowledge roots, or recall their grimy places of origin and their illiterate foremothers up north' (pp. 16-17). Rootlessness is a consequence of a lack of stable belonging to towns and cities. However, the novel also poses that rootlessness and ahistorical communities are partly the consequence of the multiple historical events such as 9/11 and Princess Diana's death. The suburban hinterland acts as an in-between place where these feelings of displacement in history and disappearing memory are most keenly experienced. Mantel then writes about the defamiliarization of grounded British identities and a rejection of historical origins due to the increasing development of motorways and technology, and the uncertainty of suburban spaces as secure places of belonging.

In *BB*, the London orbital is a haunted landscape through which communities are rootless, 'beyond geography and history' (p. 44). Catherine Spooner has written extensively on the uncanny domestic and public places in *BB*. The M25 and suburban landscape are, Spooner states, 'a dead zone in which community is fragmented and memory lost, swallowed by an affectless consumer culture. Mantel's novel can be set against an earlier tradition of supernatural narrative, one in which ghosts are historically rooted in particular communities and locations.'<sup>4</sup> Spooner claims that 'Mantel's reinvention of ghostly geographies maps the dislocation of an entire society. By relocating the historically rooted urban and rural ghosts of folklore and Gothic narrative into suggestive non-place of the outer suburbs, Mantel blocks, or reverses, the traditional function of hauntings' (p. 83). Spooner also notes that *BB*'s dead question 'what does it mean to be haunted in a culture with no history? If a society has no

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<sup>4</sup> Spooner, p. 81.

interest in its personal and collective past, then in what form can that past return?’ (p. 81). As such, rootless communities and the suburban hinterlands they occupy are both haunted and not. Mantel re-imagines the dead as containing displaced historical knowledge.

Alison’s job as a medium often brings her into contact with these dead people as the rootless society attempts to find some trace of their past. When Alison thinks ‘she was a medium: dead people talked to her, and she talked back. She was a clairvoyant; she could see straight through the living, to their ambitions and secret sorrows, and tell you what they kept in their bedside drawers, and how they had travelled to the venue.’<sup>5</sup> Alison’s ‘prediction’ allows her to move between her characters’ public and private spaces and the dead that haunt them. As an archival agent she can recollect the displaced dead within a room. At the same time, the dead’s’ living relative’s memory recreates them into a semi-corporeal form that resembles the Arnoldian spectre. Alison embodies the dead so they can dwell within rooms. The room is a trope for the novel’s text acting as a space for historical knowledge to dwell. Alison states that ‘the skill is in isolating the voices, picking out one and letting the others recede – making them recede, forcing them back if need be, because there are some big egos in the next world. Then taking that voice, the dead voice you’ve chosen, and fitting it to the living body’ (p. 20). The spirit world is figured as an archive of voices which needs a corporeal form to retell the past. However, Alison is a crucial mediator between the spirit world, the living world, and the suburban hinterland because she can recollect the traces of the past for the rootless communities. Alison’s position as a transient and travelling psychic then allows her to move between public and private spaces to process missing traces of historical knowledge in communities where meaning is lost.

The London Orbital acts as a closed loop that contains and processes historical knowledge. Mediums then travel to isolate and embody missing histories, which means the medium community mimics this network of information and its capacity to marginalise:

For it was usual among the psychics to pass clients to each other, to work in little rings and clusters, trading off their specialities, their weaknesses and strengths [...] They pass notes to each other, table to table – titbits gleaned, snippets of personal information with which to impress the clients. And if for some reason you’re not on the inside track, you can get disrecommended, you can get forced out (p. 171).

The mediums filter their individual knowledge of clients to create a network to control information. Mediums then depend on the dead for both central and marginalised histories. The dead are, however, difficult to pin down for they exist in sideways glances, in ‘your field of peripheral vision,’ (p. 36) and in renovated places. For mediums to gain information from the

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<sup>5</sup> *BB*, p. 8.

dead and make it fit for their clients' consumption, they need 'to attune, I need to tune into the vibrations of spirit world' (p. 362). Geographic places and interior spaces are then considered carefully for the mediums to better interpret meaning from the dead, who are unreliable and over time experience 'a mingling and mincing and mixing of personality goes on, the fusing of personal memory with the collective' (p. 267). In *BB*, renovated and new-built dwellings are crucial spaces for mediums' attunement with spectres and Alison to interpret the past.

The Fig & Pheasant is a site of multiple architectural identities (similar to *Fludd's* Fetherhoughton's church) due to the multiple interior renovations that destabilises a fixed sense of history for the community. The pub had 'once been a coaching inn, and its frontage was still spattered with the exudates of a narrow, busy A-road. In the sixties it had stood near-derelict and draughty, with a few down-at-heel regulars huddled into a corner of its cavernous rooms. In the seventies it was brought out by a steakhouse chain and tudorised' (p. 360). The Fig & Pheasant's cosmetic renovations mean the space does not hold a coherent narrative history of architectural styles. The public house acts as a borderland where spectres such as Morris and Co. easily pass between the spirit and corporeal world. The spectre's movements also mimic Alison and Colette's transitory movements around London, which affirms the M25 as, Spooner states, 'a literal borderland, a zone in which the membrane between worlds is thin. [...] Inner and outer space are interpenetrable, Alison's ghosts manifesting physically in the landscape she inhabits.'<sup>6</sup> The sites of transit represented by the M25 and the Fig & Pheasant's function room (or anywhere Alison and her colleagues set up their psychic performances) are the perfect place for Alison and her colleague's readings because of their porous walls and lack of stable historical identities.

In the Fig & Pheasant, Alison's own body mimics the space phenomenologically so the spectres can inhabit the room. The phenomenological experience of haunting is revealed within this public place, for 'a loud humming began inside Al's head; it was the brush of skin as a thousand dead people twiddled their thumbs.'<sup>7</sup> The audiences' emotional responses to the past absorb into the walls, which Alison's body then receives as an affective embodiment. The past is then felt and re-experienced by Alison more keenly in both public and private spaces. Mantel writes Alison's embodiment of the past as a domestic chore for her to perform in public spaces, for 'the clients won't do their own dirty work. They want it contracted out. They write me a cheque for thirty quid and expect me to clean the drains' (p. 183). Spectres are in every dark

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<sup>6</sup> Spooner, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> *BB*, p. 363.

nook and cranny of the private houses Alison dwells. They invade domestic objects and unsettle the historical meanings attached to them. Alison has few possessions which confirms her rootlessness and desire to reduce her spectral baggage. The spectres' presence then questions Alison's sense of stable belonging in any dwelling because of the spectres' intrusive occupancy of her personal objects and their freedom to follow Alison into any new dwelling she moves through.

Mantel writes spectres in *BB* as able to:

Assume any form, however debased, ridiculous and filthy. That was why Al, unlike her mother, made sure to keep a clean house. She thought that she and Colette, between them, could keep down the lower sort, who drift in dust-rolls under beds, and make streaks and fingerprints on window-panes. They cloud mirrors, and sometimes vanish with a chortle: leaving the mirror clear and unkind. They clump in hairbrushes, and when you comb them out, you think, can this thin grey fuzz be mine? (pp. 270-71).

The spectres in *BB* use domestic objects as a local referent to embed themselves more deeply within the private dwellings since public places are slippery. Despite having no historical meaning embedded within them, the renovated rooms are at times a refuge for Alison from the public places and suburban gardens. The spectres haunting of domestic objects and window fixtures allows them some access, which is not replicated in London's redeveloped orbital roads. Spooner notes that the spectres experience displacement and rootlessness because of urban planning, which is similar to the living community's displacement from the past. In Spooner's words, they 'appear stymied and frustrated by modern transport links; unable to cross the roads, congregating in the empty pockets of space created by railway bridges and car parks, hovering at the entrance to tube stations but not going inside. They are disorientated by modern urban planning, trying to move on but stuck in a kind of spiritual traffic jam.'<sup>8</sup> For Mantel, the presence of the unsettled dead and spectres is because of the new forms of access and mobility presented by the motorways and the English Channel.

The Channel Tunnel began construction in 1988 and opened in 1994. Mantel's novels enter a dialectic between British national belonging in geographic isolation and the psychic transformation which was, Mantel states in her essay 'No Passes or Documents Needed', 'made possible by engineers.'<sup>9</sup> Mantel further states that there is no other 'government transport policy that reaches so far into the imagination as the Channel tunnel. Our sense of ourself is altered, and for once, not by some great discontinuity, not by a fracture but by a process of linking up, of connection. There is [...] no traumatic parting from one's own solid earth: only the business of changing platforms at a London station' (p. 99). An insular British identity is

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<sup>8</sup> Spooner, p. 86.

<sup>9</sup> 'No Passes or Documents are Needed', p. 100.

challenged after 1988, and Mantel states ‘we are all, as I have tried to show, members of imagined communities. In the century ahead, shall we transcend nationalism, or accommodate it?’ (p. 105). Mantel then reimagines the insular British identity as a threat to local English history and infrastructure in *BB*. The imagined new-builds in *BB* embody a fractured sense of British security in dwelling places and history. Mantel claims that the fractured sense of history is a modern English sensibility, for ‘the English sense of identity is beginning to fracture [...] Generations of emigration from the former empire have made Britain a pluralist, multi-ethnic, multi-faith society, and now, like the rest of western Europe, she is host to waves of refugees from disaster-stricken territories to the east’ (p. 104). *BB* then satirises the fears of the displaced English populations through the emphasis of an unstable and ahistorical environment, and through the presence of the displaced dead.

Alison’s spectres are dislocated by progressive urban planning: the past does not travel easily in modern archives. The renovated and new-build dwellings are not suitable archives of the past. Spectres and memories are either displaced, their places of habitation or haunting are re-styled (like the Fig & Pheasant), and any modern space are reconstructed. Morris and Co. and Alison, who are permanently displaced, must keep moving to ensure historical knowledge survives modernity’s dislocating effect. Alison’s lived experience of uncanny domesticity and rootlessness underlines her desire to escape from public and private spaces that signify historical meaning. Spooner notes that ‘Alison herself, all too aware of the spirits congregating in any given place, actively seeks out places that are devoid of history. The corporate hotels and new-build housing developments of south-east England are her ideal environment, their lack of identity a benefit rather than a drawback.’<sup>10</sup> The in-between places enable Alison’s freedom from her clients’ past and her own spectres of Morris and his friends. Colette and Alison then enter the suburban hinterlands of Admiral Drive as, in Waugh and Hodgson’s words, ‘an infotech and city commuter estate that Colette sees as ‘investment’ more than home, a pension pot in a world that is unremittingly future.’<sup>11</sup> However, the novel’s suburbia both orients and disorients its characters.

Andy Miller states that suburbia is ‘the place we return to every night after work or where our parents still live [...] when suburbia features in British fiction, if it features at all, it is usually as somewhere that isn’t the countryside and isn’t the city, a location which only exists

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<sup>10</sup> Spooner, p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Waugh and Hodgson, p. 16.

to be escaped from. In Britain, the suburbs are always small-minded, bourgeois, suffocating.’<sup>12</sup> Suburbia is an intersection between domestic and commercial, a place characters in British fiction want to leave. Julian Barnes states it is a place ‘where something as well as nothing may happen. A big something, which turns out to command and oversee his entire life. I like this idea of a pale background wash, against which the rich colours of emotional action can show up more dramatically.’<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Dominic Head claims that British suburban fiction is part of a post-war ‘conviction that suburban life is deadening, unimaginative, representative of a low or restricted common denominator.’<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, ‘if the attitudes associated with suburbia are familiar, its actual geographical location is hard to pin down. The reason, of course, is that suburbia constantly relocates itself’ (p. 213). Suburbia is a place where no one belongs and from which people are constantly displaced.

British fictions which explore non-belonging in suburbia include Julian Barnes’s *Metroland* (1980), Hanif Kureishi’s *Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Jane Gardam’s *The Queen of the Tambourine* (1991), and Nicola Barker’s *Darkmans* (2007). However, there is a difference between Barnes’ *Metroland*, Kureishi’s *Buddha of Suburbia*, and Barker’s *Darkmans*. Kathryn Bird states that Barker’s *Darkmans* is in Ashford ‘known as ‘the Gateway to Europe’ because of its position in the Channel Tunnel Network.’<sup>15</sup> Like Mantel’s uncanny modernity, Barker’s Ashford is haunted by John Scogin, Edward IV’s malevolent court jester. Ashford has conflicting layers and is, as the novel says, ‘unnavigable on foot.’<sup>16</sup> The town then has different organisations of spaces and is a ‘crazy mish-mash of through-roads and round-roads and intersection and dead-ends – Business Parks, Superstores, train stations, train tracks – which slice blithely through all the other stuff, apparently aiding it on the one hand, yet completely disregarding it on the other’ (pp. 398-99). Kureishi’s novel, meanwhile, features the permanent in-between place within suburbia from the immigrant perspective. Contradictory ‘images of London through conflicts among racial groups and among different generations and economic

<sup>12</sup> Andy Miller, ‘Glorious Suburbia’, *Boundless*, (2019), [last accessed 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020], <<https://unbound.com/boundless/2019/08/02/looking-for-suburbia/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Julian Barnes, ‘Julian Barnes on Suburbia: ‘I have no sense of a Great Tufnell Park novel inside me’, *The Guardian*, (2018), [last accessed 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/feb/03/julian-barnes-on-suburbia-to-be-a-citizen-of-nowhere-much-is-to-be-a-citizen-of-the-world->>.

<sup>14</sup> Dominic Head, ‘Country and Suburbia’, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.188- 223, p. 218.

<sup>15</sup> Kathryn Bird, ‘“Weren’t All True Nomads at Their Happiest in Limbo?”: Hauntings in Non-Places in Hilary Mantel’s *Beyond Black* and Nicola Barker’s *Darkmans*’, *Landscapes of Liminality: Between Space and Place*, ed. Dara Downey, Ian Kinane and Elizabeth Parker (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), pp. 111-134, p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> Nicola Barker, *Darkmans* (London: Fourth Estate, 2007), pp. 399.

classes within the same group [...] displays the gaps opened up by perceptions of London as both a local and transnational space.’<sup>17</sup> Like the houses ‘of the South London suburbs in which Kureishi grew up and in which his novel is partly set, this London is semi-detached (which means it is also semi-attached) from the nation and its ideas of Britishness’ (p. 227). The sense of a semi-attached Britain is also reflected in *BB* with its characters’ lack of attachment to the London orbital and new-builds with their roughly renovated architecture.

Renovation in *Buddha of Suburbia* is an English passion. Kureishi’s protagonist Karim Amir, a mixed-race teenager, states:

All of the house had been ‘done up; One had a new porch, another double-glazing, ‘Georgian’ windows or a new door with brass fittings. Kitchens had been extended, lofts converted, walls removed, garages inserted. This was the English passion, not for self-improvement or culture or wit, but for DIY, Do It Yourself, for bigger and better houses with more mod cons, the painstaking accumulation of comfort and, with it, status – the concrete display of earned cash. Display was the game.<sup>18</sup>

Karim explores the plasticity of English identities and dwellings, which affects his sense of belonging and place: ‘emerged from two old histories. But I don’t care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it’ (p. 3). As a homogenous model of living and the bourgeois ideals of homemaking and security, suburbia is resisted by Kureishi and Barker. Dominic Head argues that the crucial issue within suburban literature is:

The fact that there is actually something unplanned in the configuration of suburban living, unpredictable consequences of even the most rigorous (or cynical) social planning [...] and] a mode of living shared by so many people can surely only be seen as trivial if social life is trivial in general. And can such a common mode of living really be homogenous to the core? Perhaps a more diverse culture is to be found beneath the surface of uniformity.<sup>19</sup>

Notably, the diverse culture Mantel depicts in *BB* includes the ghosts and spectres of people Alison has brought into her new home and the insects and dead babies/ bodies lying under the house. The new-build dwellings in *BB* unsettle the English sense of a common mode of suburban dwelling experience, reflecting Kureishi’s and Barker’s fictions.

The new-builds in *BB*, with their acrylic styles, are unstable in-between places. Each new-build is different in design and name, ‘there were these house types: the Collingwood, the Frobisher, the Beatty, the Mountbatten, the Rodney and the Hawkyns,’ yet they have uniform

<sup>17</sup> John Clement Ball, *Imagining London: Postcolonial Fiction and the Transnational Metropolis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 226.

<sup>18</sup> Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1990), pp. 74-75.

<sup>19</sup> Head, p. 218.

physical structures so any ‘gob-ons’ promote an uncanny effect of multiple, doppelganger dwelling.<sup>20</sup> Like the Rodney, Collingwood has decorative windows with nautical knot motifs and other gob-ons, gables, and spindles that ‘would fall off within the first six months’ (p. 227). *BB*’s criticism of new-builds echoes Fredric Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), which Sarah Sharma states presents non-places (or ‘spaces of transit’) as ‘denigrated for their homogenous architecture, their purified and pacified interiors, and lack of local referents to situate the traveller.’<sup>21</sup> Rootlessness in *BB*’s English communities is apparent in these suburban households. They resemble the mission houses of Mantel’s *ACOC* as transitional and identity-less spaces. However, the new-builds are falling apart as they are being built, for inside the house, ‘there were a few mistakes, like a couple of the internal doors being hung the wrong way round, and the Adam-style fireplace being off-centre’ with their kitchen ceiling falling in.<sup>22</sup>

Much like Mantel’s renovated house in ‘Can These Bones Live?’, the new-builds express a plastic sense of the past. Alison describes the building sites around Collingwood as a wasteland where historical meaning is unseen and inaccessible for interpretation. The nautical themed development site is on a landscape where secrets are buried: ‘towards the main road to Guildford, she could see a hedge, a miscarried foetus dug in beneath it. She could see ghost horses, huddled in the shadow of a wall. It was an indifferent place; no better nor worse than most others’ (p. 218). History is underground, and Alison is haunted by the past that inhabits the landscape even in the new-build. Admiral Drive’s landscape echoes the hidden historical artefact within the floors of Aldershot. Alison’s childhood home had buried dead babies: ‘You’d go in and the floor would be all rolling over with little dead babies, you wouldn’t know where to put your feet’ (p. 368). The shed in the garden of Alison’s new-build is an architectural mnemonic occurrence, for it ‘had a guest in the shed’ (p. 292) in the form of the homeless Mart. The shed prompts a phenomenological remembrance of Alison’s early life, which means Alison’s desire for a house without history leads her to confront her past.

Comparing the clean new-build with its cosmetic granite kitchen tops and the dirty, haunted floors of Aldershot breaks the borders between Alison’s past and present. No matter where she dwells, she always brings her spectres into whatever space she inhabits. Spooner points out that ‘Alison and Colette’s bland, homogenous Barratt-style house should be the

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<sup>20</sup> *BB*, p. 216.

<sup>21</sup> Sarah Sharma, ‘Baring Life and Lifestyle in the Non-Place’, *Cultural Studies*, 23.1 (2009), 129-48, p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> *BB*, p. 228.



antithesis of the haunted home, but its hastily built and shoddily finished architecture readily offers itself up for possession by malevolent spirits. The flaws in planning and construction rapidly become indistinguishable from the depredations of its resident ghosts.’<sup>23</sup> The new-builds are a modern haunted house that invites Morris and Co.’s return. Meanwhile, Alison reimagines Aldershot as an architecturally driven memoryscape. Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes claim memoryscape is ‘a complex and vibrant plane upon which memories emerge, are contested, transform, encounter other memories, mutate, and multiply.’<sup>24</sup> Spectres consistently displace memories found in dwellings, creating an memoryscape that exists in *BB* only in private dwellings.

The suburban landscapes and its seepages then pose a threat to Alison’s memoryscape and private dwelling at Admiral Drive, which parallels Alison’s personal threat of spectres:

There are terrorists in the ditches, knives clenched between their teeth. There are fundis hoarding fertiliser, there are fanatics brewing bombs on brownfield sites, and holy martyrs digging storage pits where fiends have melted into the soil. There are citadels underground, there are potholes and sunken shafts, there are secret chambers in the hearts of men, sometimes of women too.<sup>25</sup>

Alison’s figuration of a haunted suburban network then, in Amy Kaplan’s words, ‘does the seductive work of creating a framework for seeing and experiencing the world in a way that fuses the macro level of global and national politics with the intimate world of home and psyche.’<sup>26</sup> To dwell, Alison Hart then finds, in Archie Cornish’s words, ‘is to go deep into the ground, or far back to a uterine darkness.’<sup>27</sup> Self-knowledge in *BB* comes from remembering within the private domestic and not the communities on London’s periphery. Alison Hart states ‘remember your roots. Remember where you started’ which shows her priority over a memoryscape than an actual domestic suburban dwelling.<sup>28</sup> Alison’s comparisons between the new-builds and her remembered dwelling reveal that the dwelling experiences in Aldershot and Suburbia are no different from each other, which means the experience of haunting is, in fact, a common mode of living.

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<sup>23</sup> Spooner, p. 87.

<sup>24</sup> Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes, ‘Introduction: Surveying Global Memoryscapes: The Shifting Terrain of Public Memory Studies’, *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* ed. Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), pp. 1-26, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> *BB*, p. 450.

<sup>26</sup> Amy Kaplan, ‘In the Name of Security’, *Review of International American Studies*, 3.3- 4.1 (2008), 15-25, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Archie Cornish, ‘“His Midas Touch”: Building and Writing in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser and Seamus Heaney’, *Architectural Space and the Imagination: Houses in Literature and Art from Classical to Contemporary*, ed. Jane Griffiths and Adam Hanna (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 149-66, p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> *BB*, p. 9.

Through new-builds of suburbia, *BB* views all architectural structures (foundations included) as contingent. The present and past cannot easily coexist in suburbia unless imagination is employed to mediate such unsettlement. Spectres are metaphors for Mantel's imagination in these reimagined/renovated dwellings. The spectres embed themselves into objects that lack historical meaning and in any in between places to fill in the missing gaps in the dwelling-as-archive, which Alison cannot access. However, because the suburban house represents a plastic sense of dwelling and an archived past, the dead need an alternate archive to be contained. The dead's possession of objects helps the living remember and reconstruct them as semi-corporeal beings, which is possible in the in-between places of suburbia.

### I. 'To Vanishing Point': The Body and Technology as an Alternate Archive

Mantel's *ACOC* asks, 'do you think that your body has memories that your mind doesn't have access to?'<sup>29</sup> In these fictions, the body is another container of memory and the past, with *BB* presenting Alison's body as a complex archive of the dead. Mantel's *BB* thus continues with alternate forms of the archive which interrogate dominant discourses on historical narration. As well as the suburban Admiral's drive acting as the dwelling-as-archive, *BB* explores the body as a porous archive which struggles to contain the past and memory. While the suburban house presents a plastic sense of the past as a dwelling-as-archive, Alison's body has an affective response towards the past which allows her to have a better sense of the dead and her own self-recollection of the past. Alison, however, prefers the new-builds of suburbia because 'she hates history: unless it's on the television, safe behind glass' which means the dwelling-as-archive offers her the distance from the past that she wishes.<sup>30</sup> However, Admiral Drive also reminds Alison of her sense of rootlessness and memories of her childhood at Aldershot. The dead's mission to re-join the living world and suburbia leads Alison to then confront the body's capacity to contain the past and recollect (and lose) memory more acutely than the dwelling-as-archive.

Alison's body is also an important archive to mediate the dead's wishes for her clients. Her body is malleable and capacious to better contain the dead for her clients. Alison states: 'I try my best with the diets, she said to herself; but I have to house so many people. My flesh is so capacious; I am a settlement, a place of safety, a bombproof shelter' (p. 347). Alison figures

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<sup>29</sup> Mantel, *A Change Of Climate* (London: Viking Press, 1994), p. 176.

<sup>30</sup> *BB*, p. 41.

her body as a safe place for the dead. The dead often contain historical meaning for Alison's paying public because familial archives are missing or have gaps in the growing suburban wasteland on the outer edges of London. Spiritualism uneasily reunites the rootless communities with their familial pasts. Stewart claims that mediumship and communication with the dead in *BB*:

Expresses desires and anxieties similar to those reflected in the recent upsurge of interest in family history; the latter is now facilitated by the increased availability of online resources, and the medium can function as another research tool. The medium is the archive embodied; he or she can give voice to those forebears who would otherwise only exist as faded photographs or dusty documents.<sup>31</sup>

Alison is an archival agent who relies on her body for mediation and to find out information. Alison Hart's work as a psychic allows the dead to speak through her, and her access to her client's familial past grants her authority over a spectral archive. The ability requires organisation for the 'dead have no sense of time, no clear sense of place, they are beyond geography and history, she tells her clients, till someone like herself tunes in.'<sup>32</sup> However, Alison is also highly sensitive to the emotions in the room, as a requirement for the dead to speak in her performances is her clients' guards dropping. Alison claims that she doesn't censor what she hears from the dead. She states 'I don't ask, do you need it? I don't ask, does it make sense? I do my duty, I do what I'm here for. I put it out there, so the person it applies to can pick it up' (p. 27). Alison's duty to pass on the information from the dead means she must absorb the dead and her client's emotions. Colette notes that Alison 'will have to regurgitate or else digest all the distress that she's sucked in from the carpet and the walls. By the end of the evening she'll be sick to her stomach from other people's chemotherapy' (p. 29). Alison's body is a highly sensitive container of the living and the dead.

The dead directly influence Alison's body, which Alison interprets as a phenomenological understanding of the past: 'some entity was tweaking her left knee, some desolate soul was trying to hold her hand; not now, kids, she said, give me a break' (p. 203). Within *BB*, the imaginary dead and the corporeal bodies, in Karin Kukkonen and Henrik Skov Nielsen's words, 'are made to bleed into each other in subtle ways [...] demonstrating that acts of fictionalisation can be easily extended beyond the merging of historical and imagined events and characters.'<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Morris and Co. haunt Alison's body without her consent or control and actively prevent her from recording and retelling the past. Alison tells Colette, who

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<sup>31</sup> Victoria Stewart, 'A Word in Your Ear: Mediumship and Subjectivity in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*', *Critique*, 50.3 (2009), 293-307, p. 298.

<sup>32</sup> *BB*, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> Karin Kukkonen and Henrik Skov Nielsen, 'Fictionality: Cognition and Exceptionality', *Poetics Today*, 39.3, (2018), 473-94, p. 483.

had set up the recording sessions, ‘can we switch the tape off, please? Morris is threatening me. He doesn’t like me talking about the early days. He doesn’t want it recorded.’<sup>34</sup> Alison must house these kinds of ghosts because they also represent knowledge of her personal past that she cannot access. Alison then questions her memory as a reliable source to understand her childhood, stating ‘you don’t know anything but lies’ (p. 246) to Morris and Co. who constantly tease her with missing information. Thus, Alison’s body is often vulnerable and not always the safe place for the dead, and so their information easily disappears. Alison’s body is an archive of the communal and personal past because of her access to familial spirits. However, this alternate archive can be compromised by client’s emotions, the dead’s memory of old injuries, and Morris and Co’s haunting.

Such cognitive distribution of knowledge in bodies and families reaffirms what André Lepecki describes as how ‘the body becomes archive and archive a body.’<sup>35</sup> Michel de Certeau suggests that the body became a legible picture of knowledge between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, when ‘thanks to the unfolding of the body before the doctor’s eyes, what is seen and what is known of it can be superimposed or exchanged (be translated from one to the other). The body is a cipher that awaits deciphering.’<sup>36</sup> The picture of the body constructed by the doctor transforms via translation from a spatial organisation into ‘a semantic organisation of a vocabulary – and vice versa – is the transformation of the body into extension, into open interiority like a book, or like a silent corpse’ (ibid). The organisation of categorising the body is an archiving process that requires the doctor to write it down. Certeau’s body-as-cipher analogy relies on the supposition that the past, like the body, is placed under observation to determine its (often lost) meaning. However, Mantel’s archival agents often struggle to access private thoughts and personal memory in bodies.

*BB* then examines how a spiritual medium, who has no limitations in the collection of memory, thoughts, emotions, and the dead, is both an affective and ineffectual archival agent. Alison’s body is a porous archive of the dead that phenomenologically experiences historical knowledge. Alison’s head is ‘stuffed with memories. I can’t help what’s in there. And with Morris and his mates, it’s damage that attracts them. They love that, some types of spirits.’<sup>37</sup> Alison’s inability to filter ‘useless’ or ‘incorrect’ information from the dead, and continuous

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<sup>34</sup> *BB*, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup> André Lepecki, ‘The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances’, *Dance Research Journal*, 42.2 (2010), 28-48, p. 31.

<sup>36</sup> Certeau, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> *BB*, p. 372.

absorption of her clients' emotions and the dead's memories, shows the trouble with collecting all kinds of information because they physically impact the body. Wim Weymans claims that historians 'eventually come up against the borders of their models' because they find 'mistakes, deviations, incoherences, and coincidences because they are applying scientific models to rebellious materials.'<sup>38</sup> The body as an archive for the dead and the past does not fully follow Giannachi's premise of (a)live archives, which are 'based on a performative and post-human model of the body, that is a body which is networked, distributed, augmented, hybrid, and under constant surveillance.'<sup>39</sup> Mantel's 'post-human' lies in *BB*'s fictional representation of the dead as disrupters of memories and bodies. Alison's body is a particularly porous example of how the dead enter and exit the borders of objects. The dead's fluidity makes them unreliable as does the information that Alison passes on. *BB*'s dead's reputation for faithful or accurate knowledge is unreliable, and as an archival agent, Alison must navigate the spaces and lies. Alison's physical interaction with history is never an easy navigation. The idea of control over memory, rather than the past, make an archive for the rootless and suburban community in *BB* unachievable.

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida states the political disadvantages a lack of control over the archive presents, for 'there is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory. Effective democratisation can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.'<sup>40</sup> A lack of power over the archive (whether it is in the Hunterian museum or Alison's body) affects the archival agent's perception of personal and communal memory, which affirms the rootlessness experienced in *BB*, because 'nobody has roots here.'<sup>41</sup> The informal documents that museums may lose or ignore, or the immaterial memories the body cannot control, then question the prioritisation of information in 'formal' archives and who exactly is empowered by historical production.

The two archives Alison can access are her body and the spectral world. These archives overlap when Morris and Co. decide they want corporeal bodies again. Alison notes that 'that was why he kept her up at night, pawing and pulling at her – not because he wanted sex, but because he was plotting to be born, to be carried inside some unknowing hostess' (p. 205).

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<sup>38</sup> Wim Weymans, 'Michel De Certeau and the Limits of Historical Representation', *History and Theory*, 43.2 (2004), 161-78, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> Giannachi, p. 153.

<sup>40</sup> Derrida and Prenowitz, 'Archive Fever' p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> *BB*, p. 17.

Historical knowledge becomes porous in either archive. The breakdown in archival distinctions increases the slippages of historical meaning. Morris and Co. find that their unreliability concerning memory and knowledge quickly erases their participation in the archives of the body and spiritual world. Meanwhile, Alison's body is important for self-knowledge and to recollect the past. Alison uses Vedic palmistry to access her memories, massaging her foot to 'go back to myself, back to Aldershot, back to the dog runs and the scrubby ground, back to the swampish waters of the womb, and maybe back before that: back to where there is no Alison, only a space where Alison will be' (p. 417). In massaging her feet, Alison accesses an in-between place where she 'neither hears nor sees. The world has no scent or savour' (p. 436). In this state of memory recollection, the past and the present can coexist within her body. However, the past is (re)experienced and not recorded which again questions the reliability of the body as a material archive even as it helps Alison recall her own past. Thus, *BB* retains the scepticism of a historiographic metafiction even as the novel offers a neo-phenomenological look into recollecting memory.

Due to the unknowability of reliable information from the dead, *BB* also examines Colette and Alison's lack of control and ability to faithfully record the past. Alison's body simulates a recording device. Alison confirms that her clients should think of her 'as your answering machine' (p. 26) for the spirit world. In comparing the human body as a recording machine, *BB* also examines the effect of technology as a growing body of knowledge in the millennium, and how it is used to aid Morris and Co's attempts to regain a corporeal form. Alison and Colette's cassette tapes are a crucial example of how the past is given a body. In examining the methods of recording (through whichever medium) *BB* then follows contemporary metafictional writing. In Waugh's words, metafictional writing is 'both a response and a contribution to an even more throughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures. The materialist, positivist and empiricist world-view on which realistic fiction is premised no longer exists.'<sup>42</sup> *BB* reveals that the material recording devices and archives are similarly impermanent structures that helps the dead to easily transition between the spirit and material world.

The dead's easy transition through technology contrasts with an uneasy transition into the millennium and technological advances felt in *BB*. Colette's attempt to collect Alison's past through spoken word also reflects an uneasy transition from oral narrative to print material.

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<sup>42</sup> Waugh, p. 7.

Colette talks 'about writing a book. How hard could it be? Al made tape recordings of her clients, so wasn't it logical, to the larger world, to tape-record Al? Then all she would need to do would be transcribe, edit, tighten up here and there, make some chapter headings.'<sup>43</sup> The introduction of technology offers a new ability to filter, edit, and change Alison's account of her past to sell to the public, which then proposes cassettes and other recording devices (not including Alison's body) as an easier archive to control, edit, and maintain.

Colette's desire to record extends to her own past, and thus resembles Isabel Field's aim in *VP* to record everything least memory fails. Colette states 'I can't keep on losing it, she thought, losing chunks of my life, years at a time, Or who will I be, when I'm old? I should write a book for me, too. I need a proof of some sort, a record of what goes down' (p. 96). The conversation allows Colette to learn about Alison's childhood at Aldershot. Victoria Stewart states that 'the tape recorder serves as a mechanised counterpart to Alison's communications with the dead.'<sup>44</sup> However, the recordings experience interference in the form of other voices and birds. In listening into the recordings 'they found that, just as Al had foreseen, other items had intruded. Someone speaking, fast and urgent, in what might be Polish. A twittering, like small birds in a wood. Nightingales, Alison said unexpectedly. Once, a woman's irate voice cut through Alison's mutter.'<sup>45</sup> The multiple voices and sounds within the cassette tapes render the record senseless, alluding to the presence of spectres and their ability to wipe out historical knowledge and interfere with memory and recollection. The new archive that technology offers in *BB* is thus as fallible as the body and the dwelling-as-archive. These archives then offer an illusion of control over knowledge, the past, and the voices of the dead.

In *BB*, the dead want to be heard and remembered. However, the spectres of notable historical figures are brushed aside as frivolous, for 'nothing derails an evening so fast as royalty. They expect to make the running, they choose the topic, they talk and you're supposed to listen [...] Ruthless, she gave the whole tribe the brush off: Margaret Rose, Princess Di, Prince Albert, and a faint old cover who might be some sort of Plantagenet' (p. 34). The historical spectres believe their voices still dominate the corporeal world. However, the famous spectres are unreliable sources of the past, for 'when famous people pass they attract spirit-imposters, just as on this side you have lookalikes and body doubles' (p. 150). The identities of the dead are always suspect. The audience's lack of interest in these historical figures also

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<sup>43</sup> *BB*, p. 95.

<sup>44</sup> Stewart, p. 300.

<sup>45</sup> *BB*, p. 96.

complicates their identities. *BB* then considers the relationship Alison's audience has with their personal and the historical past and how that affects Alison's sense of multiple archived pasts and her own.

Mantel states in her 2020 *Guardian* article that 'in Alison's demonstrations, all sorts of royal figures go flitting past, doing their darndest to come through, and being greeted with non-recognition. I'm not saying the public is uninterested in history, but they think it's a locked box called truth to which only historians have the key.'<sup>46</sup> Alison appears to have sole access and 'the key' to multiple archives: the private ones and public archive. Her access is through the objects that she uses for her trade. Objects such as crystal balls are potent signifiers of history because the dead can occupy them. Alison's crystal ball is one such object that focuses on the domestic importance when representing history: 'they have no magic in themselves. Power is contained in domestic objects, in the familiar items you handle every day. You can look into the side of an aluminium pan and see a face that's not your own.'<sup>47</sup> The role of material and technological objects in *BB* emphasises the distortions of familial and historical knowledge in the present day, but also of the necessity of objects for the dead to regain corporeal form to re-join the real world.

Technology such as computers and cassette tapes initially offer more objects for the dead to easily inhabit. Colette sets about modernising Alison's psychic business by introducing computers, websites, and television appearances to generate revenue while also cementing Alison as an identity in the modern world. Mart, in comparison, escapes technology and becoming a digitalised record, which correlates with his homeless status. He states: 'I'm an outloop. I'm on a list, but I'm not computerate yet. I think, the list I was on, I think they lost it' (p. 299). Mart is barred out of everywhere because he is outside of an official or digitalised record. *BB* reveals a distinct dynamic between having a home and being in an archive, which helps giving people a sense of place.

Since the computer generates historical narratives, technological and industrial modernisation in the corporeal world disrupts the spectres sense of place because they are not digitalised in an archive. The dead experience a sense of homelessness:

The bewildered dead clustered among the skips outside the burger bars, clutching door keys in their hands, or queueing with their lunch boxes where the gates of small factories once stood, where machines once whirred and chugged behind sooty panes of old glass. There are thousands of them out there, so

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<sup>46</sup> Hilary Mantel, 'Being a Novelist is No Fun. But Fun Isn't High on My List', *The Guardian* (2020), [date last accessed: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2021], <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/oct/04/hilary-mantel-wolf-hall-mantel-pieces>>.

<sup>47</sup> *BB*, p. 268.



pathetic and lame-brained that they can't cross the road to get where they're going, dithering on the kerbs of new arterial roads and bypasses, as the vehicles swish by (pp. 265-66).

The dead are displaced in geography and from their communities. Their struggle with the modernising present means they frequently find themselves lost in places they do not recognise. Head states that 'if the attitudes associated with suburbia are familiar, its actual geographical location is hard to pin down. The reason, of course, is that suburbia constantly relocates itself.'<sup>48</sup> Mantel alludes to the spectre's further breakdown of identity and their memory due to the placelessness of the spiritual world. Alison calls the spirit world 'that eventless realm, neither cold nor hot, neither hilly nor flat, where the dead, each at their own best age and marooned in an eternal afternoon, pass the ages with sod all going on.'<sup>49</sup> Though spectres can pass between the borders of London and spiritual, private and public worlds, they cannot maintain their identity, memory, or historical knowledge.

Throughout *BB*, spectres seek the right medium (whether it is bodies, rooms, or cassette tapes) to inhabit and preserve their memory. They are unreliable as sources of familial memory because of their memory lapse: 'the perfidy of the dead, their partial, penetrative nature, their way of dematerialising and leaving bits of themselves behind or entangling themselves with your inner organs. She talked about her sharp eyesight and voices she heard in the wall. About the dead's propensity to fib and confabulate. Their selfish, trivial outlook. Their general cluelessness' (p. 153). Alison notes that, as well as a propensity to lie or forget, the dead pretend to be other people and take on identities such as Princess Diana. Technology then replaces spectres as meaning-making system because spectres cannot be relied on to reconstruct memory.

The rootless communities of the London Orbital are paralleled by the spirit world's' rootless identities, which is 'not [an] intentional fraud, it's more that a mingling and mincing and mixing of personality goes on, the fusing of personal memory with the collective' (p. 267). Communal memory is not preserved in archives because both spectres and corporeal people are in constant transition. As remnants of the past, the spectres attempt to preserve themselves in objects because their sense of personal memory and subjectivity is muddled and blurred in the spirit world. However, spectres such as Morris and Co., who are the only ones who can remember Alison's past, are slowly losing their voice within the cassette tape recordings: 'The tapes still gave them trouble. Sometimes they would find their last session had been replaced

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<sup>48</sup> Head, 'Country and Suburbia', p. 213.

<sup>49</sup> *BB*, p. 43.

entirely by gibberish. Sometimes their conversation was overlain by squeaks, scrapes and coughs, as if a winter audience were tuning up for a symphony concert' (p. 258). Voices from the tapes present a distorted oral tradition of the rootless communal memory in *BB*. Voices are hidden transmissions of communication and historical knowledge. Stewart claims that voices are crucial for historical inquiry 'because it issues from the body and is separate from it, a quality both emphasised and exploited by the telephone, the voice provides more convincing proof of the presence of one apparently absent than the type of material manifestations' which are common in medium performances.<sup>50</sup> The cassette tapes then both preserve and erase oral tradition, and thus the dead. *BB* then compares with *TGOB* and *Fludd* in the use of oral tradition to better preserve the past.

Alison's body is another interference to this recording process and the voices. Alison states that 'Yes, I admit we record the wrong numbers. And we record the nuisance calls.'<sup>51</sup> Technology cannot consign the past easily into an archive because Alison's bodily archive and her mediumistic powers interfere: 'your computer goes on the blink whenever I come near it, and we're still not getting anywhere with the recordings, are we? The machine plays back tapes that aren't even in it, we get material coming through from the year before last. All the tapes are speaking on top of each other, it's like a compost heap' (p. 320). The interplay between the material and immaterial archives follows the Foucauldian archive, which contains all statements of events. However, the multiple archives in *BB* appear to cancel each other out which puts historical meaning, evidence of the past, and the dead at risk.

The spectres' presence in the tapes and Alison's performances are part of the immaterial archive that fights corporeal bodies for space in the material archives such as the dwelling-as-archive and Alison's body. The spectres want to join all archives present in *BB*. The distortions in familial and spiritual historical knowledge are, however, posed as a 'breakdown in communication' (p. 27). Morris and Co. emphasise the ellipsis of historical knowledge within the spirit world. These spectres are inverted archival agents that find and filter the dead. Spectres and their relationship to the spirit world are allegories of the digitised archive, with the dead being collected and archived by spectres. Morris states: 'What is our mission? It is to track down useless and ugly people and recycle them, [...] if you don't go through the proper procedure and your paperwork all straight he will take a pencil and ram it through your earhole

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<sup>50</sup> Stewart, p. 299.

<sup>51</sup> *BB*, pp. 26-27.

and swivel it about so your brain goes twiddle-de-dee' (p. 384). Morris points to a documentation process similar to Miss Anaemia's interactions with the DHSS in *VP*.

The dead's obliterated subjectivity means they cannot provide the correct identification.

Morris states:

We're chasing out all spooks what are asylum seekers, derelicts, vagrants and refugees, and clearing out all spectres unlawfully residing in attics, lofts, cupboards, cracks in the pavement and holes in the ground. All spooks with no identification will be removed. It ain't good enough to say you've nowhere to go. It ain't good enough to say that your documents fell through the hole in your breeches. It's no good saying that you've forgot your name (p. 386).

Even in the spiritual world, the marginalised dead are silenced by instantaneous archiving as characters (both dead and alive) attempt to record their present. Tom Chadwick and Pieter Vermeulen claim that digitisation and instantaneous archiving via cloud and Google searches 'stores the present even as it unfolds, it also actively produces the present and the future [...] the archive has extended beyond its traditional institutions and users.'<sup>52</sup> Chadwick and Vermeulen argue that instantaneous archiving has infiltrated all parts of life. Information:

Assaults us in abundant digital flows that demand to be managed rather than recovered, the archive no longer functions as a heroic site of retrieval (as in recovered histories) or a rarified place of affective truth (as in the historical romance); nor is the diagnosis (which informed historiographical metafiction) that our access to the past (or even the present) is filtered by textual and other intermediaries even remotely remarkable anymore (p. 3).

Mantel engages with the problematics of data management via her historical research by presenting *BB* as having a palimpsest of archives – full of disparate voices, tapes, bodies, spectres, and memories. The attempts to collect knowledge and voices then reveal that, in Head's words, 'the excavation of truth beneath the surface is a familiar process in many representations of suburbia, a process that usually involves peeling away the veneer of civilised respectability to uncover the turmoil of repression or violence seething beneath.'<sup>53</sup> Mantel's works act as in-between places that renegotiate the forms and functions of historical fiction and the multiple alternate archives that contest for space and for the collection of information. However, because these works also have alternate archives that cancel each other out, archives introduce silences and erasures.

Through the examination of the body and technological objects, Mantel alludes to the transmission of historical knowledge as solely dependent on uninterrupted communication and language. Pollard and Carpenter note that within Mantel's fictions:

Language too is just another fiction, another construction to pin down meaning, to fix interpretation, to stop the world inexorably spinning away. It is this recognition of the impossibility of fixing anything that characterises all of Mantel's writing. She is a writer of ghost stories in the sense that the 'ghosts' that

<sup>52</sup> Chadwick and Vermeulen, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Head, p. 218.

haunt us are not supernatural beings from another realm but that which is hidden, ignored or erased and thus interrupts a coherent sense of self and the phenomenal world.<sup>54</sup>

However, Mantel's historical fiction alludes to its spectres as part of an imagined archive of historical knowledge evading Mantel's research. The multiple presentations of material and immaterial archives reveal the various ways Mantel encounters silences in the records. Her imagination then fills in the gaps and points to her works as certain kinds of historical adaptations, which are, in Hutcheon's words, 'inherently "palimpsestic" works that are always haunted by their adapted texts. If we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works.'<sup>55</sup> Mantel then employs her historical fiction to recover multiple voices and to (re)imagine records into a textual body haunted by multiple interpretations and records of lost pasts. *BB*'s fictional dead are attempting to re-enter corporeal bodies to haunt the suburban landscape as reimaginings of lost communities in a rootless London orbital. However, the multiple archives such as the suburban dwelling-as-archive, Alison's body, and technology cannot reliably recover and collect the memory of these diminishing communities.

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<sup>54</sup> Pollard and Carpenter, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 6.

## **Chapter Five: Renovating and Re-occupying Dwelling-as-Archive Places within *Wolf Hall***

In her afterword of *TMATL* named ‘Tudor Places’, Mantel writes ‘And what about Wolf Hall itself? It is a private house, still inhabited by the descendants of the Seymour family, and gives the impression of gently declining into the Wiltshire landscape. A site of habitation since at least Anglo-Saxon times, it is now the focus of intense archaeological exploration, and all its long past is stirring.’<sup>1</sup> Mantel muses that investigations into historical dwellings are slippery during her research, for ‘there is no guarantee of what will withstand the ages’ (p. 902). Mantel’s paratext then draws attention to Tudor dwellings that have ‘vanished entirely’ (p. 903) throughout her Cromwell Trilogy. The vanished dwellings that the paratextual Wolf Hall represents are yet another in-between place where memory and historical meaning slip. Wolf Hall in *WH* haunts the narrative as a rumour and scandalous dwelling following the revelation of Sir John Seymour’s affair with his daughter in law, Anne Boleyn herself stating ‘those sinners at Wolf Hall.’<sup>2</sup> However, shortly after witnessing Thomas More’s execution, Thomas Cromwell picks up a pen and decides he and Rafe Sadler will visit the Seymours, thus writing the future events of *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012) into text: ‘He writes it down. Early September. Five Days. Wolf Hall’ (p. 650). The missing Wolf Hall is recreated in the novel through Cromwell’s penmanship and organised diaries and documents, which lie on his desk in Austin Friars. This chapter then focuses on the presentation of Cromwell’s Austin Friars as a reimagined dwelling-as-archive. Cromwell becomes as an archival agent that reconstructs the missing dwelling, and a modern England, in historical records.

Mantel’s more recent encounter with architectural forms as imagined archives lies with her Thomas Cromwell novels: *Wolf Hall* (2009), *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), and *The Mirror and the Light* (2020). Mantel reimagines the Seymour Family’s Wolf Hall residence (from which *Wolf Hall* takes its name) and Thomas Cromwell’s house Austin Friars as historical artefacts and archives of their private lives. The novels take place mostly in London and its boroughs (Westminster, Hampton Court, Whitehall) though Matthew Hart claims the setting of Wolf Hall and its sequels to be ‘not at the edges of the [English] territory but in a centre that is its own kind of edge.’<sup>3</sup> The dwellings are missing or decaying when Mantel researches them.

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<sup>1</sup> *TMATL*, p. 904.

<sup>2</sup> *WH*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> Hart, p. 158.

Among the missing Tudor dwellings is Cromwell's Austin Friars, an Augustinian friary based in the City of London until 1538. Austin Friars is an important architectural symbol in the Cromwell Trilogy because of its physical and functional transformation throughout the novels and its status as a missing historical artefact.

Nick Holder states that the friars at Austin Friars 'changed the physical and spiritual landscape of London in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their urban monasteries became remarkable centres of prayer, preaching and scholarship for the friars; they were also important spiritual poles of attraction for living and dead Londoners.'<sup>4</sup> Deirdre O'Sullivan explains that in the 1520s Lord Chancellor Cardinal Thomas Wolsey 'under the auspices of orthodox papal authority [...] used his considerable political and spiritual authority to suppress 29 monasteries.'<sup>5</sup> Mantel's research notes England's transformative moment of land and property law through Cromwell's perspective. In *WH*, Cromwell means to

Amalgamate some thirty small, ill-run monastic foundations with larger ones, and to divert the income of these foundations – decayed, but often very ancient – into revenue for the two colleges he is founding [...] he cannot quite accept that real property cannot be changed into money, with the same speed and ease with which he changes a wafer into the body of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

O'Sullivan claims that Austin Friars's (and other monasteries') dissolution marks the real break from England's medieval world.<sup>7</sup> The dissolution is confirmed by O'Sullivan as capturing a valuable long-term property asset for the Crown, the physical and ideological suppression of the medieval church, and marks Cromwell historically implementing 'a remarkably rapid shift in the ownership of property, through the development of administrative tools. But it was not just ownership, but also the understanding of the very nature of property, that changed' (p. 204). In Mantel's account, Cromwell is Wolsey's agent in the modernising process concerning property ownership, including Henry VIII's break with papal authority, presenting significant challenges to England's idea of territory.

Through mentions of the dissolution, Mantel constructs the novels' image of Cromwell as, in Daniel Mendelson's words, an 'innovative statesman who helped drag England from the Plantagenet Middle Ages into the early modern era, remaking it as a bureaucratic state while battling entrenched class privilege and religious fanaticism: a man who tried to manoeuvre

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<sup>4</sup> Nick Holder, *The Friaries of Medieval London: From Foundation to Dissolution* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2017), p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Deirdre O'Sullivan, 'Friars, Friaries and the Reformation: The Dissolution of the Midlands Friaries in 1538-39, *Midland History*, 44.2 (2019), 190-204, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> *WH*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>7</sup> O'Sullivan, p. 190.

between ambitious ideals and stubbornly irrational realities and lost his head doing so.’<sup>8</sup> The historical Cromwell initially occupied the rented tenements of the friary and, as his fortunes rose, he obtained more of the land to build a private mansion where he conducted his personal affairs and the political affairs of Henry VIII. Holder states that ‘from the 1520s the friary was the London home of Wolsey’s and then Henry’s rising administrator Thomas Cromwell. In a sense, therefore, draft bills for the Reformation Parliament of 1529-36 had their origin in Austin Friars, as did the emerging plans for the Dissolution of the monasteries in the second half of the decade.’<sup>9</sup> Austin Friars in *WH*, under Cromwell’s management, becomes a historical agent that decentres the period’s medieval castles and monasteries as official sites containing secular and religious knowledge.

Cromwell acknowledges the instability of monasteries as sites of self-generating historical knowledge in *WH*: ‘When did anything good last come from a monastery? They do not invent, they only repeat, and what they repeat is corrupt.’<sup>10</sup> Monasteries write histories favourable to Rome, which will not hold in the modern England Cromwell strives for. Monasteries are in physical and spiritual decay because of the histories they contain: ‘there’s nothing imperishable about monasteries. They’re not part of God’s natural order. They rise and decay, like any other institutions, and sometimes their buildings fall down, or they are ruined by lax stewardship. Over the years any number of them have vanished or relocated or become swallowed into some other monastery.’<sup>11</sup> The decay and dissolution of monasteries reject the monks’ repeated histories and allows Mantel to reimagine the structure's purpose according to Cromwell’s perspective.

Austin Friars transforms from a home into Cromwell’s multiple sites of business and inscription. Cromwell states: ‘So this house will become a place of business. As all his houses will become places of business. My home will be where my clerks and files are; otherwise, my home will be with the king, where he is.’<sup>12</sup> Cromwell integrates his archive with Henry’s own bureaucratic documents because he perceives Austin Friars as a site of business rather than solely domesticity. The borders between public and private dissolve. Cromwell reflects on such overlap in *BUTB*: ‘Thomas More used to say you should build yourself a retreat, a hermitage,

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Mendelson, ‘Hubris and Delusion at the End of Hilary Mantel’s Tudor Trilogy’, *The New Yorker*, (2020), [date last accessed: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021], <<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/03/16/hubris-and-delusion-at-the-end-of-hilary-mantels-tudor-Trilogy>>.

<sup>9</sup> Holder, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> *WH*, p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> Mantel, *Bring Up The Bodies* (London: Fourth Estate, 2012), p. 52.

<sup>12</sup> *WH*, p. 584.

within your own house. But that was More: able to slam the door in everyone's face. In truth you cannot separate them, your public being and your private self.'<sup>13</sup> The domestic space of Austin Friars similarly dissolves under Cromwell's business and legal priorities as he turns his attention towards Henry and away from the aftermath of his wife and daughters' death.

Michael Everett notes an overlap of private and public in the historical Cromwell's home despite the household being a private institution. He states:

Moreover, as people increasingly saw Cromwell as a prominent figure who might advance their interests, his household became an important figure who might advance their interests, his household became an important centre of power and patronage in its own right. Not only, then, do the development and expansion of Cromwell's household provide a physical expression of his rise to power, but many of those who served him in a private capacity also played an important part in the success of his early ministry.<sup>14</sup>

In the trilogy, Cromwell's dwelling has the practical functions of a home and a working office: 'Cromwell's papers, both private and those relating to the governance of the realm, were often kept at his Austin Friars house' (p. 183). Cromwell simulates his household council, Rafe Sadler, Richard Cromwell, Thomas 'Call-Me' Wriothesley, and son Gregory Cromwell, for his affairs in and outside Austin Friars. Meanwhile, Cromwell exerts influence in other people's private households through paid spies: 'Corrupts other households to your own service.'<sup>15</sup> Cromwell is then omniscient and omnipresent in all spaces of Tudor England.

Cromwell's desk in the Cromwell Trilogy is a crucial space for England's political and legal affairs, and for Cromwell's active input. Cromwell states that 'the affairs of the whole realm are whispered in his ear, and so plural are his offices under the Crown that the great business of England, parchment and roll awaiting stamp and signet, is pushed or pulled across his desk, to himself or from himself.'<sup>16</sup> The personal and political are ideally contained within this new centre of power that Cromwell creates at his desk in Austin Friars. Austin Friars decentres Whitehall as the centre of government. His modernising agenda prioritises commercial and international counting houses over English castle walls as sites of knowledge and power. Austin Friars is thus the spatial embodiment of Cromwell's status as 'a hero of class shattering mobility.'<sup>17</sup> For Cromwell, the law and death equalise class difference: 'before God and the law, all men are equal.'<sup>18</sup> Cromwell accepts all he thinks he can train, which includes

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<sup>13</sup> *BUTB*, p. 334.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Everett, *The Rise of Thomas Cromwell: Power and Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> *TMATL*, p. 819.

<sup>16</sup> *BUTB*, p. 85.

<sup>17</sup> Mendelson, <<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/03/16/hubris-and-delusion-at-the-end-of-hilary-mantels-tudor-Trilogy>>.

<sup>18</sup> *TMATL*, p. 447.



the sons of noblemen and wild young men who remind Cromwell of himself: ‘the gentlemen of England apply for places in his household now, for their sons and nephews and wards, thinking they will learn statecraft with him, how to write a secretary’s hand and deal with translation from abroad.’<sup>19</sup> Cromwell’s knowledge-base is centred in, and is dependent on, the Austin Friars household. However, his repeated absence decentres Cromwell’s inner and domestic life despite the new centre of power.

Cromwell is perpetually in transit because of his work: ‘he would have liked Grace to know it was for her that he was so often on the road, to provide for her future: but how would she understand that, when he never comes home, if he comes home at all.’<sup>20</sup> The domestic is not a site of refuge for Cromwell, in either his childhood at Putney or in adulthood. His fictional absence replicates his domestic life’s absence in the historical record. Everett states that ‘evidence of Cromwell’s personal affairs, relationships with family members, motives and beliefs, the historical record is frustratingly silent. While this means that it is difficult to penetrate Cromwell’s private life and inner character, it is nonetheless clear that he was a man of flesh and blood.’<sup>21</sup> As such, the fictional Cromwell is represented as a trace to his family in Austin Friars to mirror the traces of the historical traces of Cromwell’s private life.

Mantel’s exploration of Cromwell’s inner character leads to the fictional recreation of Cromwell’s portrait as a domestic artefact: ‘at home in his city house at Austin Friars, his portrait broods on the wall; he is wrapped in wool and fur, his hand clenched around a document as if he were throttling it.’<sup>22</sup> The portrait is a personified spectre (a corporeal past and present) and a metafictional device. The portrait reflects Mantel’s continuous processes of research on the historical figure of Cromwell, and the various recreations and rewritten versions of Cromwell through history. Cromwell notes that ‘he will not part with the original – not now I’ve got used to it, he says – and so he comes into his hall to find versions of himself at various stages of becoming: a tentative outline, partly inked in. Where to begin with Cromwell?’ (p. 8). The multiple portraits of Cromwell in his domestic space echo the multiple names and personas Mantel includes in *WH*. He, Cremuel, ‘Thomas, also Tomos, Tommaso, and Thomaes Cromwell, withdraws his past selves into his present body [...] His single shadow slides against the wall, a visitor not sure of his welcome.’<sup>23</sup> Cromwell’s past is not at home in his present

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<sup>19</sup> *WH*, p. 534.

<sup>20</sup> *TMATL*, p. 421.

<sup>21</sup> Everett, p. 204.

<sup>22</sup> *BUTB*, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *WH*, p. 71.

body, which informs his present lived experience of domestic and political spaces of sixteenth-century England. Cromwell's placement in Austin Friars as a portrait and a flesh and blood man then plays with, in O'Sullivan's words, an 'annihilation of meaning and place' which takes place in both fiction and the historical record of the Trilogy.<sup>24</sup>

Renate Brosch claims that Thomas Cromwell typically features in the historical record 'as a Machiavellian arch villain, who manipulates and tortures, a backstairs manoeuvrer who engineered Henry's break with Rome [...] widely hated in his time.'<sup>25</sup> Mantel's Thomas Cromwell is a foreigner to typical fictional and historical representations. His hand in the monasteries' dissolution – and his self-transformation into He, Lord Essex Thomas Cromwell – is achieved through his manipulation of Austin Friars into a renovated place of business: 'the world in little.'<sup>26</sup> The transformation of Austin Friars then centres the domestic as a site of historical erasure and recovery of the dead.

Whitehall's destabilisation as a site of government and national power is paralleled by Austin Friars replacing the traditional gothic model of a haunted castle. Mantel's Cromwell Trilogy is a contemporary gothic fiction with similar concerns as the classical gothic. Steven Bruhm defines the characteristics of the classical gothic as 'the dynamics of family, the limits of rationality and passion, the definition of statehood and citizenship, the cultural effects of technology.'<sup>27</sup> What is marked in the contemporary Gothic, Steen Bruhm notes, is the 'protagonists' and the viewers' compulsive return to certain fixations, obsessions, and blockages' (p. 261). Cromwell's obsession with the past manifests as spectres. For Cromwell, Austin Friars is an archived fortress of Cromwell's past and of the future England post-reformation: 'it's not a dynasty, he thinks, but it's a start.'<sup>28</sup> Cromwell's low birth means he does not know his familial past, and he does not know his birthdate. In comparison, C.S.L. Davies claims that 'genealogical information was widely diffused among the nobility, for whom it was a vital stock-in-trade, extensive oral tradition reinforced by pedigree rolls.'<sup>29</sup> The dwelling-as-archive aids his obsessive fight against historical obscurity throughout the Trilogy, with More and Wolsey frequently appearing as spectral reminders: 'I remembered you, Thomas

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<sup>24</sup> O'Sullivan, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> Renate Brosch, 'Reading Minds – *Wolf Hall's* Revision of the Poetics of Subjectivity', in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 57-72, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> *WH*, p. 259.

<sup>27</sup> Steven Bruhm, 'The Contemporary Gothic', *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 259-76, p. 259.

<sup>28</sup> *WH*, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> C.S.L. Davies, 'Information, Disinformation and Political Knowledge under Henry VII and early Henry VIII', *Historical Research*, 85.228 (2012), 228-53, p. 230.

More, but you didn't remember me. You never even saw me coming.'<sup>30</sup> However, domesticity is perceived by Cromwell as a loss, as something he is unmoored from.

The loss of his wife and daughters are reminders of his silent past and missing sense of home: 'Liz, come down. But Liz keeps her silence; she neither stays nor goes. She is always with him and not with him. He turns away' (p. 584). The ghosts represent traces of Cromwell's past which echoes *EDIMD*'s sentiment that a house can be 'not occupied but fully furnished'. Domesticity is not silenced in the Cromwell Trilogy's dwelling-as-archives, rather it is an empty house 'loud with ghosts' (p. 644), which represents how Cromwell's domestic life does and does not fall into historical obscurity. Austin Friars is then peopled by the living and dead with historical knowledge moving within the bodies that traverse its space.

Throughout the novels, Cromwell's dwelling is a transnational space where English and European political and commercial information flows through its permeable walls. The transnational dwelling Austin Friars presents means it is an in-between place that Cromwell cannot easily situate himself within. In Zoe Wicomb's words, the status of being in-between 'signifies neither coming nor going; and it is less about the narrator's liminality than about positioning himself in placelessness, or a heterotropic nowhere.'<sup>31</sup> For Cromwell, the placelessness and transitional space of Austin Friars allow him to see the past, the present events, and the future. In *TMATL* Cromwell states that 'he needs a space where he can watch the future shaping itself.'<sup>32</sup> Bodies in transit also occupy Austin Friars. In *WH* Cromwell states: 'his house is full of people every day, people who want to be taken to the cardinal.'<sup>33</sup> Dutch Scholars, Lubeck merchants, musicians in transit, agents for Italian banks, alchemists, printers, garden designers, geometricians, and translators all reside in Cromwell's home. In *BUTB*, Austin Friars is described as the Tower of Babel with servants and merchants from every nation under the sun.<sup>34</sup>

On any given day at Austin Friars a group of German scholars will be deploying the many varieties of their tongue, frowning over the letters of evangelists from their own territories. At dinner young Cambridge men exchange snippets of Greek; they are the scholars he has helped, now come to help him. Sometimes a company of Italian merchants come in for supper, and he chats with them in those languages he learned when he worked for the bankers in Florence and Venice. The retainers of his neighbour Chapuys loll about drinking at the expense of the Cromwell buttery, and gossip in Spanish in Flemish (ibid).

<sup>30</sup> *WH*, p. 640.

<sup>31</sup> Zoe Wicomb, 'Heterotopia and Placelessness in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*', *Globalisation of Space: Foucault and Heterotopia*, ed. Mariangela Palladino and John Miller (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 49-64, p. 58.

<sup>32</sup> *TMATL*, p. 504.

<sup>33</sup> *WH*, p. 93.

<sup>34</sup> *BUTB*, p. 59.

Knowledge moves freely via an inverted form of the vernacular architecture as seen in *TGOB*; a dwelling site designed for Cromwell's domestic and international politics and functional affairs.

Cromwell calls for 'new men, new structures, new thinking' to change the nation of England.<sup>35</sup> The transnational dwelling of Austin Friars facilitates the interface between intranational, insular British knowledge and international continental knowledge. Cromwell's Austin Friars is a point of contact between political worlds that builds upon Wolsey's legacy: 'What was England before Wolsey? A little off-shore island, poor and cold' (p. 260). Austin Friars is a multi-lingual and international site that avoids traditional physical architectural characteristics. Carolin Gebauer states that the Cromwell Trilogy 'provide[s] spatial descriptions only where Cromwell actually reflects on his environment', which means the reader relies on Cromwell's phenomenological knowledge of places and dwellings.<sup>36</sup> Burkinshaw states that Mantel is 'distinctly uninterested in the description of physical objects. Instead, Mantel uses Cromwell's perceptions, which give the illusion of unfettered mental access, as well as providing detail of the external world and his relation to it. As the exterior description is so sparse, the reader increasingly relies on Cromwell's mental judgement.'<sup>37</sup> The lack of physical descriptions is replaced by the multiple languages and sounds that describe Austin Friars as an archival place. Crucially, it is Cromwell's perception and reception of the multiple sounds within Austin Friars that denotes the 'Tower of Babel' as a heteroglossic landscape acting as a form of phenomenological knowledge.

The borders between Cromwell's private and public are broken down by the various communications and sounds that move within and beyond Austin Friar's walls:

The voices of these children, small boys, calling out to each other from staircases, and nearer at hand the scrabbling of dogs' paws on the boards. The chink of gold pieces into a chest. The susurrations, tapestry-muffled, of polygot conversation. The whisper of ink across paper. Beyond the walls the noises of the city: the milling of the crowds at his gate, distant cries from the river. His inner monologue, running on, soft-voiced: it is in public rooms that he thinks of the cardinal, his footsteps echoing in lofty vaulted chambers. It is in private spaces that he thinks of his wife Elizabeth. She is a blur now in his mind, a whisk of skirts around the corner.<sup>38</sup>

The focalisation on Cromwell and his inner monologue, in Burkinshaw's words, 'presents the reader with a distorted world view, one which the reader is complicit in creating.'<sup>39</sup> The

<sup>35</sup> *WH*, p. 100.

<sup>36</sup> Carolin Gebauer, 'Narrative of Reformation: The Revision of History and Narrative Form in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* (2009) and *Bring Up The Bodies* (2012)', *Making Time: World Construction in the Present-Tense Novel* (London De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 151-172, p. 168.

<sup>37</sup> Burkinshaw, p. 319.

<sup>38</sup> *BUTB*, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Burkinshaw, p. 319.

heteroglossic landscape Mantel creates in Austin Friars is a microcosmic replication of England as an emerging geo-political territory. New knowledge is produced and curated to create a new administration within national lines. Hart states that ‘Cromwell’s identification with other peoples and cultures is crucial to Mantel’s depiction of him as the omnicompetent shaper of a ‘remodelled society’ [...] Thus, while Cromwell helps sever the spiritual links between England and Rome, he deepens the traffic between London and Florence, England and the Low Countries.’<sup>40</sup> Brosch explains that Cromwell’s ‘interest in new ideas, such as those of Copernicus and Machiavelli, reflects the exploding knowledge systems and the increasing sense of uncertainty in the early modern world, registered in frequent, slightly fantastic references to the shifting nature of reality.’<sup>41</sup> Cromwell himself is a foreigner to the period’s fanaticism, and an ‘unstable world requires flexible minds’ (ibid). Austin Friars’s transnationalism, then, reflects Cromwell’s foreignness in England and government despite being English born.

Cromwell’s time in Continental Europe marks him as less than fully English: ‘Fight for the French, eh, bank for the Italians? [...] I tell you what you are, Cromwell, you are an Italian through and through, and you have all their vices, all their passions.’<sup>42</sup> Cromwell brings to Austin Friars Italian silks, a memory palace, Italian merchants and connections, and malaria. Cromwell’s mobility through Europe prior to the events of the Trilogy alienates him from the court, and questions whether Cromwell feels he belongs to England due to his transnational experiences and knowledge. Cromwell experiences tension between his Putney origins, ‘the place where you come from’, and his movement to the King’s side, ‘I stand just where the king has put me.’<sup>43</sup> In *WH*, the secession from Rome is represented, in Susan Strehle’s words ‘as a new beginning for the people and the state, one that affirms the potential for positive change in the lives of commoners. In the logic of the novels, Thomas Cromwell stands out as the creator of a new England, indeed as a liberator for the English.’<sup>44</sup> Cromwell’s immediate access to Austin Friars and to Henry’s side allows him unique access to all parts of England, which allows him to refashion, through documentation, England as a larger dwelling-as-archive that he can manipulate and erase.

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<sup>40</sup> Hart, p. 157.

<sup>41</sup> Brosch, p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> *WH*, p. 567.

<sup>43</sup> *TMATL*, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Strehle, pp. 39-40.

Cromwell's unification of the heteroglossic space of Austin Friars into a centre of knowledge-based power is not limited to his personal dwelling space. The nation is viewed as a household by Cromwell: 'He doesn't want the kingdom to be run like Walter's house in Putney, with fighting all the time [...] He wants it to be a household where everybody knows what they have to do, and feels safe doing it.'<sup>45</sup> Cromwell's sense of self-made personhood means 'the courtiers see that he can shape events, mould them. He can contain the fears of other men, and give them a sense of solidity in a quaking world: this people, this dynasty, this miserable rainy island at the edge of the world.'<sup>46</sup> Cromwell's omniscience and omnicompetence stabilise the nation in an uncertain religious and political environment. However, Cromwell's 'foreignness' means he faces intranational opposition from the whole of England, and Austin Friars is confirmed as a site of power with inherent instabilities.

Since the dissolution, Cromwell's Austin Friars was slowly sold off until it has become a trace in London's streets. Ben Weinreb, Christopher Hibbert, Julia Keay and John Keay claim that

In 1600 the choir, tower and transepts were demolished; and two years later the Marquess of Winchester sold his house to John Swinnerton, a merchant. [...] In 1844 the remaining part of the house was decided into warehouses and in 1862 the church was burnt down. Rebuilt the next year by Edward l'Anson and William Lightly, it was bombed in 1940 and rebuilt again in 1950-6.<sup>47</sup>

Mantel imagines the fictional Austin Friars as an important archive of her research into Cromwell's personal and political affairs. Mantel only makes this true by blending invented story elements and historical ones within Cromwell's defining dwelling space. As Ann Rigney states about the historical novel:

As novels, they are written under the aegis of the fictionality convention whereby the individual writer enjoys the freedom to invent ... a world 'uncommitted to reality'. As historical novels, however, they also link up with the ongoing collective attempts to represent the past and invite comparison with what is already known about the historical world from other sources [...] They are not 'free-standing fictions' ..., they also call upon prior historical knowledge, echoing and/or disputing other discourses about the past.<sup>48</sup>

Cromwell's domestic space is the world uncommitted to reality in so far as Cromwell's perspective dictates what is allowed to move and dwell within the domestic microcosmic world. Austin Friars then echoes Burton's emphasis on the 'importance of home as both a material archive for history and a very real political figure in an extended moment of historical

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<sup>45</sup> *BUTB*, p. 84.

<sup>46</sup> *WH*, p. 522.

<sup>47</sup> Ben Weinreb, Christopher Hibbert, Julia Keay, John Keay, *The London Encyclopaedia* (London: Macmillan, 2008), p. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Rigney, p. 19.

crisis.<sup>49</sup> As such, Mantel's exploration of Cromwell's dwellings is a crucial part of her contiguous textual engagement (fictional and academic) with the Tudor historical setting.

### I. Reimagining Cromwell's Dwelling-as-Archive

Cromwell retains his immediate access to the dwelling-as-archive despite being frequently away from Austin Friar's for visits. While the king offers lodgings in Westminster if Cromwell works late, Cromwell reimagines his home by walking 'mentally through his rooms at Austin Friars, picking up his memory images from where he has left them on windowsills and under stools and in the woollen petals of the flowers strewn in the tapestry at Anselma's feet.'<sup>50</sup> The act of picking up his memory images from the familiar domestic objects and rooms is Cromwell's way of generating his own memory archive. Cromwell's (re)imagination of his private dwelling allows him immediate access to the memory of his own political and personal documents. However, in contrast to the private archive, his imagination allows him access into transnational public archives and perspectives that nobles such as Harry Percy cannot envision. Cromwell states:

The world is not run from where he thinks. Not from his border fortresses, not even from Whitehall. The world is run from Antwerp, from Florence, from places he has never imagined; from Lisbon, from where the ships with sails of silk drift west and are burned up in the sun. Not from castle walls, but from counting houses, not by the call of the bugle but by the click of the abacus, not the grate and click of the mechanism of the gun but by the scrape of the pen on the page of the promissory note that pays for the gun and the gunsmith and the powder and shot (p. 378).

Cromwell's imagination and travels in Europe present him as Mantel's archival agent who can conceptualise multiple dwellings-as-archives as being able to contain and idealise a new Europe that Cromwell is familiar with because of the objects he associates with modernity: the pen, the abacus, and the counting house. Cromwell similarly reimagines 'England in a drizzle of ink' (p. 650) to reflect the modernising country as an archival place where historical meaning is rewritten. Thus, Austin Friars often represents an imaginary archive that is not dependent on whether Cromwell physically dwells there or not.

Gilliland and Caswell claim that imaginary archives posit that 'such imaginaries are archivally impossible in the sense that they will never result in actualised records in any traditional sense, although they may exist in some kind of co-constitutive relationship with

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<sup>49</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> *WH*, p. 432.

actual records.’<sup>51</sup> Affective responses to the past often produce imaginary archives. The absence of imagined documents, records, and diaries are due to Mantel imagining them as lost, destroyed, or manipulated, making them part of Mbembe’s spectral archives. The absent knowledge results in what Gilliland and Caswell call a ‘distrust of authority and the archive, misplaced trust in artefacts [...] that appear to represent reality, belief in what cannot be substantiated and disbelief in what can, fear of what might be in the archives as well as frustration with what is not, and sometimes the aspiration to recover what is absent from the archive’ (p. 62). Imaginary documents within Mantel’s fictions – such as the diaries by the historical figures in *APOGS* – challenge, in Gilliland and Caswell’s words, ‘dominant conceptions of the evidentiary qualities of tangible records and the archival legacies’ by insisting on a ‘more dynamic and holistic view of records that takes the affect’ of the narrators into account.<sup>52</sup> Imagined archives are imaginary in the sense that, as Mbembe reveals:

No archive can be the depository of the entire history of a society, of all that has happened in that society. Through archival documents, we are presented with pieces of time to be assembled, fragments of life to be placed in order, one after the other, in an attempt to formulate a story that acquires its coherence through the ability to craft links between the beginning and the end. A montage of fragments thus creates an illusion of totality and continuity.<sup>53</sup>

Mantel’s historical works and her genre exploration of historiographic metafiction, then, examines the illusion of totality and continuity within the missing, censored, or destroyed material and immaterial archives.

Mantel reimagines documents with the full awareness that, within their imaginary archives, such objects are, in Gilliland and Caswell’s words, ‘bound by their impossibility; they are always out of grasp, falsely promising to make sense of the nonsensical, always emerging on an intangible horizon. They will never serve as legal evidence, nor provide answers about past atrocities.’<sup>54</sup> However, Mantel presents documents in the Cromwell Trilogy as possible traces of the historical Cromwell’s effect on modern administration. These Cromwellian documents are hypothetically in reach if the gaps of knowledge are filled and reinterpreted. At the same time, imaginary documents such as the Book of Henry provide no certain answers about the historical Cromwell’s private life and memory.

With regard to personal memory, Cromwell states that he has ‘a very large ledger. A huge filing system, in which are recorded (under their name, and also under their offence) the

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<sup>51</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 61.

<sup>52</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, ‘False Promise and New Hope: Dead Perpetrators, Imagined Documents and Emergent Archival Evidence’, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 19.5 (2015), 615-27, p. 615.

<sup>53</sup> Mbembe, p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 625.



details of people who have cut across me.’<sup>55</sup> Cromwell is determined to maintain his control over memory, suggesting his ability to be an archive of the Tudor past. His use of the memory system resembles a collection of archival documents, which require the memory of places to maintain and store: ‘In Italy he learned a memory system and furnished it with pictures [...] When you have made the images, you place them about the world in locations you choose, each one with its parcel of words, of figures, which they will yield you on demand’ (p. 216). In *WH* these locations are dependent on Cromwell’s past affective experiences of these places. However, Cromwell’s art of memory implies that any object or picture previously associated with a particular place can be put in any location he remembers. Only Cromwell will know the specific meaning as to why his pictures are in the locations he has chosen. Cromwell retains immediate access to the past and present due to such an irresolvability of meaning, creating an archival process of memorisation that is untraceable should Cromwell ever die. Thus, imagination is initially posed in *WH* as a disruption to archives, making memory vulnerable.

In the Cromwell Trilogy, Cromwell is also an inverted archival agent who uses his legal proficiency to fabricate, erase, and silence the communal memory of Medieval England. Similar to *APOGS*, Mantel weaves fictional narratives with historical events. Cromwell, however, is the only modern narrator in an increasingly unstable Tudor state. History’s progress is deemed inevitable, and echoes a question first posed in *Fludd*: ‘What can you do, against a modern man?’ when the quarrels of a community are ‘ancient and impenetrable.’<sup>56</sup> Communal knowledge and archives of state or noble lineage information undergo intense changes in England. Before the dissolution, monasteries stored bureaucratic documents and paperwork of governance. Asheesh Kapur Siddique claims that during the fifteenth century the English monarchy ‘sought to assert authority over documents produced by bureaucrats, on the belief that such texts constituted a vital form of knowledge that could guide the resolution of proximate problems of administration, and that they were the monopoly of royal government.’<sup>57</sup> The medieval archives were in disparate locations out of the direct and immediate control of the sovereign. Siddique also states that efforts ‘to centralize control of the paperwork of governance in the hands of the central state and treat archives as tools of bureaucratic administration represented a new, distinctive “early modern” approach to administration’ (ibid). State papers became ‘sources of historical knowledge open to broader

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<sup>55</sup> *WH*, p. 481.

<sup>56</sup> *Fludd*, p. 24, p. 73.

<sup>57</sup> Asheesh Kapur Siddique, ‘Mobilising the ‘State Papers’ of Empire: John Bruce, Early Modernity, and the Bureaucratic Archives of Britain’, *Journal of Early Modern History*, 22.5 (2018), 392-410, p. 394.

audiences' (p. 395). Cromwell's perspective details the growing development of print culture as an added source of historical knowledge reaching the European audience.

Amy Boesky claims that many of Mantel's characters (in her works as well as the Trilogy) are authors: 'Gardiner patting the manuscript *Of True Obedience*, Wyatt with his verses, the King imaging himself cast in a 'tragedy' he is writing,' and Thomas More's own socio-political satire *Utopia* (1516).<sup>58</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1532) is further state-related knowledge that Cromwell refers to throughout the Trilogy, along with other manuscripts: 'When our forefathers defeated the French under Great Harry, we shipped their manuscripts home across the sea. They were mirrors for princes, texts that prescribed how to be a king: they were written for kings to read.'<sup>59</sup> Intertextual knowledge of More's *Utopia* and Machiavelli's *The Prince* is better preserved than Cromwell's memory and records. Meanwhile, intertextual references of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) appear in the Cromwell Trilogy as a temporal collapse, for it references Cromwell's own past knowledge of Thomas Becket and Mantel's awareness of the text. Passages from *Murder in the Cathedral*, such as the repeated motifs of seven years and harvest, are without quotations and thus hidden within Cromwell's narrative voice: 'We can brace ourselves for seven lean years. But when the fat years come, are we prepared? We never know how to take it when our life begins to be charmed' (p. 504). Intertextual knowledge of the play alludes to the historical discourse between King Henry II and his Chancellor, foreshadowing Cromwell's eventual betrayal by the mercurial Henry VIII.

The historical awareness of print culture is metafictionally established, alongside *WH*'s repeated contrast to Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) in interviews and articles on *WH*. Arnold notes that 'Mantel's frequent use of unmarked quotations has the effect of rendering her work as always populated by these hidden texts, even when they cannot be immediately identified by the reader.'<sup>60</sup> The repeated references to Machiavelli, Thomas Becket, and Wyatt's authorial unreliability, present the Trilogy as embodying its own patchwork of internal intertextual and paratextual knowledge. The hidden intertextual references also mimic the patchwork silences within the historical record.

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<sup>58</sup> Amy Boesky, 'Hilary Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*: A Novel', *Spenser Review*, 42.2.20 (2013), [date last accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021], <<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/volume-42/issue-42-3/reviews/bring-up-the-bodies-a-novel/>>.

<sup>59</sup> *TMATL*, p. 337.

<sup>60</sup> Arnold, p. 175.

Cromwell attempts to bury these intertextual references or destabilise them as reliable sources of knowledge. Cromwell questions Becket's bones as a reliable relic: 'They show you a skull, they say it's Becket's, its' smashed up by the knights but it's held together with a silver plate. For ready money, you can kiss it.'<sup>61</sup> Cromwell links objects of historical knowledge as perpetually missing meaning or the kind of truth-seeking he prefers. He reveals the missing embodied knowledge as the crucial gap in records:

There is a correspondence between the score sheet and the human body, in that the paper has divisions marked off, for the head and the torso. A touch on the breastplate is recorded, but not fractured ribs. A touch on the helm is recorded, but not a cracked skull. You can pick up the score sheet afterwards and read back a record of the day, but the marks on paper do not tell you about the pain of a broken ankle or the efforts of a suffocating man.<sup>62</sup>

Embodied knowledge is the ellipsis in the historical record, along with the frequently dying characters in the Trilogy (whether by illness or execution). Cromwell 'wonders again if the dead need translators; perhaps in a moment, in a simple twist of unbecoming, they know everything they need to know.'<sup>63</sup> Much like John Hunter, Cromwell conceives the dead as possessing inaccessible knowledge. Cromwell further notes inscription's ability to contain embodied knowledge of the dead, which manifests as the spectral memory of Elizabeth: 'Yet the essence of Elizabeth is in this book, his poor wife with her white cap, her blunt manner, her sideways smile and busy craftwoman's fingers.'<sup>64</sup> In *BB*, Alison works through her past with vedic palmistry (ie. rubbing her foot), which points to Alison's achievement in figuring out her own past and the achievement of an embodied experience of the past. A sensory experience of the body indicates the interior and non-linear structure of memory. However, the transformative and decaying nature of the body presents a formal dilemma on embodiment; the body is an impermanent structure that cannot safely hold memory. Mantel's Cromwell Trilogy then attempts to solve the dilemma by depicting an inscribed heritage of Cromwell's political and legislative influence, where inscriptions of the body and the record of illnesses and injuries enables Cromwell to access the past. As such, imagination helps to bridge the gap between 'a record of the day' and the 'pain of a broken ankle'.

Meanwhile, Cromwell is sceptical of authors within the Cromwell Trilogy. Thomas Wyatt is a crucial example of slippages and multiple narrative perspectives: 'He writes himself and then he disclaims himself. He jots a verse on some scrap of paper, and slips it to you, when you are at supper or praying in the chapel. Then he slides a paper to some other person, and it

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<sup>61</sup> *WH*, p. 396.

<sup>62</sup> *BUTB*, pp. 194- 95.

<sup>63</sup> *WH*, p. 152.

<sup>64</sup> *BUTB*, p. 286.

is the same verse, but a word is different [...] he will declare, you must believe in everything and nothing of what you read' (p. 413). Cromwell reinforces the idea that nothing inscribed should be believed in, thus establishing the Cromwell Trilogy as historiographic metafiction. At Henry's fall, Cromwell turns his attention to expunging what records are already made: 'Afterwards it will be known that on such a date, the king's horse stumbled. But God's hand plucked him from the ground and set him back laughing on his throne. Another item of note, for *The Book Called Henry*: knock him down and he bounces' (p. 209). Cromwell's point of view explores the internal tension concerning the unreliability of truth-seeking and fabrication – 'You said, only the truth we can use' (p. 359) – and his narrative perspective and memory possessing an omniscience, for 'incredible things are related of Cromwell's memory' (p. 23). The broken-down borders between history and fiction further blur distinctions between

the nature of the border between truth and lies [...] It is permeable and blurred because it is planted thick with rumour, confabulation, misunderstandings and twisted tales. Truth can break the gates down, truth can howl in the street; unless truth is pleasing, personable and easy to like, she is condemned to stay whimpering at the back door (p. 190).

Cromwell manipulates, to his advantage, the sanitised truth, underlining the themes that inscribed records are unreliable interpretations of the Tudor past. The trilogy then calls into question all authors of Tudor life and history.

Cromwell, Jaakko Husa notes, 'paradoxically manipulates the law while simultaneously harbouring great respect for it. The protagonist of these books is capable of spinning stories in order to achieve certain ends. Yet at the same time he holds that it is enormously important that the law be respected, obeyed and upheld.'<sup>65</sup> Within the Cromwell Trilogy, there is a further sense of fabricated evidence through the imagined archive. The intertextual references are intermixed with the imagined document of the 'Book of Henry: how to read him, how to serve him, how best to preserve him.'<sup>66</sup> Cromwell recognises inscriptions' ability to rewrite the present, preserve his administrative and legal legacy, and the need to be safely stored within an archive away from the Court's influence.

Cromwell's Austin Friars is an imagined archive, with the dwelling site central to Cromwell's administrative power of the Tudor period. The archive responds to the rapid modernisation Cromwell was instrumental in implementing: 'chivalry's day is over. One day soon moss will grow in the tilt yard. The days of the moneylender have arrived, and the days

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<sup>65</sup> Jaakko Husa, 'Comparative Law, Literature and Imagination: Transplanting Law into Works of Fiction', *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law*, 28.3 (2021), 371-89, p. 384.

<sup>66</sup> *BUTB*, p. 80.

of the swaggering privateer; banker sits down with banker, and kings are their waiting boys' (p. 169). Of all Mantel's works, Cromwell's Austin Friars is the most institutional archive, depending on where its documents are stored. Cromwell's Austin Friars is a fortified site where Cromwell preserves his personal and political archive through objects and documents.

Austin Friars still retains Cromwell's control over information and the bodies that move between the public/private borders despite its permeable walls that allows information and political knowledge to pass through. To echo Young's words, 'a person does not have a place of her own and things of her own if anyone can have access to them. To own a space is to have autonomy over admission to the space and its contents [...] privacy refers to the autonomy and control a person has to allow or not allow access to her person, information about her, and the things that are meaningfully associated with her person.'<sup>67</sup> Cromwell's possession of Austin Friars is recorded in historical records as lasting for ninety-nine years. Holder states that records indicate how 'in May the following year, Brown enhanced the friary's ties to its influential tenant Thomas Cromwell (by then Henry's principal secretary) by granting him a ninety-nine-year lease on a block of houses on the edge of the precinct so that he could redevelop it as a grand urban mansion.'<sup>68</sup> In *WH*, Cromwell 'holds the lease for ninety-nine years. His great-grandchildren will have it: some unknown Londoners. When they look at documents his name will be there. His arms will be carved over the doorways.'<sup>69</sup> Austin Friars is foremost a domestic archive that Cromwell has built rather than an established public or religious institution. Cromwell's ownership of Austin Friars is inscribed in paper meaning he appears to have full autonomy of the place.

Mbembe states that the term archives 'first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state. However, by 'archives' is also understood a collection of documents – normally written documents – kept in this building. There cannot therefore be a definition of 'archives' that does not encompass both the building itself and the documents stored there.'<sup>70</sup> Mantel decentres the official public archive by making the domestic household of Austin Friars the archival centre. The objects of Cromwell's past – which are symbolised by his daughter Grace's angel wings and the Book of Henry – are ideally to be preserved throughout history and retain the memory and historical meaning of Cromwell's name:

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<sup>67</sup> Young, p. 162.

<sup>68</sup> Holder, p. 305.

<sup>69</sup> *WH*, p. 583.

<sup>70</sup> Mbembe, p. 19.

Our possessions outlast us, surviving shocks that we cannot; we have to live up to them, as they will be our witnesses when we are gone. In this room are the goods of people who can no longer use them. There are books his master Wolsey gave him. On the bed, the quilt of yellow turkey satin under which he slept with Elizabeth.<sup>71</sup>

The possessions are part of Cromwell's domestic archive that will survive alongside his lease, which facilitates Liz and Wolsey's haunting of Cromwell whenever he occupies Austin Friars.

The secular objects within the domestic are to outlast Cromwell's life and lease - which directly mirrors the monasteries and convents' relics' ability to multiply and produce: 'according to the custodians of holy relics, part of the power of these artefacts is that they are able to multiply. Bone, wood and stone have, like animals, the ability to breed, yet keep their intact nature; the offspring are in no wise inferior to the originals. So the crown of thorns blossoms.'<sup>72</sup> However, for Cromwell, the relics' historical meaning is exploited and plastic. Cromwell then marks the movement from the religious/public archive to the secular/domestic archive in the dissolution of the monasteries.

Buildings are crucial for the archiving process. In Mbembe's words 'the archive has neither status nor power without an architectural dimension, which encompasses the physical space of the site of the building, its motif and columns, the arrangement of the rooms, the organisation of the 'files', the labyrinth of corridors, and that degree of discipline.'<sup>73</sup> The archive Mantel presents is inescapably material and an instituting imaginary, for 'in the domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public which does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.'<sup>74</sup> Jacques Derrida claims that the meaning of archive comes 'from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded' (p. 2). Derrida links the ownership of the dwelling space as part of owning and controlling the archive. Mantel writes Austin Friars as the centre of Cromwell's political power, translating to his archival power that similarly controls his private and public reputation amongst nobles and kings. The archival power then stresses Cromwell's control over memory.

Cromwell's ownership of the archive is an immediacy that rivals the noblemen's power. In Derrida's words, 'the citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or the represent the law. On account of their publicly recognised

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<sup>71</sup> *TMATL*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>72</sup> *BUTB*, p. 83.

<sup>73</sup> Mbembe, p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever*, pp. 2-3.

authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. [...] They have the power to interpret the archive' (ibid). In *TMATL*, Austin Friars retains Cromwell's inscriptions and documents of governance: 'Now Austin Friars begins to shape like the house of a great man [...] he owns the neighbourhood, and in his chests [...] he keeps the deeds that have divided, valued, and named it. Here are his freedoms and titles, the ancient seals and signatures of the dead, witnessed by the city wardens and sergeants.'<sup>75</sup> Through his fortune, Cromwell moves easily within the microcosmic international sphere he has built within Austin Friars, and thus he has unlimited access to the more private spaces of Court and Henry's chambers: 'Fortune, your gate is unlatched: Thomas Lord Cromwell, stroll through' (p. 76). However, Cromwell's mobility through political spheres is contingent on Henry's favour, who 'has sworn him in; Henry has put his time at his disposal and said, come, Master Cromwell, take my arm: through courtyards and throne rooms, his path in life is now made smooth and clear.'<sup>76</sup> Losing Henry's confidence destabilises Cromwell's centre of power, meaning the dwelling-as-archive becomes vulnerable to dismantlement.

In *WH*, when Wolsey is dismissed as Lord Chancellor, his house is taken apart. Cromwell notes that:

Room by room, the king's men are stripping York Place of its owner. They are bundling up parchments and scrolls, missals and memoranda and the volumes of his personal accounts; they are taking even the inks and quills. They are prising from the walls the boards on which the cardinal's coat of arms is painted.<sup>77</sup>

Wolsey's dwelling is stripped of his identity and power, presenting a dismantled dwelling-as-archive that Henry will give to someone else fully furnished yet without the attached historical meaning of Wolsey's past and memories. Such dismantling foreshadows Cromwell's own fall from power in *TMATL*.

The breach of Cromwell's Austin Friars notes the profound loss of Cromwell's connection to the security of Austin Friars – as a domestic and professional space – and of belonging to the territory associated with English nobility. The dwelling-as-archive is vulnerable once more, which means Mantel can no longer navigate Cromwell's historical knowledge and documents: 'Mr Wriothesely has moved into Austin Friars, they tell him. The king has ordered him to dissolve the Cromwell household. By day, Call-Me strides through the

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<sup>75</sup> *TMATL*, p. 76.

<sup>76</sup> *BUTB*, p. 41.

<sup>77</sup> *WH*, p. 47.

rooms, expansive, breathing in the smell of paper and ink.’<sup>78</sup> The repossession of houses introduces further silences, as Cromwell’s political and personal documents such as the Book of Henry are destroyed to protect the rest of the household: ‘we burned it, sire. I took my people to your house before Wriothsesely came there. We burned a great many things, and raked the ashes into the garden’ (p. 831). The burned documents become part of the imaginary archives in Mantel’s Cromwell Trilogy. Cromwell’s ability to interpret the archive and to preserve the private domestic space is taken from him. Dissolving the Austin Friars household, which echoes the dissolution of the monasteries and Wolsey’s York Place, signifies Henry’s break with Cromwell’s omniscient authority over English politics. Thus, the dwelling-as-archive is never safe from Henry’s whims and favours. Cromwell loses his transnational community and domestic memory. Austin Friars transforms into the missing origin of British political, historical knowledge and Cromwell’s private/domestic life. Wriothsesely’s navigation of Austin Friars means Cromwell’s dwelling is no longer a fortified archive of Cromwell’s memories or his financial and political power. Austin Friars is, then, a mutable space where information disappears even as the evidence of Cromwell’s lease survives in the historical record. Thus, if the lease and property ownership does not preserve Cromwell’s domestic account he must turn to writing his life narrative.

The interplay of the absent/present heritage of inscribed accounts is thus a central motif within the Cromwell Trilogy. Cromwell notes ‘inheritance is a strange thing. No one knows what traces our fathers leave’ (p. 708). For Cromwell, his sense of knowledge frequently changes to correspond with the changing laws and print culture of the period:

What’s wrong with me? Why does everything you know, and everything you’ve learned, confirm you in what you believed before? Whereas in my case, what I grew up with, and what I thought I believed, is chipped away a little and a little, a fragment and then a piece and then a piece more. With every month that passes, the corners are knocked off the certainties of this world: and the next world too.<sup>79</sup>

Other authors gain permanence while Cromwell’s narrative voice slips, which *TMATL* alludes to as a break from England: ‘he is far from England now, far from these islands, from the waters salt and fresh. He has vanished; he is the slippery stones underfoot, he is the last ripple in the wake of himself.’<sup>80</sup> Legacy is inscribed in literary productions of books and wills, which informs historical thought and cultural memory. An example includes Cromwell naming his literary successor: ‘To Rafe Sadler his books.’<sup>81</sup> Though Chadwick refers to *APOGS* in his

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<sup>78</sup> *TMATL*, p. 865.

<sup>79</sup> *WH*, p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> *TMATL*, p. 875.

<sup>81</sup> *WH*, p. 148.



assessment that ‘the novel bears the imprint of the templates of recovered histories and historiographic metafiction, but it also testifies to literature’s capacity for anachronism – for upsetting clean genealogies by pointing beyond them’, similar themes of upsetting genealogies appear in the Cromwell Trilogy.<sup>82</sup> Cromwell’s reanimated literary legacy in the Cromwell Trilogy allows the audience to recognise Cromwell’s fictional identity as part of a historical narrative that lacks a personal autobiographic account in public knowledge. A meta-awareness of past literary and historical constructions of Cromwell’s influence in the Tudor period is established.

Cromwell’s ‘administration produced the largest and most remarkable body of statutes ever seen before the nineteenth century.’<sup>83</sup> The Trilogy then testifies against historical accounts of Cromwell. G.R. Elton explores Reginald Pole claims of Cromwell’s character:

He became at best the servile instrument of his master’s policy, at worst a ruthlessly unscrupulous promoter of a secular despotism; and it is particularly noticeable that his lowly origins, aggravated by the fact that he actually went into trade and – horror of horrors – lent money, came to be used against him even by American scholars supposedly free of such snobberies (p. 373).

The novel contrasts historians’ retrospective account of Cromwell with the presentation of Cromwell’s perception, he ‘watches events unfold and the narrative method effectively dramatizes his interior commentary.’<sup>84</sup> Biased or rumoured accounts of Cromwell’s identity and actions remove his self-narration from his ownership and historical agency. Such an interplay acts as an ironic pastiche because of the Tudor period’s technological setting. The contentious prophetess, Elizabeth Barton, in *WH* fights for freedom of speech from Henry VIII’s legal tyranny and idealises the power of inscription and technology spreading crucial information. Lucy Peyt states that ‘God has given us the printing press.’<sup>85</sup> The idealisation of widespread information is problematic to ‘true’ accounts of the Tudor past.<sup>86</sup>

Cromwell’s modern voice in the Trilogy underlines the embodied experience of memory and the written accounts of the Tudor period because of his fascination with the written word as a medium for modernisation. Inscription embodies history and the self, which allows them to coexist in, in Arnold’s words, a ‘haunted void.’<sup>87</sup> In the process of inscribing his life

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<sup>82</sup> Tom Chadwick and Pieter Vermeulen, ‘Politics of Literature, Politics of the Archive’, *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 31.2 (2020), 95-101, p. 100.

<sup>83</sup> G. R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government: Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 380.

<sup>84</sup> O’Connor, p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> *WH*, p. 301.

<sup>86</sup> See Michel de Certeau for his distinguishing the real insofar as it is the known of past societies, and the real insofar as it is entangled within the scientific operations. *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 35-6.

<sup>87</sup> Arnold, p. 19.

story, Cromwell aligns himself with the ghosts of the past written in the margins – made rootless to society and history by their own spectrality. Cromwell is an outsider who ‘cannot forget his own history, retaining empathy for the maltreated, the poor and ill-bred.’<sup>88</sup> Matt Phillpott notes Mantel’s depiction of Cromwell as one possible true history based upon the evidence: ‘It is not to say that there are not alternatives or that there is no fictional element here, but that every attempt has been made to represent as true account of Cromwell and his world. Unlike academic historians Mantel is not proposing a variety of interpretations but one possible interpretation.’<sup>89</sup> Mantel’s engagement with Cromwell’s past elevates her as an authority on Cromwell alongside Geoffrey R. Elton, Diarmaid MacCulloch, and Michael Everett (to name a few). To call them historical novels,

Does them an injustice; they are novels which happen to be set in the sixteenth century, and with a profound knowledge of how that era functioned. Novels they remain, as Mantel herself has frequently (and with mounting weariness) emphasised to would-be-critics. This book is different. It invites you, the reader, to find the true Thomas Cromwell of history, by guiding you through the maze of his surviving papers – and a real maze they are, composed of thousands and thousands of individual documents.<sup>90</sup>

The fictional depiction of Cromwell is then based on historical fact and documented memories, thus making the novel a pseudo-Cromwellian archive. However, this archive that Mantel presents retains the status of an imaginary archive because of the fictional reimagining of Cromwell’s thoughts, and the introduction of an unknown past within tradition.

The fictional Cromwell faces the traditional past in both his legislation and inscribed records. Elizabeth Renzetti states that ‘he’s making a new country, but he realises that a tenacious grip the past has. People are not eager to embrace the new, unless you can convince them of the advantage of it. That’s where the ghosts lie. The generations under the soil do live in our imagination, sticking us to the old way of doing things.’<sup>91</sup> Cromwell’s interest in the Calais’ alchemist’s memory machine further implies inscription’s role in preserving a personal archive: ‘there is a man in Paris who has built a soul. It is a building but it is alive. The whole of it is lined with little shelves. On these shelves you find certain parchments, fragments of writing.’<sup>92</sup> The memory is built through language, denoting the construction of selfhood

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<sup>88</sup> Boesky, <<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/volume-42/issue-422-3/reviews/bring-up-the-bodies-a-novel/>>.

<sup>89</sup> Matt Phillpott, Review of *Presenting History: Past and Present*, (2012), [date accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2020], <<https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1251>>.

<sup>90</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell: A Life* (London: Penguin, 2018), p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Elizabeth Renzetti, ‘Author Hilary Mantel on Brexit, the monarchy and why Thomas Cromwell will always haunt her’, *The Globe and Mail* (March 2020), [date last accessed: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020], <<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/books/article-elizabeth-renzetti-talks-with-hilary-mantel-about-brexit-the-monarchy/>>.

<sup>92</sup> *WH*, pp. 614-15.

through semiotically transmitted language made physical. Cromwell is concerned with recording his own memory as a life story worth preserving. However, the Cromwell Trilogy is also concerned with the construction and preservation of national origins.

In *WH*, gaps are generating in the historical record, the distinctions between historical fact and myth blurring. The French King Francis asks, ‘Who now remembers Agincourt?’ (p. 406). Meanwhile, Cromwell notes that a chronicle of Britain omits King Arthur ‘on the ground that he never existed’ (p. 650). These blurring memories of fact and myth represent the necessity for memory to maintain history. At the same time, the loss of fact and myth implies a lack of ‘housing’ for these memories which Cromwell notes in *TMATL*. Cromwell also notes that his art of memory requires real places, and ‘when you run out of real places you dream up more; you design islands, like Utopia.’<sup>93</sup> *TMATL* notes a move from *WH* to include mythical and fictional places, for *Utopia* is also a book written by Thomas More. The inclusion of the fictional place in Cromwell’s ‘inner terrain’ (ibid) marks a recollection of and a reconciliation with Thomas More. The quote ‘I remembered you, Thomas More, but you didn’t remember me’ outlines the ambiguity of who remembers what and who, but also that Cromwell is the sole authority of memory in the Trilogy.<sup>94</sup> Cromwell towards the end of *TMATL* is becoming forgotten while constantly remembering the facts of his life to negate that transformation to obscurity. Cromwell also implies that movement in the inner terrain of memory is also required to recollect the past and preserve real and mythical places. Memory is posed in the Cromwell Trilogy as a restorative practice. Memory also blurs the distinctions between myth and fact when it is improperly contained.

Memory repeatedly occupies the physical spaces of Mantel’s imagined dwellings, and so the interiority of her characters’ minds. Jane Griffith states that ‘because mental activity was understood to take the form of movement between these chambers, the architectural mnemonic might be understood not only as a virtual finding aid, but also as image of the remember and creating mind itself.’<sup>95</sup> The imagined dwelling spaces in Mantel’s fictions occur as containers of re-imagined memories. Aristotle regarded imagination as an extension of memory, for imagination, Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks explain, ‘was essential to the act of thinking and was prior to memory, which was in effect the subsequent recalling of images. If

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<sup>93</sup> *TMATL*, p. 853.

<sup>94</sup> *WH*, p. 640.

<sup>95</sup> Jane Griffiths, ‘Elizabeth Bishop’s House in the Mind: Memory, Imagination, and Interior Space in “The End of March”’, *Architectural Space and the Imagination: Houses in Literature and Art from Classical to Contemporary*, ed. Jane Griffiths, and Adam Hanna (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 197-212, p. 205.

memory was the ‘mother of muses,’ imagination was their very act of procreation.’<sup>96</sup> Dylan Trigg in *The Memory of Place* frequently links memory and imagination as collaborative endeavours: ‘memory and imagination work together to sculpt memories of a previous dwelling, now reanimated in the present dwelling [...] the dynamic interplay between memory and imagination is realised in that place becomes the passive container of memory, whereas the imagination is raised to the role of active retriever.’<sup>97</sup> Mantel’s Trilogy actively works against the idea that imagination is an obstacle for historians and scientists with regard to memory and reason.

Frequently in Mantel’s fictions, memory is spatialised in hidden rooms, ruins, buried in the ground, or within private houses of memory as Fludd in *Fludd* demonstrates: ‘One by one the pictures chased each other, and he held open his mind’s door, and let them pass through, until the house is empty.’<sup>98</sup> Mantel’s fictional dwellings then question how, in Trigg’s words, ‘memory and imagination work together to produce a mutated past, often in tension with the anonymous reality of that past.’<sup>99</sup> A consideration of how Mantel’s imagination defines the experience of familial and historical memory in dwellings, which Trigg also outlines as being ‘such that our sense of belonging to the past depends on not only remembering how things were, but constantly reworking that memory in the present’ (p. xxvi), is taken to conceptualise Mantel’s imagined dwellings as mutated historical artefacts. The dwellings-as-archives find ways to call up representations of the recoverable and absent memories.

The Cromwell Trilogy, then, poses writing to aid the recovery of collective memory and preservation of the past. Christophe in *WH* states that fragments of writing in the building with a soul ‘are made of spirit. They are what we shall have left, if all the books are burned. They will enable us to remember not only the past, but the future, and to see all the forms and customs that will one day inhabit the earth.’<sup>100</sup> Preserving his identity turns Cromwell into another trace that haunts the historical records. Furthermore, the process of writing is a performance in identity-constructions and selfhood. His private notes within *The Book of Henry* appear again as a hidden record that reflects his perception of Henry and the Tudor period: ‘He takes up his pen. God bless the work. [...] This is not a book you could take to the

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<sup>96</sup> Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks, ‘Introduction’, *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500- 1800*, ed. Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1-10, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Dylan Trigg, *The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2021), pp. 65-66.

<sup>98</sup> *Fludd*, p. 78.

<sup>99</sup> Trigg, p. xxv.

<sup>100</sup> *WH*, p. 615.

printer. It must be for the eyes of the few.’<sup>101</sup> Through the pen motif, the reader is invited to the hinterland of the imagined archive, where Cromwell’s perception and memories play out in narrative. The fact that inscribed records are not shown (rather than not preserved) is a crucial difference in Mantel’s imagined archive. The Cromwell Trilogy then presents the helpless experience of writing the past beyond the narrators’ control because of Cromwell’s crucial inaccessibility to the ownership of his words and dwellings-as-archives.

*WH* quotes Petrarch as Cromwell reflects over More’s death: ‘between one dip of the pen and the next, time passes: and I hurry, I drive myself, and I speed towards death. We are always dying – I while I write, you while you read, and others while they listen or block their ears; they are all dying.’<sup>102</sup> Cromwell’s role as archive and inverted archival agent throughout the Trilogy reveals that the living’s imagination can reinvent and rewrite historical and personal memory. Cromwell claims that ‘It’s the living that turn and chase the dead [...] we edit their writings, we rewrite their lives’ (p. 649). However, Mantel also reveals that the moment of imaginative writing is a neo-phenomenological moment that introduces new silences and gaps. The in-between place of writing history allows immediate access to Cromwell’s thoughts and memories, while also introducing the ambiguity of never knowing what knowledge and memories are collected and archived. In *TMATL*, Cromwell states:

It is nowhere recorded that the rewards of public office include a quiet mind. He sits in Whitehall, the year folding around him, aware of the shadow of his hand as it moves across the paper, his own inconceivable fist; and in the quiet of his house, he can hear the soft whispering of his quill, as if his writing is talking back to him.<sup>103</sup>

A discourse is generated in the physical act of writing and the silent house Cromwell is in. On one hand, the quill is generating sound and history. On the other, the private dwelling retains its silence to mirror the quiet mind and the unwritten accounts that Cromwell reflects on as a symbolic shadow of his hand. Through the motif of preserving legacy with inscription, Mantel explores Cromwell as a figure in the romance of the archive who prioritises his self-discovery and personal archive (via the setting of the rapidly modernising 1500s Britain) over communal archives.

In *Narrative and the Self*, Anthony Paul Kerby states: ‘self-understanding and self-identity will be dependent, in certain important respects, upon coherence and continuities of one’s personal narrative, understanding, after all, is facilitated by a clear presentation and

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<sup>101</sup> *TMATL*, p. 393.

<sup>102</sup> *WH*, p. 648.

<sup>103</sup> *TMATL*, p. 709.

development of material, and identity implies a certain continuity over time.’<sup>104</sup> Cromwell struggles to construct a coherent narrative of his life story. Cardinal Wolsey’s daughter Dorothea distorted his perception of his past, who claims that ‘forgery is among your talents, I hear.’<sup>105</sup> Dorothea’s distrust towards Cromwell’s written and spoken words rewrites his ability to recollect, his perception of himself, and his authority: ‘Dorothea has rewritten his story. She has made him strange to himself’ (p. 290). Because Cromwell ceases to recognise himself, his memory becomes both absent and present in the novel. The textual space of the Cromwell Trilogy offers an in-between place where Cromwell’s memory also slips because memory and Cromwell’s documents can always be rewritten. The tension in the Cromwell Trilogy is not just self-understanding, but how self-annihilation happens within the in-between places in Mantel’s works. The fictional Cromwell and the historical Cromwell never easily coincide in the Trilogy since memory slips in the in-between place, and historical fact is rewritten into fiction. Cromwell inscribing his documents and lifting the pen then offers a negation of such slippages in the in-between place of the Cromwell Trilogy.

Autobiographies are essential testimonies of selfhood and subjective experience. Mantel’s own memoir *GUTG* outlines her awareness of her past being constantly narrativized. Mantel states:

For a long time I felt as if someone else were writing my life. I seemed able to create or interpret characters in fiction, but not able to create or interpret myself. About the time I reached mid-life, I began to understand why this was. The book of me was indeed being written by other people: by my parents, by the child I once was, and by my own unborn children, stretching out their ghost fingers to grab the pen. I began this writing in an attempt to seize the copyright in myself.<sup>106</sup>

Mantel’s control over her past is written as possible when she takes charge of her narrative. Arnold also links the act of inscription to embodied knowledge, for ‘writing this account can provide her with a coherent presence in a way that mere physicality has failed to.’<sup>107</sup> Mantel’s memoir attempts ‘to find stability and place among the ‘ghost fingers’ seeking to possess Hilary’s life story’ which is complicated by her own ‘fluctuating and painful endometriotic body’ (p. 19). Ghosts and memory are then located within language, as well as within a body and text. The memoir acts as a hinterland that resists false perceptions of her own record.

Victoria Bennett claims ‘writing is a way of creating and delimiting the self’, exposing the ‘workings of the narrative self-in-the-world, the self that writes to be a part of the world

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<sup>104</sup> Anthony Paul Kerby, *Narrative and the Self* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> *TMATL*, p. 287.

<sup>106</sup> *GUTG*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>107</sup> Arnold, p. 18.

and the social (dis)order.’<sup>108</sup> The metaphor of ‘seize the copyright of myself’ appears in Lucy Arnold and Victoria Bennett’s critical assessment of Mantel. The idea of ‘seizing the copyright of myself’ expresses the authorial tension of testimony, while also creating enough ambivalence to allow her to imagine other voices in the text. Bennet explains that ‘writing herself is a kind of defiance, a way of breaking out of socially prescribed ideas of what the self should be, whether these are mediated through her stepfather’s proscriptions or the doctor who forbids her to write’ (ibid). The writing defiance allows the narrator Mantel to imagine metamorphosing her body into books with a ‘spine stiff enough to stand up in the wind.’<sup>109</sup> Mantel’s historical fictions are then a kind of pseudo-memoir where each historical figure can reanimate their voice. As such, the Cromwell Trilogy features Cromwell’s attempts to write himself into legislation while also criticising other authors’ approaches to writing and conceptualising England.

The interplay of material, immaterial, and imagined archives within the Cromwell Trilogy then follows Gilliland and Caswell’s claim that:

We cannot expect archivists, whose work is steeped in the material stuff of the past, to intervene directly in the immaterialities posed by imagined records. However, we can and should envision new ways that archival description, retrieval and use can be reworked to take absences – and their attending affects, into account, and in situations where our ethics and humanity demand it, striving to turn impossible archival imaginaries into possibilities.<sup>110</sup>

New archival descriptions through metafiction, historiographic metafiction, and intertextuality then explore the ‘theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction.’<sup>111</sup> Mantel’s interjection of the past through historical actors, such as Thomas Cromwell, is a theory of history through writing the personal perception of the past. Inscribing the past through such postmodern techniques (outlined by Patricia Waugh and Linda Hutcheon) creates intensely personal experiences where memory often drives the historical production. At the same time, historical fiction and historiographic metafiction focus on the recovery of the human subjects lost in history because of a prioritisation of nonhuman archival agency defining historiography (and therefore collective memory of history).

Through the pen, Mantel recreates her character’s palimpsest of memories. Memories and the past are recoverable through the archival agent who witnesses and recounts historical events. As an embodied object of the character’s knowledge, the pen explores the practice of

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<sup>108</sup> Victoria Bennet, ‘Subjectivity in Process: Writing and the I in *Giving Up the Ghost* and *Ink in the Blood*’, in *Hilary Mantel: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Pollard and Carpenter, pp. 73- 86, p. 79.

<sup>109</sup> *GUTG*, p. 222.

<sup>110</sup> Gilliland and Caswell, p. 73.

<sup>111</sup> Waugh, p. 2

writing the past as fiction. The inscribed past is the psycho-mythological territory that is traversed through the present-tense event of Mantel's characters writing. Mantel, then, posits that in the absence of a reliable archive of the past, the pen is the dual motif of preservation and reconstruction. The pen, then, challenges metanarratives while also asserting the historical romance genre inherent in Mantel's works.

In *BUTB*, Cromwell thinks 'You don't want history to make a liar of you. In public before your courtiers you had me state that you have never had to do with Mary Boleyn, while you sat there and nodded. You removed all impediments [...] But now our requirements have changes, and the facts have changed with us.'<sup>112</sup> Truth-seeking via inscribed texts in the Cromwell Trilogy is de-prioritised in favour of self-knowledge and changing history to best suit Cromwell and Henry's purposes. Thus, the discovery of knowledge lies in the gaps and the revisions or rewritings of history. Mantel also maintains that her discovery of knowledge lies within the dead, which, in Mbembe's words, means:

An intimate relationship with a world alive only by virtue of an initial event that is represented by the act of dying. This being the case, writing history merely involves manipulating archives. Following tracks, putting back together scraps and debris, and reassembling remains, is to be implicated in a ritual which results in the resuscitation of life, in bringing the dead back to life by reintegrating them in the cycle of time, in such a way that they find, in a text, in an artefact or in a monument, a place to inhabit.<sup>113</sup>

The imagined archive Mantel presents then emphasises what Gilliland and Caswell claim, 'for archival theory, this means complicating the link between record and event in order to accommodate records collectively conjured by affect rather than created by event.'<sup>114</sup> Mantel inscribes affective responses to the past as a reanimated, imagined dwelling-as-archive while reimagining Cromwell's personal account.

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<sup>112</sup> *BUTB*, p. 283.

<sup>113</sup> Mbembe, p. 25.

<sup>114</sup> Caswell and Gilliland, p. 72.



## **Conclusion: Resting on the Mantel Piece: The Mantelian Effect on the Writing of History**

The past went that-a-way. When faced with a totally new situation, we tend always to attach ourselves to the objects, to the flavour of the most recent past. We look at the present through a rear-view mirror. We march backwards into the future. Suburbia lives imaginatively in Bonanza-land.<sup>1</sup> – Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (1967).

The dwelling-as-archive appears in multiple forms to interrogate what is real and what is fictional in Mantel's works. In her most recently published novel *TMATL*, Thomas Cromwell walks through his new house in Mortlake, planning its refurbishment and extensions. Mortlake is near the place where Cromwell was born which means the place is a site of origin for Cromwell. This new house acts as Mantel's hinterland where Cromwell's memories and past enter the rooms and imbue this new dwelling-as-archive place with historical meaning. The historical meaning is represented by the dead which Cromwell feels he has brought from London. Cromwell states: 'Norris and George Boleyn, young Weston, Mark, and William Bereton. As he stepped out of his barge they stepped out too; they stood on the banks of the Styx, waiting to cross. They died within minutes of each other, but that does not mean they are together now. The dead wander the lanes of the next life like strangers lost in Venice.'<sup>2</sup> The reference of Cromwell's past experience of Italy merges with his memories of the dead men he helped sentence to death. The past experience and memories are disruptive to Mortlake because Cromwell has not yet dwelled within this space, for there 'is always a current of disturbance, till a house settles about you: till your dog finds its way to the hearth and the sheets to the beds, the beef to the table. There is a scent in the air that reminds him of something from the past' (ibid). Though he tells the dead to get out and they cannot move into Mortlake, Cromwell's memories are played out as he walks through the manor of Mortlake. Memories can still slip into the dwelling even if the dead cannot move in and disrupt the dwelling-as-archive.

The scent of the past, and the way the place is an origin for Cromwell's early memories, act as a sensory trigger that prompts Cromwell to recall the memories of his upbringing in Putney, his time in Italy, and the moment he witnessed Henry sign the dead's death warrants. By Henry's shoulder, Cromwell remembers the king's act of inscription as a historical moment

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (California: Gingko Press, 2001), pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup> *TMATL*, p. 220.

in process: ‘the king [as] an unwilling scholar, truculent as some infant set down for the first time with a slate. It is hard labour for Henry, it is irksome toil, signing lives away. And the king’s hand rests, it seems, for long moments together, to allow him to view the half-made strokes – as if they might form by themselves and relieve him of the task’ (pp. 220-21). Henry’s reluctance to sign lives away prompts Cromwell to feel as if it is his own body carrying out this act of inscription. Cromwell states: ‘Henry Norris, yes. He wills the royal arm to move. William Bereton, yes: he can feel, as if he himself were the king, the concentrated power of Rafe Sadler’s gaze on the nape of his neck’ (p. 221). Cromwell envisions himself in Henry’s body carrying out a historical act. Cromwell then explores the phenomenological idea of bodies acting as, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s words, ‘the vehicle of the world.’<sup>3</sup> Henry’s body and writing hand is important to sign the death warrants, completing Cromwell’s revenge against the four men who ‘for a joke turned the cardinal [Wolsey] into a beast.’<sup>4</sup> Thus, Henry’s body is a vehicle that Cromwell retrospectively desires to embody and control the history writing process.

The novel introduces further contingency in this moment by contrasting Henry’s statement of intent in ‘why would I show mercy, to a man who has debauched a queen of England’ with his hesitancy and sympathy for the ‘very young’ Weston.<sup>5</sup> The implication that Cromwell and Rafe Sadler encourage Henry out of hesitancy is represented by Rafe sharpening the quill for Henry and Cromwell stating, ‘it must be all of them: no doubts, no exceptions, all are guilty’ (p. 221). Cromwell is described throughout the Trilogy as ‘scribbling in the shadows’ while only accepting truths that he can use for his political gain (p. 299). The novel, then, questions the authority and objectivity over the decision to sign the death warrants by offering the contingency of Cromwell and Rafe’s involvement in their frequent rewriting of documentation. At the same time, Cromwell’s involvement behind the scenes of Henry’s acts of writing resembles how extra and possible knowledge in *APOGS* is ‘written in invisible ink,’ thus emphasising the possible histories that exist in Henry’s moment of inscription.<sup>6</sup>

Cromwell expresses uncertainty and contingency with his recollection of events; he is not sure if the memory is a perfect recall of the past or some other past slipping in: ‘He, Cromwell, thinks, I have done this before, surely? Some other time, some similar form of

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<sup>3</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ‘The Body as Object and Mechanistic Physiology’, *The Phenomenology Reader* ed. Dermot Moran and Timothy Mooney (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 427-435, p. 431.

<sup>4</sup> *BUTB*, p. 391.

<sup>5</sup> *TMATL*, p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> *APOGS*, p. 745.

coercion?’<sup>7</sup> Cromwell’s recall of the process of writing death warrants brings uncertainty as to the correct events, and calls into question the reliability of what Cromwell has misremembered, experienced, or imagined himself. Retrospection then underlines that unknowability of the past, that an unknown documentary source that describes Cromwell’s life cannot be objectively or neutrally related. Cromwell describes the process of pages and memories slipping as represented in ink, for ‘when the page grows dim and letter forms elide and slip into other conformations, so that as the page is turned the old story slides from sight and a strange and slipper confluence of ink begins to flow. You look back into your past and say, is this story mine; this land?’ (p. 250). This technique also questions whether the events of Cromwell’s life as they are narrated throughout *WH* to *TMATL* are reliable and recognisable. Cromwell’s past disrupts both the manor at Mortlake, and the recalled event of Henry signing the death warrants. Cromwell’s past then blurs the distinctions between facts and memory, between fictive and real, which underlines the uncertainty of these remembered events. The manor is, then, an in-between place where meaning and memory slip or overlap, allowing Cromwell to re-experience the past.

Mantel’s works, then, use historiographic metafiction as restorative practices for her characters and the possible, hypothetical pasts within the in-between places. The hypothetical pasts and documents in Mantel’s works are still treated with scepticism, such as Cromwell’s frequent questioning of the reliability of his own memory. However, these documents remain hypothetical and uninterrogated by historical discourse because they are burned, destroyed, or become missing over time such as Muriel’s file. Hutcheon states that historiographic metafiction question ‘how those documentary sources are deployed: can they be objectively, neutrally related? Or does interpretation inevitably enter with narrativization?’<sup>8</sup> Hutcheon also claims that historiographic metafiction uses ‘the paratextual conventions of historiography (especially footnotes) to both inscribe and undermine the authority and objectivity of historical sources and explanations’ (p. 91). Mantel’s paratextual information of the Seymour’s Wolf Hall retains the scepticism as to whether dwellings are stable containers of the past. Cromwell’s recall as he wanders through the Manor of Mortlake is not a typical paratext. However, Cromwell’s recall of the past is a self-conscious retrospection of a certain memory and

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<sup>7</sup> *TMATL*, p. 222.

<sup>8</sup> Hutcheon, ‘Historiographic Metafiction’, *Metafiction*, ed. Mark Currie (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 71-91, p. 90.

Cromwell's perspective of the historical event, thus introducing contingency into the historical moment.

The dwelling-as-archive through Mantel's works presents that similar ambiguity of the inscription and undermining of historical sources, especially since the dwelling-as-archive represents a fractured archive and dwelling experience that cannot easily contain memory. Mantel's dwelling-as-archive does not focus on whose history gets told despite the marginal subjects explored in Mantel's works. Instead, the novels motif of the dwelling-as-archive questions what stories can be found and how they can be (re)told.

This thesis claims that the dwelling-as-archive and the ways the process of history recording is explored in such in-between places is characteristic, if not an offshoot, of historiographic metafiction. The five chapters discussed how the dwelling-as-archive formalises the scepticism of historical documents and archives providing a totalising account of history by presenting memory and the past as vulnerable and misplaced. The places outlined in Mantel's works cannot contain memory or historical objects which means dwellings-as-archives are not secure places for characters to dwell and preserve their familial histories. The dwelling-as-archive's containment of historical documents and objects means the dwelling-as-archives are often bodies of knowledge that are constantly questioned for their ability to keep the factual and 'possible' accounts of the past. The factual accounts of the past relate to the historical research Mantel undertakes per novel and the paratextual information she sometimes supplies where needed. The 'possible' accounts of the past relate to Mantel's imagination of the past to fill in the gaps. The in-between places they represent blur the boundaries of history and fiction. As such, the dwelling-as-archives are subverted and destabilised in the novels to expose the suppressed histories. Exploring the dwelling-as-archives in their multiple forms introduces multiple contingencies to be both re-experienced and interrogated.

In her second Reith Lecture, 'The Iron Maiden', Mantel pinpoints the ethical and moral issues with reconstructing the past and how historical narratives are commoditised for public consumption. Mantel states 'we crave the style of the past while condemning its substance.'<sup>9</sup> Every historian or historical novelists' interpretation of a historical event destabilises the historical record. Intentions and the processes of narrativization must be questioned and analysed as much as the gaps found in facts. Writers of historical fiction, Mantel claims, 'want to give a voice to those who have been silenced. Fiction can do that because it concentrates on what is not on the record. But we must be careful when we speak for others. Are we being

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<sup>9</sup> Mantel, 'The Iron Maiden', *The BBC Reith Lectures*, BBC Radio 4, 25 July 2017.

colonialists? Are we parasites? If we write about the victims of history, are we reinforcing their status by detailing it? Or shall we rework history so victims are the winners?’ (ibid). Many feel the need to improve the past. Some, Lowenthal states, ‘purposefully improve history, memory, and relics to reveal the past’s ‘true’ nature better than could be done in its own time’, while ‘some falsify the past because what actually happened shames or beggars or scares them; others forge paintings or salt sites with fake antiquities to gain wealth or to perpetuate a hoax; still others invent history for pride or patriotism.’<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Mantel states that ‘the novelist doesn’t spoil history for others. She doesn’t trash her sources once she’s used them. The archive remains secure [...] she offers a version of the past – there can be others, and there will be. The novelist owns up to invention.’<sup>11</sup> Her view counteracts any nostalgia felt about the past and any ‘improvements’ of the received version of a given historical event. Mantel claims she neither adds to nor removes from history because she is more concerned with exploring the gaps within the archives. Often, the gaps feature the dead who follow many of Mantel’s characters into the in-between places. Mantel’s works then explore how far the novel is a home for historical knowledge and memory. Her novels also ask whether suppressed pasts are the result of incorrect recording of historical events, the archival agent’s biases, or the archival agents’ inability to understand historical meaning from objects.

Mantel, then, investigates beyond, in her words, the ‘limits of documentary evidence into the murky waters of motivation, those motivations that may not be present even to the characters own minds, goes into the hinterlands, into the subconscious.’<sup>12</sup> Mantel’s works offer a re-enactment of the past because of the hinterlands present within domestic places. Archival agents often need spatial metaphors to relate their experience of the world outside the domestic, but also to place them in a given historical moment. In ‘The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher’, the unknown author states ‘Picture first the street where she breathed her last.’<sup>13</sup> The opening of the short story directs the setting, the title stating that the assassination happened in 1983. However, Thatcher’s real-life death happened in 2013. The counterfactual short story requires spatialisation to blur the distinctions of fact and fiction, and thus possible accounts and historical meanings to generate. As Ginette Carpenter in ‘Walking the Dead’ states,

Both history and the bodies of the past are untethered from more conventional narratives that anchor them solely to specific positions. Discussing the past and its dead via the prism of spatial metaphors

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<sup>10</sup> Lowenthal, pp. 499-500.

<sup>11</sup> ‘The Iron Maiden’.

<sup>12</sup> Hilary Mantel, ‘Booker Winner Hilary Mantel on “Opening up the Past”’, (2012), [date last accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020], <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1-wBRsQAVo>>.

<sup>13</sup> *TAMT*, p. 207.

allows for a re-calibration that contradicts fixity and allows for resistance and change; it (re)positions the past as mutable and history as re-walked and rewritten by both its writers and readers.<sup>14</sup>

The possibility of recreating and reimagining the past into counterfactual narratives is only possible through the in-between status of the dwelling as archive that the Georgian house presents in 'The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher'. Spatial motifs then explain Mantel's 'Can These Bones Live?' claim that 'the task of historical fiction is to take the past out of the archive and relocate it in a body.'<sup>15</sup> However, there is a certain tension between Mantel writing 'beyond the limits of documentary evidence' with her possible accounts of the past, and her faithfulness towards historical facts and events.

Mantel claims in a 2015 interview that 'nobody else works by this method, with my ideal of fidelity to history.'<sup>16</sup> The literary-historical novels Mantel explores within the subgenres of historiographic metafiction and the romances of the archive differ from the traditional historical novel Georgs Lukács explains in *The Historical Novel*. Mazurek summarises Lukács assessment of the historical novel as aiming 'to present a 'total' model of a society undergoing historical change, and which avoids reminding the reader of its limitations as a textual version of history.'<sup>17</sup> Mantel's works also challenge metanarratives by exploring the dwellings-as-archive as a plural and non-totalising archival agent. Metanarratives are defined by John Stephens as 'a globalising or totalising cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience.'<sup>18</sup> They are meta, in David Shumway's words, 'because they structure many specific narratives, both fictional and nonfictional, and as such they cannot be overly specific themselves. But they are formed of features typical of stories rather than purely of concepts or ideas.'<sup>19</sup> The legitimacy of metanarrative itself is challenged in the postmodern era. Chen Houliang states:

When the preferred legitimation process of knowledge becomes plural, localised and contingent, and we do not need a totalising authority [...] Besides the totalising and teleological charges, metanarrative is also accused for being an exclusive, dictatorial mode of discourse. With its claims for universality, objectivity and absoluteness, it suppresses the expression of locality, contingency, and relativity, only to induce ominous monopoly of knowledge and totality in politics rather than ultimate liberation it claims to bring forth.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Carpenter, p. 114.

<sup>15</sup> 'Can These Bones Live?'

<sup>16</sup> Mantel and Mona Simpson.

<sup>17</sup> Mazurek, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> John Stephens, *Robyn McCallum, Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> David R. Shumway, 'Looking Backward, Looking Forward: Utopia, Avatar, and the Loss of Progressive Metanarrative', *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, 6.1 (2014), 45-59, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Chen Houliang, 'Constructing Postmodernism with Incredulity to Metanarrative: A Comparative Perspective on McHale's and Hutcheon's Postmodern Poetics', *Neohelicon*, 42.1 (2015), 283-95, p. 285.

Mantel's works destabilise the totalising narrative schema of the metanarrative through genre-bending and including possible and marginalised histories into her works. The dialogue of presence/absence concerning missing or destroyed documents and memories unsettles the idea of a complete homogenous archive. The dwelling-as-archive's dual function as a domestic home and a porous archive further deconstructs any sense of a totalising function that dwellings represent to a Mantelian character.

However, the lack of a homogenous archive also presents multiple issues for the archival agent characters. As Mantel states, 'history is not the past – it is the method we have evolved of organising our ignorance of the past. It's the record of what's left on the record [...] it's the multiplication of the evidence of fallible and biased witnesses, combined with incomplete accounts of actions not fully understood by the people who performed them.'<sup>21</sup> Mantel's works play with the problem presented with metanarrative totalisation. Mantel's archival agents oscillate between organising and recording the present into a past narrative and struggling to recall the order of a historical event or understand what their own bodies remember. Meanwhile, there are multiple voices in the dwelling-as-archive that compete to tell their version of events. In *BB* and *Fludd*, oral archives explore the subversion of the totalising metanarrative. Voices and the re-exhumation of the dead then explore competing discourses from the historical record and in historical writing. The novels then also present the fractured methods and ways to tell a story from different characters, thus emphasising both 'who' should tell the story and 'how' the past should be recorded and stored.

Historical romance, with its suggestion of frivolity and irrelevance, then solves the issue of imaginative fiction acting as an authoritative voice in historical discourse. Mantel states that 'this is how we live in the world: romancing' (ibid). 'The Day is for the Living' notes the shift between perceptions of romance: 'Once the romance was about aristocratic connections and secret status, the fantasy of being part of an elite. Now the romance is about deprivation, dislocation, about the distance covered between there and here: between, let's say, where my great-grandmother was and where I am today. The facts have less traction, less influence on what we are and what we do, than the self-built fictions' (ibid). Mantel's dwelling-as-archives shifts back to Lukács' theory that 'what matters therefore in the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should reexperience the social and human motives which led

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<sup>21</sup>'The Day is For The Living'.

men to think, feel, and act just as they did in historical reality.’<sup>22</sup> Mantel’s historical works explores the individual experience, for, in Ian Watt’s words:

If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side, it would only be an inverted romance; but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective: the novel’s realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it.<sup>23</sup>

Mantel believes that historical fiction must challenge and discomfort the reader through having marginalised characters feel and re-experience the past from their differing perspectives.

The true purpose of collecting and reinterpreting the past features in her first Reith Lecture: ‘To retrieve history we need rigour, integrity, unsparing devotion and an impulse to scepticism. To retrieve the past, we require all those virtues, and something more. If we want added value – to imagine not just how the past was, but what it felt like, from the inside – we pick up a novel.’<sup>24</sup> Mantel champions history as ‘a human being who hears’ and to do justice to ‘the past in its nuance, intricacy, familiarity and strangeness’ (ibid). Mantel’s historical fiction then seeks to reinvent historical production as an embodied agent that enables a shared experience of the past through dwellings. At the same time, the dwelling-as-archive’s porous status as an in-between place often frees ‘the people from the archive and lets them run about, ignorant of their fates, with all their mistakes unmade’ (ibid). Mantel’s reconstruction of the past through her imagination then necessitates the characters having sensory access to documents and historical events, thus re-experiencing the past as present and free to be reinterpreted.

Mantel’s works show that writing historical fiction is an affective response which questions the fractured ways archived histories are interpreted and preserved. Through dwellings and archives, Mantel’s works stress the need for effective and affective communication when writing about, or recording, the past. The present tense imparts the immediate experience of the past in her works. Mantel states in ‘Make It Now’.

I have found that many of the givens of history melt away on close examination, so I am trying to reflect that perception. The past tense can take-on a God-like knowingness. Here I stand: over there, separate from me, is the past event. I don’t think like that. I think we are in history, history is in us. I am moving, relative to the text I generate, and relative to all the texts that stand behind it, and which are constantly being reinterpreted. We are all moving. There is no moment I can pinpoint as ‘now’, at which I am standing to tell the story.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lukács, p. 42.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Pimlico, 2000), p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> ‘The Day Is For The Living’.

<sup>25</sup> Mantel and Richard Lea, ‘Make It Now’.



Transition, transformation, and blurred boundaries are frequent themes in Mantel's works to reflect the need to address a totalising metanarrative of the past. The collapse of past and present allow the reader to investigate possible experiences of historical meaning in Mantel's works. T.S. Eliot argues in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1917) that the historical sense:

Involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order [...] a writer more acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.<sup>26</sup>

Mantel speaks in her interviews of a similar awareness of contemporaneity as her characters reconstruct the past in the present. Mantel's works, and the setting of the dwelling-as-archive, then imaginatively explores the ways the present can reconfigure the past by focusing on the character's contemporaneity. In *WH*, Cromwell states 'there are moments when a memory moves right through you.'<sup>27</sup> The past is re-experienced because muddled memories represent a felt past, especially in character's bodies. This neo-phenomenological re-experience of the past then acts in addition to historiographic metafiction because characters always question the reliability of memory. There is renewed access to the past through these dwellings-as-archive, with these in-between places able to offer a new vantage point into character's memories, feelings, and neglected bodies of knowledge.

James Woods states that Mantel 'has made a third category of the reality, the plausibly hypothetical.'<sup>28</sup> This thesis claims that the plausibly hypothetical is exemplified by the dwelling-as-archive motif and Mantel's works' genre bending. Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* (2020) has emerged after the success of Mantel's Cromwell Trilogy. O'Farrell's *Hamnet* is her first historical fiction despite also writing other novels about the past. Susan Strehle states that Farrell's novels, published between 2000-2020, 'function as mysteries in which a present event sends the protagonist on a quest, often interior and reflective; the answer lies in the past, where a hidden or frustrated passion has thwarted the protagonist's (sometimes an entire family's) self-knowledge and acceptance.'<sup>29</sup> Maggie O'Farrell, much like Hilary Mantel, states: 'I suppose I'm drawn to the romance of things that have vanished. That's what fascinates me

<sup>26</sup> T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent (1917)', *T. S. Eliot: Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), pp. 13-22, p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> *WH*, p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> James Wood, 'Invitation to a Beheading', *The New Yorker*, (2012), [date last accessed: 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021], <<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/05/07/invitation-to-a-beheading>>.

<sup>29</sup> Susan Strehle, 'Maggie O'Farrell: Discoveries at the Edge', *The Contemporary British Novel Since 2000*, ed. James Acheson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 61-69, p. 61.

about living in cities. Everywhere you go, you're constantly bumping into the past.'<sup>30</sup> O'Farrell is Mantel's most direct contemporary, if not successor, of hypothetical realities in historical fiction.

The two novelist's approach to writing history contain traces of Irish sensibility towards the past; there is a constant tension between traditional and revisionist accounts of the past.<sup>31</sup> O'Farrell was born in Northern Ireland yet grew up in Wales and Scotland. She expressed a wariness of writing Irish subjects until her novel *Instructions for a Heatwave* (2013). O'Farrell was asked in 2016 to participate in an Australian panel on Irish writers because she was the most Irish person at the book tour. O'Farrell said: 'I'm not sure if you really want me on this panel because I was born there but I didn't really grow up there.'<sup>32</sup> O'Farrell's statement echoes Mantel's own experience of a missing Irish identity (though Mantel was never born in Ireland). The missing Irishness impacted Mantel's relationship with her Irish grandparents. The novelists may not be able to acknowledge their Irish identity, but they also cannot escape the traces of their familial past. This thesis offers hypothetical historical fictions as a possible result of Mantel and O'Farrell's common experience of a displaced Irish identity. Themes of lost memories and gaps of the past are possible traces of a missing Irish experience and identity in Mantel's life. Rewriting the past and offering possible vantage points that investigates missing Irish historical meaning then translates to how Mantel revises and reconstructs the past.

Hutcheon states that postmodern fiction 'suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological.'<sup>33</sup> Breaking the borders between fiction and history allows Mantel to regain lost historical meaning previously contained in dwellings and archives. Her imagination then restores dead marginalised figures to the foreground of their historical setting. Mantel became a historical novelist because, as she states in 'Adaptation', 'historical fiction acts to make the past a shared imaginative resource. It is more than a project of preservation: it is a project against death.'<sup>34</sup> The dead are objects of historical interest once again because of their ability to exist in the in-between places. Moreover, the dead can engage in discourse to prevent a totalising and homogeneous dwelling-as-archive experience. In *BUTB*, Cromwell

<sup>30</sup> Alastair Sooke, 'Maggie O'Farrell Interview', *The Telegraph*, (2010), [date last accessed: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021], <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7597512/Maggie-OFarrell-interview.html>>.

<sup>31</sup> See Hugh F. Kearney's 'Visions and Revisions: Views of Irish History', *The Irish Review*, 27 (2001), 113-120.

<sup>32</sup> Maggie O'Farrell, 'Maggie O'Farrell: Teachers would say 'Are your family in the IRA?', *The Irish Times*, (2016), [date last accessed: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022], <<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/maggie-ofarrell-teachers-would-say-are-your-family-in-the-ira-1.2687468>>

<sup>33</sup> Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, p. 110.

<sup>34</sup> 'Adaptation'.

states, 'I sat in a room with him. A room here at the Tower, such as the one you occupy. I listened to the murmurs within his silence. Construction can be put on silence. It will be.'<sup>35</sup> Mantel stresses the reimagined historical meaning and fictive possibilities in her work that could exist outside her fictional hinterlands, emphasising the complex ambiguities in Mantel's dwellings-as-archives. The past is reconstructed to be reexperienced anew in these in-between places. At the same time, the silences and the traces of the past are constructed in fiction to explore what it means to re-experience the voices of the dead, and the past, in dwellings and archives.

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<sup>35</sup> *BUTB*, p. 397.

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