

Colorado College

The Testimonial Experience of Civil Wars: A Question of Trauma Expression and Historical  
Representation

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## Introduction

The repercussions of civil war change not only the political, economic, and social structures, but also cultural memory of the nation. While Spain and Northern Ireland are not unique in the fact that they experienced civil wars, the effects of these events were arguable felt by all. Due to the overwhelming number of civilian fighters an even greater number of people became connected to the civil wars through their direct participation, witnessing, and survival of the events.<sup>1</sup> Since the trauma affected the entire society the two nations formed a collective memorialization in the effort of creating a single narrative in order to control the commemoration of the wars. Due to legislative and societal pressures many of those who had their memories silenced have only recently begun to express their experiences.

The governmental and societal pressures, along with the effects of trauma, as induced by the civil wars, repressed the memories of individuals and collective groups surrounding the conflicts. Trauma affects the verbalization and recollection of one's memories. These effects appear in the forms of silence, repetition, stuttering, anxiety, stress, or distressed body language, as well as the reliance upon a shared or previously established collective discourse. The difficulties of verbalizing trauma and past events created a culture and a set of legal limitations surrounding the silence of the civil wars.

Archives of audiovisual testimonies reconstruct the collective memories surrounding the two civil wars by privileging the individual experiences.<sup>2</sup> Since the respective societies repressed individual memory expression, no discourse emerged after the civil wars, except for the

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<sup>1</sup> Guerrilla fighters in Spain were most prominent from the 1940s onwards, there were a number of different groups of guerrilla fighters with a variety of ideological motivations (Marco 6). The paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, along with the British army were the two sources of violence before and during the Troubles (Jarman 421). The paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland remain active, despite the peace treaties.

<sup>2</sup> University of California, San Diego and the Ulster University created two archives which contain the testimonies of witnesses and survivors from the Spanish Civil War and Irish Troubles studied in this paper.

institutionally supported collective memory. Thus the individuals who speak about their past experiences of the civil war often rely upon collective discourse as a way to supplement the lacking individual frameworks. The use of the two discourses constructs a third discourse, termed the polyphonic discourse, in which speakers draw upon multiple voices, all the while emphasizing his or her individual experience. The representations of trauma, use the collective discourse in the expression of their individual narratives, which often go against the previously established memory. The archives embody the consolidation of the individual and collective discourses in the expression and representation of the civil wars. Through the individual's use of the polyphonic discourse the individual's experiences and trauma become privileged.

The following paper will use the civil wars of Spain and Northern Ireland as two case studies for the analysis of the individual expression of trauma. I will establish the historical contexts of the two wars, followed by an examination and comparison of the collective and individual silences and the memorialization of the civil wars. Afterwards, I will analyze the effects of trauma on the individual expression of the civil wars. Finally I will discuss the limitations of the archives. Through the comparative study of two civil wars and the different methods of memorialization and representation, an argument may be made that in order to discuss an individual's traumatic experience he or she may use the polyphonic discourse thereby allowing the speaker to both represent his or her experiences as well as begin to process any past trauma.

### **The Historical Context of the Spanish and Irish Civil Wars and the After-War Years**

The Spanish Civil War lasted from 1936-1939, and during this time there was massive societal upheaval, not only from the ensuing violence, but also in the rapidly changing government. The Spanish Civil war broke out in 1936 after a failed coup d'état against the

Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939). The civil war affected all of Spain, since both men and women acted as participants in the war. The war resulted in 270,000 prisoners, and approximately 600,000 deaths (Casanova 184 and 187).<sup>3</sup> A completely different government and state rose to power after the war and gave rise to a dictatorship under Francisco Franco. Franco came to power in 1936 when he was appointed “Generalísimo and supreme head of the military rebels” (Casanova 18).<sup>4</sup> His rule lasted until his death in 1975. During his time as dictator he dictated the representations of the civil war to legitimize and elevate the actions of him and his supporters. The combination of Franco’s rule and the suppression of all opposition led to a complete silencing of many during and after his dictatorship.<sup>5</sup>

While the Northern Ireland Troubles do not share the same title of a civil war, it was in fact a violent civil conflict that resulted in changes politically, culturally, socially, and economically.<sup>6</sup> The Troubles unfolded over the course of approximately 30 years. The Troubles have a long historical background before the first violent outbreak in the 1960s; however Cairns and Darby simplify the Troubles to “a struggle between those who wish to see Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom and those who wish to see the reunification of the island of Ireland” (Cairns and Darby 754). The close confines of the northern region of the island amplified the effects of the Troubles, thus creating and ensuring a collective trauma. There were over 3,000 deaths and 30,000 recorded injuries in a population of 1.5 million living in a space of

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<sup>3</sup> The number of deaths from the Spanish Civil War is of great contention. Historians use numbers that range from 500,000 to one million.

<sup>4</sup> Another name for Franco is “Caudillo de España por la Gracia de Dios.”

<sup>5</sup> The suppression of civil war expression remains present in modern Spanish society, since the democracy has never condemned the actions of Franco or his dictatorship.

<sup>6</sup> “The term 'Troubles' was frequently used in a social context at 'wakes' or funerals where people who wanted to express condolence would often say ‘sorry for your troubles’ to the relatives and friends of the deceased. It may be that the use of the term was extended from this context to cover wider social and political conflict” (CAIN: The Northern Ireland Conflict). While the civil conflict of Northern Ireland is often referred to as a conflict or the Troubles, for the purpose of this paper, I will also refer to the Troubles as a civil war.

32,000 square miles, thereby ensuring the widespread effects of the civil war (Cairns and Darby 756).

Both Spain and Northern Ireland, codified systems of societal silence after their respective civil wars. While Spain legislated the silencing, Northern Ireland used societal pressures as the primary method of oppressing one another. The Spanish law, “La Ley de Amnistía” (the Amnesty Law of 1977), stipulated a collective forgetting of the civil war and dictatorship. The Amnesty Law of 1977 “determinará en general la extinción de la responsabilidad criminal derivada de las penas impuestas o que se pudieran imponer con carácter principal o accesorio” (Artículo sexto de la Ley 46/1977). The political elites agreed upon “the constitutional compromise [which] agreed to “forget” the past in order to create a new political environment based on mutual tolerance and respect” (Boyd 135). Thus the law instated the colloquially named “Pacto del Olvido” which silenced all trauma and injustices that occurred during the civil war.

Unlike Spain, Northern Ireland did not legally implement an agreement to forget the events of the conflict. There was however a social agreement in which many agreed to forget about the conflict and “move on.” The peace process, which “concluded” the conflict in 1998 in the “Good Friday or Belfast Agreement,” stipulated the end of the violence between the various paramilitary groups (such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)). The Good Friday Agreement argues for “The true memorial to the victims of violence. The participants particularly recognise that young people from areas affected by the troubles face particular difficulties and will support the development of special community-based initiatives...” (“Reconciliation and Victims of Violence” Part 12). This agreement legally

guaranteed the creation of the Northern Ireland government, economic reforms, and the recognition of the victims from the conflict.

After the Troubles (1998), a number of governmental and community organizations began working towards reuniting society through the recognition of individual and collective suffering. The organization, PRONI (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland), created a public archive of documents, historical data, and founded a number of community engagement projects. These projects included the commemorative celebrations of the Troubles as well as the collection of individual testimonies of his or her experiences during the Troubles. The 2015 Stormont House Agreement argues to move towards a “guarantee[s] reconciliation” between the different peoples of Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement 2015). The significance of having a more recent document demonstrates the nation’s movement towards legally recognizing the victims and survivors, their voice, and their narratives. These two documents demonstrate the legal and community initiatives put in place to help guide a societal reconciliation.

Similarly to the movement toward the civil war memorialization in Northern Ireland, Spain also underwent a number of legal and social changes in order to begin the recognition process of those previously silenced. Although the amnesty law remains to the present day, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned Spain in 2012 and requested that they retract the law. This mandate hoped to right the “serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed during the Civil War and Franco’s dictatorship...” (UN Human Rights Council Session). While there has not been a removal of the Amnesty Law of 1977, there has been a movement towards remembrance.

The silencing and forced forgetting began to change in 2000 under the new prospect of remembering the events of the civil war and the dictatorship. The Association for the

Recuperation of Historical Memory (ARMH), began the movement towards the “Recuperation of Historical Memory” by “working to restore dignity to the victims of the regime, and to demand justice for those who have not had a voice within our democracy” (ARMH). Legally the Spanish state passed “La Ley de Memoria Histórica” (the “Law of Historical Memory”) with the following purpose:

reparar a las víctimas, consagrar y proteger, con el máximo vigor normativo, el derecho a la memoria personal y familiar como expresión de plena ciudadanía democrática, fomentar los valores constitucionales y promover el conocimiento y la reflexión sobre nuestro pasado, para evitar que se repitan situaciones de intolerancia y violación de derechos humanos como las entonces vividas.<sup>7</sup> (La Ley 52/2007)

With the passing of this law, a number of organizations founded projects to recover the memory of those who society previously forgot. The ARMH engaged in a number of projects in the pursuit of recovering memory in the form of exhuming mass graves and identifying the victims, along with the creation of archives of official documents from the war (“What is the Association...”). One of these projects is the effort to recognize many different individual experiences of the war through the recording of individual testimonies.

Both Spain and Northern Ireland progressed after their civil wars with the agreement for silence and oblivion. Paloma Aguilar addresses the construction and maintenance of collective memory in her book *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*. Aguilar not only examines the ways in which collective and individual memory coexist and rely on one another’s existence, but also the role of amnesia in the process of cultural memorialization. Aguilar briefly states that “amnesty and amnesia have the same origin” (19).

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<sup>7</sup> Boyd explains the function of the Law of Historical Memory “pointedly avoided references to historical or collective memory, recognizing only each citizen’s right to “personal and family memory” (Boyd 145). The bill also “refuses to define or impose a common historical memory for all Spaniards. Instead, it guarantees the right of each individual or group to remember the past in their own, way, while asserting a governmental role in the search for historical knowledge and the promotion of “democratic memory...” (Boyd 146).



Both amnesty and amnesia create the agreement for a collective silence – rather than memory. Therefore limiting the opportunities in which one may express his or her memories and relegating the experiences to distant spaces which offer the speaker the chance to discuss his or her traumatized past.

Many of the individuals in both Spain and Northern Ireland that participated in the memory recovery projects were affected by the civil wars, by witnessing and surviving the violence. Giorgio Agamben discusses the role of witnesses and survivors, specifically in the context of witnessing the actions the state in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Agamben says: “man as a living being presents himself no longer as an object but as the subject of political power” (13). Thus man not only witnesses political power, but also experiences it – just as those who witnessed the civil wars also experienced it. Agamben continues his discussion of the survivor to explain how they have gained the distance needed between them and the events that they have experienced in order to speak of them (99). The survivors of the state live in a tenuous and liminal space in which they are torn between their allegiance to the state and the dead, who they must honor, as part of their duty. Thus the speakers within the two testimonies may be termed survivors and witnesses of the two civil wars due to their experiences and the distance between the events and their present in order to speak of the conflicts.

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and Ulster University archives contain numerous testimonies of survivors of the civil wars.<sup>8</sup> Both archives format the testimonies audiovisually, thereby highlighting the presence of the speaker, an interviewer, a camera person,

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<sup>8</sup> The University of California, San Diego created the Spanish Civil War Memory Project: Audiovisual Archive of the Francoist Repression. Ulster University created the second archive used for this project entitled, Accounts of the Conflict: A Digital Archive of Personal Accounts of the Conflict in and around Northern Ireland.

and often a friend or family member of the speaker.<sup>9</sup> The testimonies address a number of various perspectives from the wars, thus creating a large and diverse archive of personal accounts.

The UCSD and Ulster University archives contain, store, and preserve cultural documents; however due to their location online, the status of the archives is questionable. The Society of American Archivists defines an archive as “An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations” (S.A.A. Glossary). The documents stored in the archive must hold culturally important records that must be of historical or cultural importance (S.A.A. Glossary). Derrida further analyzes and questions the role of an archive in “Archive Fever.” Derrida explains how archives function as a societies’ unconscious holding all the society wishes to repress and forget (9). Derrida further explains that through the archivization of documents a consignment of memory occurs thus rendering the memories within the archive inaccessible (10). Both archives studied in this paper were created in the effort of memorializing the individual perspective on the civil wars, specifically of those that had previously been silenced; and yet due to the very nature of the archive the voices and memories remain repressed.

The site (or the website) of the archives embody and further the very act of amnesia that they are trying to prohibit and combat. The individual testimonies within the larger collection of the archive ultimately become consigned, and subsumed, in the same way that the individual and collective discourses become indistinguishable in the telling of his or her experiences. Thus the two archives ultimately fail in their goals of memorializing the individual representations of the civil wars, and fall into the propagation of the hegemonic silencing of individual experiences and discourses.

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<sup>9</sup> At least for the purpose of this paper are all audiovisual. The testimonies found in the Ulster University archive have a number of different formats.

The memorialization of the two civil wars while previously an all-encompassing silence has progressed towards a collective memorialization in the form of the two archives. While these two archives may be limited by their ability to contain and promote the individual memory, it will nevertheless maintain the individual accounts of the civil wars and the after war years.

### **The Role and Effects of Trauma**

Trauma, an intrinsically personal affliction displays itself psychologically and physically. The study of an individual's trauma consists of the onset of trauma, including the witnessing or experiencing of violent actions, and emotional, mental, and physical abuse. Trauma manifests itself in a variety of forms such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), nightmares, memory loss, and language disruption – in the form of stuttering, silence, repetition, and the inability to recall words or name emotions. Cathy Caruth, one of the leading scholars in trauma theory explains how “The pathology consists, rather, solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it” (Caruth 4, original emphasis). Caruth defines the traumatic experience as abnormal, thereby creating a space in which these different experiences may be analyzed and the difficulties expressed, thus demonstrating the need for trauma theory which allows for the analysis of different areas within the field.

The application of trauma theory to the examination of oral testimonies from survivors and witnesses of the Spanish Civil War and the Northern Ireland Troubles necessitates the study of three specific areas of trauma theory; the study of witnesses, individual and collective trauma, and the long-lasting effects of trauma. One of the effects of trauma is that language becomes impeded by the trauma thus making it difficult for individuals to speak of their experiences. Caruth explains how “To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. And

thus the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted, simply, as a distortion of reality, nor as the repression of what once was wished” (Caruth 4-5). While there are a number of areas in trauma theory, the theories rely upon the knowledge and understanding of psychoanalysis which assists in the explanation of the repression of memories and language.<sup>10</sup>

Psychoanalysis and trauma theory function in conjunction with one another in order to further the study of trauma’s effects on the mind of those who repressed the experience from his or her conscious mind. Sigmund Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis, explores the repression of memory and the ways in which trauma affects one’s being. The repression of memories and the idea that the changes to one’s ego and his or her conscious actions are the “reactions expressed in their behavior... from a mental constellation of revolt, which has then, by a certain process, passed over into the crushed state of melancholia” (Freud 248). These memories that the brain naturally represses for the benefit of the ego are often harmful and will escape from their exile in the unconscious in the form of mourning, melancholia, mania, and depression. While both Freud and Julia Kristeva address the effects of trauma on one’s ego, only Kristeva discusses the ramifications of these three afflictions on one’s language expression.

Kristeva’s analysis concerning the effects of depression and melancholia goes a step further than Freud’s since she examines how language becomes affected as a result of trauma. Trauma affects language such that “speech delivery is slow, silences are long and frequent, rhythms slacken, intonations become monotonous and the very syntactic structures [fragment]” (Kristeva 34). Kristeva’s list of the changes of language demonstrates the key elements to look for when analyzing a person’s speech, especially someone who has undergone some kind of

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<sup>10</sup> For additional readings on trauma theory, please see:  
 K. Erikson, “Notes on Trauma and Community,” (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U Press, 1995) 183-199.  
 J. Herman, “Trauma and Recovery,” (N.p.: Basic, 1992.) Print.  
 H. Krystal, “Trauma and Aging: A Thirty-Year Follow-Up,” (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U Press, 1995) 76-99.

trauma. Thus Kristeva's text serves as an exemplary guide to illustrate the various factors of traumatized speech when watching and examining testimonies.

An individual's inability to contextualize his or her past experiences within any kind of discursive framework demonstrates his or her difficulty with language. Ernst Van Alphen discusses the lack of existing discourse and narratological frameworks necessary for making sense of one's experience. Van Alphen explains how the "experience of an event or history is dependent on the terms the symbolic order offers. It needs these terms to transform living through the event into an experience of the event" (27). Experience is thus the ability to frame lived moments in which one is present. Trauma is a "failed experience" in that "the close interconnectedness of discourse and experience is disrupted" (Van Alphen 26). Van Alphen's argument that trauma does not fit into any discursive framework thereby raises the question as to how survivors and witnesses of traumatic events talk about it.

Psychoanalysis thus explains the breaks in language and the inability to describe memories because they have been repressed and not properly processed within one's mental being. Trauma theory explores the effects of the trauma, and Van Alphen raises the issues of how witnesses and survivors discuss trauma. While psychoanalysis accounts for the breaks in language, one needs a third and final theoretical framework in order to study the patterns in the breaks of language and the ways in which language and silence work together to form testimonies or narratives of trauma.

The lack and inability to frame a testimony due to trauma serve to create what is called an "unnatural narrative." Jan Alber and Rudiger Heinze explain how "unnatural narratives" "have a defamiliarizing effect because they are experimental, extreme, transgressive, unconventional, non-conformist, or out of the ordinary" (Alber and Heinze 2). These unnatural narratives, in the

form of oral testimonies (and other forms of trauma representation) confirm the previous claims that trauma narratives necessitate a different kind of discursive structure. Thus narratives of trauma, which cannot in Van Alphen's terms, follow the "normal" conventions of narrative discourse, are "unnatural." The testimonies analyzed in this paper may be categorized as "unnatural" in the manner that the narratives do not follow the ordinary or conventional frameworks for narration, in the way that speakers often tell fragmented stories.<sup>11</sup>

By looking at the oral testimonies from Northern Ireland and Spain, audiences witness the different ways that language affects the verbalization of trauma and may study the different frameworks imposed. Collective memory constructs a framework in which narratives of trauma concerning a widespread event, such as a civil war, can be told. The creation of the institutionally supported collective memory effectively silences the experiences and perspectives of thousands of individuals in both Spain and Northern Ireland. The development of the University of California, San Diego and Ulster University archives creates a shared space in which these previously silenced voices have an opportunity to help reconstruct the collective memory by offering their sometimes opposing perspectives. Through this collective reconstruction is a homogenization and a second forgetting of the additional voices because of the massively collected testimonies.

The two archives from Northern Ireland and Spain both offer a space for individuals to relay their personal experiences from the respective civil conflicts. While both nations underwent extensive civil upheaval, change, and trauma from the experiences, all had different causes and effects. The power structures and institutions behind the conflicts and after were both extremely different, and yet the people, the civilians from both nations underwent decades of silencing due

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<sup>11</sup> Ordinary or conventional frameworks of narration refers to chronological and linear narratives.

to societal pressures (be they legislative, or communal). The comparison between the individual narratives was made possible due to the similar silencing. This silencing affected thousands of people and therefore has affected the institutionally recognized collective memorialization and expression of the past, as well as the individual expression of experiences. The two archives therefore provides a space in which the stories that were previously silenced have room to be told.

The archives demonstrate collective memory with an emphasis on the individually narrated experience in order to recognize the perspectives of those who had previously been silenced through legislation and social pressures. In the case of Spain, the recognition of perspectives, in the archive, overwhelmingly come from men and women who supported the Second Republic of Spain, and those who were a part of any opposing political parties (socialists, communists, anarchists, and republicans). Therefore many of the testimonies found in the Spanish archive create a collective memorialization of those whose memory had previously been silenced and forgotten in the name of amnesty.

The testimonies found in the Northern Ireland archive on the other hand appear to have a more “holistic” memorialization of the Troubles. The power structures and effects of the Troubles created a “mutual” silencing of one another, so that no one involved or effected by the Troubles had a chance to speak of what they witnessed and survived. Many in Northern Ireland worked to silence one another, just as they did during the civil war in order to gain control over the societal memorialization. Thus the Northern Ireland archive strives to create a more equal representation of the Troubles, one which recognizes the experiences, beliefs and actions of all of the participants, witnesses, survivors, and victims of the conflict.

The archives consist of the recorded testimonies of a number of individuals in order to create a new perspective on the civil war memory; however due to the nature of the archives, they ultimately diminish the memories and voices of the witnesses and survivors of the civil wars in Spain and Northern Ireland. Jacques Derrida explains how the archive “gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, [and] must be paired with what we will call the power of *consignation*” (10). The consignation thereby unifies the documents in such a way to create homogeneity. Thus the institution or person that creates this collectivization and testimonial documents ultimately determines the memorialized narrative. The archives therefore create a collective memory of the civil wars, through the demonstration of the numerous individual perspectives.

The archives created by the two universities produce a collective memory of the civil wars which includes and relies upon the individual voices of the witnesses and survivors. James E. Young addresses the inclusion of individual testimonies as “restor[ing] a measure of contingency to history as it unfolds, opening up the possibility of historical causes and effects otherwise lost in our projection and a hindsight logic onto events” (282). The use of individual testimonies in the creation and reconstruction of history gives audiences a greater perspective than that of solely what a historian may “objectively” deem factual and important.

While the archives created a space for the narratives, the constraints of the archives changes the narratives told and the lengths to which the speakers discuss his or her past. In the case of the Northern Ireland testimonies the interviewers guide the testimonies to such a large extent that the speakers no longer remain free to speak of what they want. The length of the testimonies are drastically different from either archive. The Spanish testimonies last for an average of two hours, whereas the Irish testimonies last for approximately 20 minutes. The



difference in lengths relies on the permission of the interviewer to talk and share their experiences. Since the Northern Ireland interviewers only want to hear/discuss a single topic (community, education, profession, travel, and the arts) the speaker cannot in this framework, freely discuss his or her experiences during the Troubles. Whereas those from Spain have much longer testimonies, because the interviewers allow them to speak for as long as they wish, and will only occasionally interrupt and ask prompting or clarifying questions. The result of the two methodologies is the freedom and the space in which one is allowed to discuss their individual experiences. Thus the methodological collectivization of the testimonies restrain the narratives told and the memorialization ironically functions to silence the voices of the individuals rather than to record them, since they may become lost in the collection of testimonies.

There are fundamental differences in the arrangement of documents within the two archives. The UCSD archive indexes the records alphabetically, offering minimal annotations about what each record (testimony) contains. The catalogue of the Spanish archive maintains the archival integrity, such that the archivists do not separate or classify the documents nor do they offer any additional tagging of the documents. All the documents in the Spanish archive maintains an “organic bond” to the archive since all the documents originated in the archive, rather than collecting the records separately.<sup>12</sup>

The Irish testimony on one other hand has a completely different organizational structure. The Ulster University archive does not catalogue its records in a specific order, but rather by the order that the records were added to the archive. While this is the primary method of searching through the records users (of the website) may reorganize the archive and refine his or her search based on the organization who recorded the testimony, date, format, and/or subject of the

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<sup>12</sup> I use the term organic bond to illustrate the natural connection between the archive and the testimonies since the archive collected the testimonies itself.

document. This additional search method is all possible because of the annotations and tagging of each testimonies. The Ulster University archive is a collection of other organizations' testimonial recordings. The different organizational methods found in the two digital archives affects the integrity and authenticity of each document, and demonstrates the privileging of certain aspects over others.

The two archives offer different levels of information for each record. The Northern Ireland archive does not provide a historical account of the Troubles, prior to explaining the purpose of the archive. Nor does the Northern Ireland archive provide any kind of protocol for the testimonies since the archive itself did not record the testimonies, but rather collected the testimonies from a number of different organizations in Northern Ireland. While the archivists describe each organization's project by quoting the organization's web page, they do not offer insight as to the interview protocol. The Northern Ireland archive also allows for specific key word searches, thus allowing users to search the archive for certain topics. This goes against the definition of the archive, since the archive is not supposed to privilege the documents in any way, but rather allow the user to determine the importance of certain entries. Spain on the other hand collected all the testimonies themselves and provided the protocol, as well as the historical proceedings and users must go through all the names in the archive in order to find certain testimonies.<sup>13</sup> The different organizational styles of the archives illustrate the faults in the archive's status.

The individual testimonies analyzed in this section are from the University of California, San Diego and Ulster University archives. The purpose of testimonies, according to the creators of both archives, is to give voice and attention to certain individual voices or accounts of the civil

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<sup>13</sup> Protocol: "The first portion of a document, containing the administrative context of the action (the persons involved, the time and place, and the subject) and the initial formulas" (SAA Glossary).

wars and the post-war years. The two archives were created in the hope of crafting a collective memory which includes new and or different perspective on the civil wars.

Even though the archives claim the altruistic goal of recognizing all the victims of the civil wars the archives actually have political motions. One must question the source of the two archives and who collects the testimonies for the archives. A completely outside university created the Spanish Civil War archive and recorded the testimonies. The effect of an American university recording the testimonies is perhaps that the interviewers are less biases/subjective, because they most likely were not directly affect by the civil war, nor do they have any political alliances. Also by being an outsider, the speakers might be more likely to tell them of their experiences, because there is the idea that the speaker can teach/inform the outsiders of the history.

Even though the Ulster University created the Northern Ireland archive different organizations recorded the testimonies that originated in different parts of the country and the island. The Smashing Times Theatre Company Ltd, originated from the Republic of Ireland, and founded the project that collected the analyzed testimonies. While this group is not necessarily completely outside of the realm of influence of the Troubles, they are still technically a foreign entity collecting these narratives. Due to the close connection to the Troubles and the fact that the Troubles still affected the Republic the foreign quality does not have the same effect that the UCSD archive has.

The different theoretical frameworks permit the analysis of the different discourses used by the individual testimony speakers. By discussing the construction of the two archives in conjunction with the different discourses found in the oral representations of the civil war one may look at the relationship between two constructions of memory.

### **The Testimonial Experience of the Individual**

Trauma affects the language and expression of an experience and become noticeable in the deviances from the speaker's normative speech. The archives construct the space in which trauma may be communicated through verbal expression, body language, and the visuals of each individual's testimony. This construction not only offers an opportunity to speak, but to also make meaning of each experience, such that the interviewers and the speaker construct a symbolic order in order to make meaning of the traumatic experiences (Van Alphen 27). The new symbolic order not only includes the experiences of the silences, but also allows for a partnership between the speaker, the interviewer, and the archives to make sense of each experience, as exemplified by each of the eight testimonial speakers.

The eight testimonies chosen manifest trauma differently in the narration of individual memories from the civil wars; however, all of the speakers bear similar biographic markers. These factors for the Spanish Civil War are the gender of the speaker (female), and imprisoned at some time during the civil war or after during the dictatorship.<sup>14</sup> The Irish testimonies chosen for their shared format (audiovisual, with a focus on the speaker) and for people who lived in border areas between the Republic and Northern Ireland, and/or highly divided areas which had high populations from either side of the conflict.<sup>15</sup> While the archives contain a number of different

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<sup>14</sup> I chose the four women from the Spanish archive, because I believe that the women experienced a greater repression since the men's voices and experiences have been privileged over theirs.

<sup>15</sup> These two factors were placed in the same category, because people who lived in these areas experienced a great deal of violence during the times of the Troubles. Therefore despite the differences in locations both of these categories caused people to live in areas of great discontent.

testimonies those chosen for their formats, biographic, and geographic similarities give a perspective on the discursive frameworks used in the testimonies.

The Spanish Civil War testimonies all followed similar methodologies in order to create interviews that are all similar.<sup>16</sup> Each interview involves two interviewers who ask a specific set of guiding questions to begin and end the interviews and also ask clarifying questions. Their role is to “facilitate the process of the production of a testimony... [and] to be there for the victims, to reconstruct the dimension of otherness that was destroyed by the trauma so that the victims can be the subjects of their own histories” (Interview Protocol of Archive). Each interview goes for as long as the speaker desires, thus allowing the speakers the chance to fully discuss their experiences, this usually lasts for approximately 30 to 40 minutes per interview part.

The main goal of the interview is to allow the voice of the speaker to be the main focus of the testimony in order to emphasize the individual nature of the testimony and experience. The UCSD archive explains:

To pay attention to the diversity of voices of history breaks with the myth of the two Spains and its ideological reductionisms. However, to listen to the different voices of these subjects does not entail placing them all in the same plane, but rather returning them to history with its conflicts and antagonisms. (Methodology)

The camera person in charge of focusing the shots creates the audience’s experience of the testimony by zooming in and out on the speaker. By filming the testimonies the camera person provides the focus of the audience and thereby affects the way in which each viewer receives the testimony and the narrative.

The Ulster University archive, like the Spanish archive, consists of a number of testimonies from the civil conflict in order to recreate the collective memorialization of the

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<sup>16</sup> I went through the two archives to choose which testimonies to analyze, and made the decision as to which organization appeared to have the most similar methodology of recording the testimonies to the UCSD archive.

Troubles. The various organizations that recorded the testimonies had their own methodologies. Since the Spanish testimonies all followed a single methodology, the testimonies chosen from the Irish archive will all follow a similar protocol. Smashing Times Theatre Company Ltd, a theatre group based in the Republic of Ireland, founded the Memory Project in 2013. From the 12 testimonies archived by Smashing Times Ltd, four were chosen. Two men and two women make up the four testimonies analyzed; unlike the Spanish archive there is a limited number of testimonies to choose from if one wishes to select testimonies collected by a single group.

The following section will go through each of the eight speakers to give short descriptions of who they are, and a paraphrased version on what his or her testimony concerns. This will begin with an introduction of the Spanish speakers followed by the Irish. All eight of the speakers will serve as examples for the analysis of language and the representations of the civil war in the form of oral testimonies.<sup>17</sup>

Carmen Borrell Pérez, an 88 year old woman, discusses aspects of her life and experiences during the civil war. The combination of the interviewer's guidance and Pérez's reluctance to speak or give many details results in a fragmented testimony of individual experience followed by the use of collective-memory discourse, as created by the songs from her time in prison.<sup>18</sup> The repetition, the fragmented speech, and the normalization of her past all indicate an inability to speak of one's past which is congruent with Van Alphen's trauma theory. Pérez's comfort in using collective memory discourses suggests that the traumatic past can be

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<sup>17</sup> All the transcribed quotations were written by me, because the UCSD does not give transcripts and even though the Ulster University archive does provide transcriptions they do not include stutters, silence, or verbal ellipses (when the speakers trails off or loses track of what they were going to say).

<sup>18</sup> Caruth discusses the ways that trauma affects the speaker and his or her language production; given Pérez's inability to speak freely of her past without the interference and guidance of the interviewer and his questions the audience may observe Pérez's trauma from the past.

expressed in a more accessible manner when the trauma is not just individual. Thus demonstrating the reliance of the individual discourse upon the collective.

Concha Carretero, a seemingly similar figure to Carmen Borrell Pérez, also discusses her imprisonment in Las Ventas women's prison for her socialist and militant activity; additionally she also ends her testimony with the singing of resistance songs from prison. Carretero, however, uses a very different discursive frameworks in order to talk about her past experiences. Through Carretero's use of conversations and strained language, the audience may find that her reliance on past conversations as a mode of verbal recollection ends up forming a polyphonic-collective memory framework.<sup>19</sup> Thus Carretero's testimony demonstrates an individual's reliance upon the voice of another person in her testimony, because her singular voice does not express her experiences to the extent to which she wishes to explain the past.

Carmen Casas Godessart, like Carretero, relies upon a secondary voice in the narration of her experiences during and after the civil war, except Godessart depends on the voice of her husband, Leandro, who is present during her testimony. Godessart was a young woman involved in a socialist political party, Las Joventudes Socialistas Unificadas, at the beginning of the war.<sup>20</sup> Unlike the other two women, Godessart was a prisoner in France from 1939-1943, where she had been detained in the Argeles-Sur-Mer concentration camp.<sup>21</sup> Godessart was then arrested upon her return to Spain in 1944 and placed in the Torrero prison, followed by the Gerona prison, and

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<sup>19</sup> I use the phrase polyphonic-collective memory here to categorize the fact that her memory is shared by multiple people, i.e. all who were involved in the conversation.

<sup>20</sup> Las Joventudes Socialistas: "se constituye como la organización juvenil política de la juventud socialista española... Además, también se fijaron las normas para crear las milicias Socialistas (grupos que contrarrestaban los ataques mediáticos y públicos de la derecha, mediante la difusión y explicación de los proyectos llevados a cabo por el Gobierno de la Republica)."(JSE).

<sup>21</sup> Argeles-Sur-Mer Concentration Camp: "In 1939, Argelès-sur-Mer was a small agricultural village of around 3,000 inhabitants where the French government decided to construct a concentration camp on the beach, to accommodate the Spanish Republican refugees... Argelès-sur-Mer camp was the first of those built in Roussillon and in a few months it housed over 80,000 people" (Argelès Memorial Camp).

finally a prison in Zaragoza. The multiple imprisonments and sentences ultimately led to a prolonged experience in prison and separation from her family and husband. Godessart's testimony relies upon two frameworks and the presence of her husband in order for her to convey her experiences. Godessart's chronological and detailed telling of her narrative function to highlight her trauma by creating distance, and by demonstrating the inadequacies of language.

Felicidad Bienzobas's testimony also highlight the inadequacies of oral language, especially since she is partially deaf and requires a written note with the interviewer's questions. Bienzobas, a 92-year old woman and the final speaker on the Spanish Civil War, details her experiences during the war in her four-part testimony. The cause of Bienzobas's imprisonment was her red nail color.<sup>22</sup> Bienzobas's imprisonment was split between two locations the first in Salamanca and the second in Guipuzcoa (which had originally been a monastery before being used as a prison). Most of the interviewer's questions had to be written and many were not read aloud, thereby prohibiting the audience from hearing the questions. Bienzobas also relies upon the use of a personal archive made from a number of photographs in order to tell her testimony. This use of a personal archives acts as a supplement to the stories that she cannot verbalize and fully explain.

The four women who narrate their experiences during and after the Spanish Civil War give insight as to the way individuals use collective frameworks in conjunction with the individual discourses in the narration of their very personal and individual experiences. The Irish testimony speakers will provide similar insight and continue to provide different examples to the ways in which he or she needs additional frameworks in order to narrate his or her past.

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<sup>22</sup> The red nail color signifies a number of politically unfavorable ideologies including that of women's rights and progress, female promiscuity, and communism.



The Irish testimonies illustrate the different ways in which the interviewers and the background privilege certain aspects of the testimonies. By forcing inscription frameworks upon the speakers the testimonies appear much more organized, than those of the Spanish archive; however, the interviews from Smashing Times do not allow the speakers to discuss the narratives in their “own” manner, nor do the interviews allow the speakers to construct their own narrative framework. The Irish testimonies function as supplemental and augmented perspectives on the Troubles, therefore each individual voice add a different memory to the archive, but due to the containment and guidance of the testimonies the individual voices ultimately become incorporated into the previously established collective memory.

The first speaker, Peter Conlon, a middle-aged man from the Republic of Ireland details a number of instances from his time as a member of An Garda Síochána.<sup>23</sup> Conlon’s testimony lasts for 23 minutes and Smashing Times filmed it in the Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon, Republic of Ireland on October 6, 2013. Conlon’s speech remains fairly even and free, his tone, the faraway look in his eyes, and his difficulty speaking at times belie the affable front he initially presents. The interviewer’s questions and Conlon’s body language dominate the expression and method of representation during his testimony.

Andrew Redican’s testimony like Conlon’s revolves around a specific theme as created through the conversation with the interviewer. Redican, a retired secondary school teacher from the Republic of Ireland, discusses his experiences in the education system as a child and later as a teacher. Redican’s 24 minute interview was recorded in 2013 in the same theatre as Conlon’s interview. Once more the interviewers steer the interview towards a single topic, education, and

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<sup>23</sup> An Garda Síochána, Republic of Ireland: “An Garda Síochána is the national police service of Ireland. The Mission of An Garda Síochána is Working with Communities to Protect and Serve” (About Us).

how it affected Redican's political beliefs and actions. By imposing such a strict framework, the interviewer does not permit Redican to express his narrative in his own chosen discourse.

Eileen Weir, one of the two women speakers, works at the Shankill Women's Centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland discusses her time briefly in the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), and her work in building communities.<sup>24</sup> Weir grew up on the Shankill Road in Belfast during the Troubles, and while this was in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, this road is full of walls and barricades clearly marking the sides of the conflict creating a border in the middle of the city.<sup>25</sup> Weir's testimony, while guided by the interviews has a clear theme to which all the stories told relate back to. The theme of community, with an emphasis on the role of women, who create and maintain the sense of community in certain areas of Belfast.

Olivia O'Hagan, the final speakers is a 60 year old woman, gave her testimony in 2013 in the Metropolitan Arts Centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland. O'Hagan narrates one of her experiences from the Troubles when the IRA abducted her sister. Olivia narrates this experience as truly a secondary figure as the experience is not necessarily hers, despite the fact that it did in fact have an effect on her life. O'Hagan's role as a witness differs from the way in which the "witness" has previously been embodied. Since O'Hagan primarily focuses on the experience of her sister, rather than her "own" O'Hagan demonstrates the ways in which witnessing can affect one's memories just as strongly. Despite the fact that O'Hagan narrates her sister's experiences, O'Hagan still displays difficulties with language, as demonstrated through her stuttering, pauses, and language confusion (she mixes up the words and has difficulties expressing herself).

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<sup>24</sup> Ulster Defense Association (UDA): "Loyalist organization founded in Northern Ireland in 1971 to coordinate the efforts of local Protestant vigilante groups in the sectarian conflict in the province" (UDA).

<sup>25</sup> The peace walls of Belfast "are physical barriers between the Protestant / Loyalist community and the Catholic / Nationalist community in certain areas in Northern Ireland. The walls are usually constructed of concrete, stone, and / or steel, and can be over 6 metres tall" (CAIN Glossary).

The eight testimonies contribute to the study of language and representational discourses of the individual and collective. Each will serve as an example for the analysis of the language used, the effects of trauma on language, the different discourses, and the different ways in which the visual aspects of the testimony function to create the testimonial experience. The testimonial experience does not happen solely for the audience but also for the speaker. The speakers are all a part of a community of people who experienced repression and now have the opportunity to be a part of a group telling their narratives. These narratives function as additional information and details for the collective memory, and as a part of the construction of the language of trauma. The testimonies also offer the speakers an opportunity to express his or her narrative as well as those of others who either cannot tell their narratives since they did not survive or of those who cannot verbalize his or her experiences. The use of these different people's voices within the narration of his or her individual experiences helps to form the polyphonic discourse.

### **The Analysis of Language Anomalies in the Testimonies**

Trauma, as Kristeva explains, affects the production of language in the forms of silence, language breaks, and difficulties in speech (stuttering and repetition). Silence as represented in the testimony manifests itself in a couple of different manners; the first is the actual presence of silence in which neither the speaker nor the interviewer speak, the second is the consent of the speaker to allow another to speak for him or her. The breaks in language where a speaker cannot verbalize their memories, thoughts, and feelings illustrate the faults in discourse, which often leads the speakers to switch to another (often a collective discourse). These moments in which the normative language breaks allows the moments of trauma to present themselves and become apparent to the audience.

The breaks in language occur in the form of oral ellipses in which the speakers trail off or when he or she expresses his or her inability to find sufficient diction and through silence. Carretero often has difficulty speaking during her testimony; she loses track of what she's saying or expresses inability to find the word she's looking for. In the first part of her testimony Carretero says: "No encuentro palabras..." (13:43). While saying this Carretero's face is drawn, her gaze downcast shaking her head. The camera-person magnifies her face, drawing attention to Carretero's face and her distressed body language. In the second part of her interview Carretero says: "no puedo olvidar," but she does not expand on the memory past that statement (7:55). Therefore Carretero does not have the language to properly express her memories and experiences in an individual personal voice.

A second example of language breaks is when Redican tries to explain his and his wife's fear:

We were, my wife was shivering, I can still see her. I was quite tense myself. [His wife told him,] ["Now make sure, make sure you don't say any smart things to the police or the the soldiers make sure.["] It had a huge effect on us, we went way around em Northern Ireland. (04:56 – 05:20)

Redican's stutters and repetition illustrate the moments of his fear that he cannot verbalize, because he either does not know what words to use nor does he know how to frame the fear. While Redican might have continued to discuss the ways the Troubles affected his and his wife's lives, the interviewer quickly interrupts and asks him another questions that has to do with his education as a child. The rapid change in topics illustrates the interviewer's singular interest in Redican's role and experiences in the education system. The moments in which language breaks, and when the speaker cannot find the words to complete his or her narratives are the moments in which the memory repression and trauma becomes apparent. The instances of language

disruption can be fixed by either listing words that seem to function, or to have a second voice fill the silences of the testimony.

The presence of a representative speaker in the individual testimonies illustrates the need for another person to vocalize his or her narrative or supplement parts of the testimony he or she witnesses. There are two different versions of mediation in the testimonies, the first is allowing someone else to speak for him or her, the second is speaking for someone else who is not present. By speaking for someone else the person acts as a distanced witness, as discussed by Agamben, the distance allows the speaker the space necessary for the verbalization of trauma and suffering. Thus the act of mediation functions as the ultimate act of a witness.

Godessart does not give her testimony by herself, her husband sits in the background listening, and occasionally contributing to his wife's testimony. The screen first depicts the husband Leandro in the second part of Godessart's testimony when she talks about him (27:45). The screen shows Leandro Godessart sitting in a chair silently and passively listening, but when the camera zooms in the audience can see him fidgeting with his hands, thus demonstrating his discomfort in listening to his wife. Later in Godessart's testimony he begins to speak and amplify parts of Godessart's testimony with his own voice, explaining the actions of the soldiers (15:02). Leandro's presence both orally and visually creates a shared experience or a kind of mutual understanding as to the trauma undergone by the two of them. The presence of his voice in Godessart's testimony functions as a secondary perspective on the civil war, as well as the affirmation to his position bearing witness to his wife.

The events Conlon narrates do not always concern him personally, instead he relays the story of someone else. Conlon explains how there was:

Another incident where the roads were cratered at the time and you would have to go the main road through a checkpoint to go from North to South ... And one particular man in

a family, got involved in the campaign to open the roads, and they used to hold meetings and they would close in the roads and a large number of demonstrators would arrive. (15:16)

Conlon narrates this story, without any names and without explicitly stating his role or connection in the story. Conlon does not explain how this affected him personally, but rather a very distant recount of an event from the Troubles. By distancing himself from the event and by narrating the encounter from a third point of view, Conlon establishes his role as a witness to the Troubles and the events. Thus Conlon's perspective, like Leandro Godessart's, functions within the distant space necessary for dictating the traumas of the past.

O'Hagan narrates her testimony in a similar manner to Conlon, in the way that she establishes herself as a witness to the Troubles and her sister's abduction and ensuing suffering. O'Hagan begins her testimony by explaining the many ways in which the Troubles affected her and her family's life. O'Hagan states: "It was em a lot a lot a lot of things affected in our family, there were a number of people – mistaken identities they were shot dead, first cousins shot dead, em and my sister eh the one who died at 43, she was abducted..." (04:23-04:40). O'Hagan did not live in Northern Ireland for the entirety of the Troubles, or even for some of the events that struck the family. She was an outsider to many of the experiences, however O'Hagan's telling of the traumas indicate the extent to which they affect her. O'Hagan, Conlon, and Leandro Godessart all function as witnesses to the narratives and events of the past. By using their voices to augment the narratives of those who cannot speak because they are either dead or because they cannot find the right words, the secondary, witness speakers use the distance from the event to impose a discourse upon the narrative.

Many of the speakers use repetition within their testimonies, whether this be in the repeated expression of feelings, a stutter, or repeated tangents of his or her narratives. Peréz's

repeats the phrase “y lo que había” or “lo que hay” over the course of her testimony. Both of these phrases, one in the past tense and the other in the present, illustrate the distance that Pérez creates when discussing the past. The phrase “lo que había” invokes a sense of determinism, such that the phrase erases the agency the speaker may have.<sup>26</sup> Pérez discusses the way that two young women “nunca hablar o nada nunca hablarlo nada... Así que es lo que hay” (26:33). By employing a blasé statement Pérez both emphasizes the trauma and events of the past all the while summing it up to nothing other than something that has occurred. By repeating the phrase “lo que había” Pérez normalizes her experiences, thereby indicating that these experiences were simply the way that things were, Pérez constructs a discourse which allows her to discuss her past, because in this sense then there is nothing extraordinary about her memories and thus do not need a new kind of framework.

While Godessart employs repetition in her testimony, it is her extensive list of adjectives that serve to emphasize the inadequacy of language. In the beginning of the second part of Godessart’s testimony, she describes the aftermath of a bombing in Barcelona, she says: “Fue un bombardero aquellos horrosos nos tiramos del camión como pudimos, dejamos las maletas en el camión. Salimos corriendo en busca de un refugio la gente corriendo por todos a los refugios... todo de ruido no había más que fuego, gritos, horrosos” (00:56 – 01:44). Within this example Godessart not only describes the effects with a list, but she also uses repetition to emphasize the horror and tragedy of this event. The list of descriptions functions in the same manner that the repetition does. Godessart needs, or feels the need to list the descriptors because a single word, or the single utterance of a word does not and will not adequately express what

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<sup>26</sup> During the 1940s, Fatalismo was one of the most popular literary genres. Fatalismo, connected to Determinismo is the study or belief that one’s fate has been predetermined, thus declaring the ineffectiveness and impossibility of agency.

she has witnessed. By using so many adjectives Godessart illustrates her trauma more clearly, matching the theoretical model, than she had previously expressed in her chronological description of her experiences.

Whereas Godessart uses an excess of adjectives to describe her memories, O'Hagan's testimony contains numerous moments of stuttering, repetition, and pauses, illustrating her continued difficulty verbalizing her past which was created by her sister's abduction as a young woman. O'Hagan explains how her sister "was abducted and held at the Blackwater, until her husband eh drove a bomb to a pub that served soldiers, she was em abducted by the IRA. So she was held at gun point at the Blackwater River and her husband was made drive a bomb to eh the pub..." (04:43-05:05). The repetition of the story about how the IRA forced her brother-in-law to drive a bomb, demonstrates her continued fear. By repeating the story twice, O'Hagan exposes the un-believability of the situation, thereby emphasizing the transferred horror to her narrative of her sister to her. All three of these examples of repetition, demonstrate the different forms of repetition in the three testimonies, and the manner in which the three function in similar ways.

While almost all of the speakers stutter during the course of their testimonies, Redican's testimony demonstrates the greatest difficulty in fluently telling his narratives. The breaks in Redican's testimony illustrate how even when the interviewers provide a discursive framework moments of trauma break through. When Redican discusses his experience in an unnamed storytelling workshop, he talks about the different stories he came into contact with. While discussing the different stories he's heard, he has very difficult time going through and explaining what he heard. Redican says:

Wu em uh wo-would you believe it eh you know not uh well uh the stories they told me were like from the other side weren't directly, eh you know, you wouldn't - they were child's - children's stories about sparkling and things like that things that eh, you know, things that you wouldn't... I never got a story about saying about themselves in you



know that type of way that you know like their families and things. The only kind, I-I-I got was we had em er about like peace building and peace reconciliation and all that type of thing...” (15:47-16:28)

Redican constantly stutters in his explanation of the kind of stories that he has witnessed, and this change in language starkly contrasts the rest of his testimony and the previous fluidity when speaking. The direct contrast in the kind of language the Redican uses therefore illustrates the difficulties he experienced when witnessing and later when recalling this specific event. The different types of language exhibited by Redican highlights the moments of difficulty, since he does have many instances of fluency.

Whereas the moments of silence, when language breaks, shows the way that language fails because words cannot be found; excessive language, when speakers use an abundance of words (adjectives or filler), demonstrates a different kind of fault in language such that it shows that language cannot properly express the emotions, actions, or memories of the speakers. So not only is there a lacking individual discursive framework for individuals, but the speakers demonstrate how language itself is not adequate to express his or her traumatic memories.

### **Collective Representational Discourse**

All of the speakers use collective discourses in the telling of their past experiences during the civil war. While there are a number of different kinds of collective discourses the main four are; songs, conversations, the use of an established chronology, and some kind of shared theme. The individual speakers all recognize and use the familiar, established collective discourses. Therefore the collective discourse formats the individual testimonies and create the third polyphonic discourse as shown in the following examples.

The use of song in the testimony enhances the presence of a collective discourse that pertains to a kind of shared individual prison experience. Carmen Pérez sings three prison songs

throughout her testimony. These three unnamed songs are all a part of a collective memorialization of her time in prison.<sup>27</sup> Pérez was imprisoned in Las Ventas, a woman's prison, for one year and fifteen days for her participation as a socialist militiawoman with Las Socialistas Unificadas.<sup>28</sup> The lyrics of the first song discusses the conditions of the prison. Pérez sings: "Cárcel de ventas, hotel maravillosa llenos de lujos de quien a to cónfer donde hay bate ni ducha ni comida en el infierno estamos mejor" (08:40 – 09:23). By ending the interview in song, Pérez privileges the collective memory over her individual experience, as shown by her body language and ability to recall the songs. The collective discourse appears to be an easier method of expression for Pérez, since the interviewer did not have to prompt her to sing during this part of her testimony. The collective memory enacted through Pérez's singing demonstrates the way in which a collective memorialization of prison may be recalled and enacted in the personal recount of the past.

All three of these songs learned in prison provide the prisoners a shared discourse in which they could express their grief, anger, unhappiness, etc. The use of collective memory here allows for an "easier" expression of the past, one in which she may take comfort in the fact that she is not the only one with that particular memory. Pérez explains after singing a second song that the women in the prison would all sing together. Pérez says: "contabamos las recreamos nosotras" (11:10). Pérez's describes how the singing recreated her and the other women's identity demonstrates how integral these songs were, not only in the development of her memories, but also hers.

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<sup>27</sup> These songs are not named by either the speaker or by the interviewer. The archive also does not provide additional information as to the titles of these songs.

<sup>28</sup> Las Ventas Women's prison: is one of the most well-known women's prisons in Spain. Las Socialistas Unificadas: "La unificación de las juventudes socialistas y comunistas en España en una nueva organización (JSU) fue, por una parte, un resultado del replanteamiento en el movimiento comunista de algunas cuestiones -como su actitud frente a ciertos sectores de la socialdemocracia-, y por otra parte, una consecuencia de la peculiar coyuntura política de España" (LA FORMACIÓN).

Peréz and Concha Carretero both use songs in their testimonies as a way of invoking their memories of prison. Both women were imprisoned in Las Ventas prison for their socialist activities; however they both sing very different songs. While Peréz sings about the prison and the women there, Carretero sings about the ideologies that she believes in which caused her to be imprisoned. The themes of the songs she sings are about “el joven guardia,” “libertad,” and “la lucha por la revolución” (25:39 – 26:45). Carretero sings songs that are more akin marching and fighting songs which contain more repetition than the songs that Peréz sings. Even though the types of songs are very different they function in the same way of reaffirming the collective identity between the imprisoned women. The songs serve as the first kind of collective discourse used in the testimonies, illustrating the way that the music connects the women in their experiences and their beliefs.

The conversational examples in the testimonies take two forms; the first is the recollection of actual conversations from the past, the second is the creation of a dialogue between speaker and interviewer during the testimonies. Conversations serve as a polyphonic collective memorialization of the past, such that more than one person is involved in the memory thereby making it shared. The conversational discursive framework as provided by the interviewer in the case of some of the testimonies depend on the role of the interviewer.

The role of the interviewer (according to either of the stated or inferred methodologies of the archives) appears to be very similar, but after watching the testimonies it becomes apparent that the actualization of their role is very different. The interviewers for the UCSD archive play a much more subtle role than those in the Irish testimonies the interviewer usually starts the testimony with a question about the speaker’s childhood and then just lets the speaker discuss her life with minimal clarifying questions or prompting. The presence of the interviewer is much

more apparent in the recording of the Irish testimonies. The interviewer of the Irish testimonies, asks the speaker questions to begin the testimony, however, he or she does not remain in the background, but instead maintains his or her position as a key actor in the process of the testimony. One example of the amplified position of the interviewer is in the numerous guiding questions, which function to shape the interview into telling the narrative or perspective that the interviewer wishes to discuss.<sup>29</sup> The speakers thereby become subject to the guiding questions of the interviewer rather than claiming his or her narrative and telling it the way in which he or she would wish to.

These frequent conversational examples serve as one of the defining aspects of Carretero's testimony. Carretero relays a number of conversations that she had with soldiers, other prisoners, and family members or friends. In the first part of Carretero's testimony, she tells a story about walking past a military building, and getting stopped and questioned (16:56-17:38). While she telling this story she becomes very animated, her voice changing tones, gesturing, and reenacting the interaction. Carretero performs the conversation for the audience to demonstrate her and the soldier's actions, such as when she strikes a sassy pose reenacting same moment from past (17:38). These conversations serve as the framework of her testimony and catalyze the movement from event to event.

All of the conversations naturally encompass the words of Carretero and also of the second speaker. Thus her narrative relies upon the voice of a second figure in order to facilitate the telling of her memories. Carretero needs a second voice to relay the events that she witnessed

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<sup>29</sup> Renato Rosaldo discusses the manifestation and dangers of the inscription framework within his article, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage." The inscription framework is the framework applied to interviews that serves to further emphasize a previously held conception.

and took part in, because she, herself cannot find the words or the language to convey her memories.

During Pérez's interview the interviewer continually asks Pérez questions in order to prompt her to continue speaking. By repeatedly asking questions the interviewer constructs a dialogue and a discourse in which Pérez may remember and verbalize her memories. Within the first few minutes of Pérez's testimony the interviewer prompts Pérez to speak about her childhood, her school, her family, and about her travels. Within the first two minutes the interviewer asks Pérez four questions: "Pues Carmen ¿puedes decirnos dónde naciste? ... Podemos empezar con tu infancia ¿qué recuerdes algo de tu infancia...? ... ¿Y de dónde viviste? ... Y tus padres ¿qué hicieron?" (0:23, 0:36, 01:17, 01:30). Thus it becomes evident that she needs someone else to contextualize and ground her memories.

The repeated questioning causes Pérez to think about specific instances in her past, guiding her through her memories, rather than allowing Pérez to determine the course of her narration. Through the repeated questioning of Pérez the audience gains an idea of how difficult it is for her to speak of the past, demonstrating the strong effects of the past on her present recollection and verbalization. The questions after emphasize the need for some kind of individual discursive framework to express her experiences; as shown by ability to use and express a collective memory of the prison as illustrated by her singing.

Due to the interviewer's frequent interventions, Conlon's testimony progresses in a logical manner. The interviewer creates the logical narration by forcing Conlon to discuss his experiences in the Guard one at a time, and by also giving the audience a bit of context to each story. The interviewer says: "OK so you were used to the fact that you were on the border with the United Kingdom, so when you became a Garda and got posted in this area, you were used to

that life?” (3:52). The interviewer forces Conlon to slow down and go through each, previously discussed experience rather than jump between them rapidly – as he does in the beginning of his testimony. The interviewer insists that Conlon pause and begin his narration once more. The interviewer prompts Conlon by saying: “Just tell us where you were born, Peter” (02:18). By imposing this framework upon the speaker, the interviewer creates a space in which Conlon’s experiences may be told and/or discussed. The interviewer’s framework also forces Conlon to speak in a manner that he most likely – as demonstrated by his initial manner of speaking – would not have used when speaking. By imposing an unnatural and inorganic mode of discussing his experiences, Conlon’s mode of speech and expression of his experiences become mired in the expectations of his audience.

The reliance of the speakers upon the interviewers for the framework of their testimonies displays their inability provide a natural narrative, and due to the unnatural qualities of the narrative the speaker and the interviewer try to force a more logical framework (Alber). Another way that the natural narrative format is imposed upon the speakers is through their prioritizing the chronology, dates, and specific facts surrounding their narratives. By highlighting certain events, most of which are well known in the collective memorialization of the civil wars, the speakers emphasize their place within historical events.

Peréz’s discomfort and difficulties discussing personal memories and experiences becomes even more apparent in her actions when confirming the dates. At one point in Peréz’s testimony she stops and looks toward someone off screen and asks for him/her to confirm her statement about her sibling’s age: “¿Setenta años no?” (2:00). Not only does Peréz make sure that her facts are correct, but she also confirms the understanding of the interviewer later in her testimony, by asking “¿Entiendes?” (25:35). Peréz double-checks her facts and her memories as

though scared that what she is saying may be wrong. This uncertainty in her memory demonstrates her self-consciousness and insecurity. The laws that had previously silenced all opposing perspectives maintains their legacy, and the audience can see the manifestation of this reluctance to speak and to go against the pervasive discourse in Pérez's testimony.

Similarly to Pérez, Godessart makes a point of emphasizing her factuality. Godessart does so by highlighting all the dates that accompany her experiences. In Godessart's telling of her testimony she makes sure to give the important dates, and recalls her memories in chronological order. Godessart even goes as far as to correct herself when she is wrong or confused about certain dates. Thus Godessart's detailed testimony illustrates the possibility for a chronological framework. The attention and emphasis placed upon the dates function as a justification for her memories and her testimony, therefore showing audiences her place within a history that has previously forgotten her.

Godessart chronologically narrates her testimony beginning with her childhood during the Second Republic and continuing into the Civil War, the dictatorship and her present. Godessart emphasizes the dates of events such as the date of her family's arrival in Cataluña: "Ya pues llegamos a Cataluña en el año 1934 en octubre una fecha memorable, el seis de octubre. Cuando se levantó Cataluña y estudia en contra del gobierno por las toda las serias cosas que estaban pasando" (03:03-03:21). The entire time that Goessart talks about this experience she maintains her distance and her position as the narrator, and if is as though she were telling the story of a family completely unrelated to herself. Godessart only includes herself as the object of the narrative in the beginning with her use of "llegamos," the rest of time she discusses her father and his transitional process at the time. This emphasis placed on the details allows for

a logical organization of her memories, thus creating a sense of distance in the testimony, by emphasizing the past/historical nature sense of her past experiences.

The emphasis on factuality in both Pérez and Godessart's testimonies demonstrates their manipulation of the previously established collective representations of the Spanish Civil War. Both women experienced societal and legislative silencing, their memories forcibly repressed by others and by trauma. By using the specific dates and facts surrounding their experiences they simultaneously prove their authenticity and legitimacy in speaking, and reconstruct the historical narrative to include their perspectives. While Pérez and Godessart demonstrate their historicity through their use of dates, the Irish testimonies do so by giving their perspectives on certain themes or topics surrounding the Troubles.

The Smashing Times filmed the Irish testimonies around a central theme, which can supposedly be relatable to others and their experiences. These themes are community, education, the arts, travel, and the profession as a border guard. Eileen Weir's testimony, while guided by the interviews has a clear theme to which all the stories told relate back to. Weir's testimony focuses on the theme of community, with an emphasis on the role of women who create and maintain the sense of community in certain areas of Belfast. The interviewers of Redican's testimony try to guide him to speak solely about education. Whereas O'Hagan's interview is primarily about her sister's abduction, it also includes a discussion of her travels and her participation in the arts. The interviewers demonstrate their levels of interest in the narratives told by the speakers by asking clarifying questions. By not expressing additional interest the interviewers illustrate their disinterest in the various other narratives told by the speakers. Even through the individual speakers all give his or her perspectives on the themes, these subjects are



all parts of previously established discourse surrounding the more disputed topics surrounding the memorialization of the Troubles.

The collective discursive frameworks; song, conversation, chronology, and central themes, all illustrate an individual's use of the collective memorialization of the civil wars. By using the collective discourses in their individual representations of the past, each individual restructures the collective memory, by adding him or herself to the narrative. The addition of each individual ultimately results in a reformed collective memory, and the rise of the polyphonic discourse surrounding the events.

### **The Construction of the Visual Aspects in the Testimonies**

The audiovisual nature of the testimonies inherently ensures the portrayal of the speaker's face, body, and any additional visual aspects. By using an audiovisual format the testimonies create a more active and realistic experience for the audience to bear witness to the testimonies. The camera plays an integral role in the production of the testimonies in such a way as to highlight certain features of the speaker's face and body movements. Therefore the body language and expression become apparent to the audience and allows the audience to better acknowledge the uniqueness of each person's narrative by recognizing the individuality and humanity in the viewing of each speaker.

The positioning of the camera and different magnifications of the speaker illustrate the gestures and the body language of the speaker during his or her testimony. Pérez's interview is set in her home, with her sitting on the couch.<sup>30</sup> By framing the testimony in a home the interviewers create a space which humanizes the speaker and thus create empathy in the viewer.

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<sup>30</sup> The UCSD archive states that the interviews are staged in homes in order to be "favorable for the activation of the connections of memory (for example, the headquarters of a union, a place of memory, a grave, etc.)" (Interview Protocol).

The frame of Pérez's testimony further illustrates the discomfort of Pérez by highlighting her body language while speaking and how it changes when she sings. The camera encompasses almost all of Pérez's body while she speaks, and it shows the way that she sits in the farthest corner of her couch, with her shoulders hunched, and her hands folded into her lap – hands fidgeting. The image conveyed illustrates how Pérez tries to withdraw into herself while speaking.

Pérez's body language, and the perspective of the camera changes when she begins to sing. The camera zooms into her face, which had previously been drawn. The effect of magnifying Pérez's face is the interviewers deny the viewer the opportunity to see how her posture changes, but the emotions conveyed through her face become more apparent. Pérez's expression changes and she smiles while she sings, and right after singing the second song she even adds a sassy and teasing remark about finishing the song saying: "hasta luego" (11: 59). The closer view on Pérez's face further illustrates the emotive difference from when she speaks to when she sings.

The focus of the camera changes throughout the course of Carretero's testimony, from her body to her face. The only time that Carretero directly faces the camera is when she sings the songs of resistance from prison. Carretero faces the camera and occasionally makes eye contact, but otherwise looks towards the interviewer who sits to the side of the camera. During the singing Carretero, like Pérez, seems to gain a greater confidence and ability to express her individual experience through the collective discourse of the songs. The interviewer pauses the video and places the camera closer to the Carretero, with the lens facing upwards, as though one were sitting on the floor looking up at Carretero as she sings. This position of the camera places Carretero in a position of authority over the viewer. This perspective continues to show the way

that Carretero continues to look past the camera at the interviewer or the people behind the lens rather than focus on the camera itself, thus emphasizing the speaker's position of authority over the audiences.

The construction of the visual aspect of the testimony allows for an analysis of the body language of the speakers. Godessart, for the majority of her testimony, sits back in her chair, speaking relatively calmly, occasionally gesturing, and leaning forward to emphasize a point. The camera further iterates Godessart's distance by remaining zoomed out from Godessart's face, leaving her on the far right side of the screen, showing her from the mid-torso upwards. This distance created by the camera functions to illustrate Godessart's position as a logical speaker. The visual aspects of the testimonies permit the audience to not only witness the changes in the speaker's body language but it also allows them to view the differences in the testimonies. These differences being the presence of written words and pictures, both of which are present in Bienzobas's testimony.

Unlike the other speakers, Bienzobas is partially deaf and therefore the interviewer's questions had to be written, most of which were not read aloud, thereby prohibiting the audience to hear the questions. A second visual aspect that was fundamental to the telling of Bienzobas's testimony was her inclusion of pictures. In showing the pictures to the camera and describing the people in them and the events surrounding the photographs, Bienzobas grounds her testimony in the artifacts of her past. These pictures, and other items that surround Bienzobas in the background of her testimony serve to create a personal archive, thus helping her to both remember specific moments and people from her past.

The role of the interviewer appears to be more present than some of the other interviewers, because he has to write his questions or repeat them since Bienzobas cannot hear

them. By writing down the questions the interviewer interrupts the flow of the testimony, so where there had previously been a dialogue between the speaker and the interviewer there appears to be a more one sided power dynamic. The interviewer's questions dictates and constructs the flow of the interview by interrupting Bienzobas with his questions. The questions not only interrupt the flow of the interview but they also force Bienzobas to go back to a subject she has moved past. This continual backtracking in her testimony creates a number of fractures where there might not have been any if the interviewer had allowed Bienzobas to continue speaking.

The camera in this testimony not only focuses upon Bienzobas and her movements, but also on the background and on the photographs and memorabilia that she shares during her narrative. Bienzobas repeatedly shows pictures of family members and important historical figures during the course of her testimony. Each time that Bienzobas shows or uses a picture in her testimony she becomes distracted from telling her narrative and focuses on the person that she's talking about.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the pictures and the use of her personal archive functions as a distraction from her verbal narration of her testimony. The use of the various visual aspects within Bienzobas's testimony plays an integral role in the communication of her narrative, as well as in the conversation between the interviewer and the speaker. Thus the visuals of the testimony provide contextual information and details surrounding the speaker's story in the same way that the location does.

The construction of the testimonial experience includes the location of each testimony. The filming locations were done in public and private spaces. The Spanish testimonies were all filmed in the home of the speakers, usually in a living room or a dining room. Each space is

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<sup>31</sup> Part four of Bienzobas's testimony is of her going through family picture albums, however due to some kind of technical malfunction the audio does not work, and her explanation cannot be heard.

private in that one must be invited into the space before having access. This places the speaker into a position of power such that they may stop the interview at any point and make people leave. By filming in such an intimate location the speaker becomes even more humanized, individualized, and the audience is given the space to empathize with them. The Northern Ireland testimonies on the other hand are all filmed in public locations the men in theaters and women in community centers. The public nature of the testimonies creates a more shared space, but also does not put the speaker in a comfortable location.

In order to capture Conlon's testimony the camera-person helps organize the appearance of the testimony. The interviewer films Conlon's testimony in the seats of a theatre, with red chairs and a dark background. By filming the testimony in such a setting the rehearsed and performative aspects of the testimony becomes emphasized, thus highlighting the artificiality and theatrical production of the testimony. The empty seats in the background function as a metaphorical invitation to viewers to sit and watch, and thus bear witness to Conlon's testimony. The performative aspects of Conlon's testimony illustrates the inorganic nature of Conlon's testimony.

The camera zooms in and out of focus on Conlon's face especially in moments when he seems to have the hardest times speaking. By magnifying Conlon's face and body language the camera emphasizes his discomfort in discussing his past as a guard. For the majority of Conlon's testimony his eyes are glassy, with a faraway look, and his face is drawn. All three of these are physical manifestations of Conlon's reluctance to speak. The interviewer's imposition of a narrative framework and the filming in such a public venue creates a very different kind of testimony than that recorded for the Spanish archive. The more practiced nature of Conlon's

testimony illustrates the interviewers' desire for a more cohesive and succinct testimony, rather than one that is more natural.<sup>32</sup>

The filming of Weir's testimony creates hope in the viewer. Weir's testimony is filmed in the Shankill Women's Centre where the background is bright and full of light and color. This directly opposes the appearance of Conlon's and Redican's testimony, since they were filmed in a dark empty theater. By using such a bright background in contrast to the darker background of the men, Weir's testimony appears to fit into gendered spaces. The organization films the men in public locations, which are used for entertainment, education, or exemplary productions all of which hold a privileged position in society. The women's center in contrast is focused on "Providing an accessible resource and development support for women in Greater Shankill and beyond" (About Us).<sup>33</sup> The gendered locations clearly demonstrate a privileging of testimonies and voices.

The visual aspects of O'Hagan's testimony emphasizes the dark and tragic nature of her testimony. The testimony was filmed in the Metropolitan Arts Centre, however the background appears more like gymnasium bleachers, with very little light in the room. O'Hagan's testimony is filmed so that only the camera focuses on only O'Hagan's face to her shoulders. The limited view offers the audience a very clear picture of her expressions and any kind of facial and eye movements. While O'Hagan discusses the events of her sister's abductions she continually looks up, down, and then closes her eyes. She cannot focus on a particular part of the room, the camera, or speak to the interviewer. O'Hagan's inability to maintain any kind of extended eye

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<sup>32</sup> Whereas the Spanish archive privileges the audiovisuals of the testimonies, the Northern Ireland archive de-privileges it by offering accompanying transcripts for each testimony. These transcripts are not complete in that they do not include the less consequential conversations help with the interviewer. Nor do the transcripts include the stutters, or moments of filler words.

<sup>33</sup> Shankill Women's Centre, About Us Webpage.

contact alludes to her desire to escape from her narrative and memories. By filming O'Hagan's testimony in such a dark location, the creators emphasize the trauma of the event.

The audiovisual formatting of the testimonies allows the audience to view the body language of the speaker, the location, and the props used by some of the speakers. By focusing the camera on the speaker, the audience may see face of the speaker, and thereby recognize his or her humanity, and in doing so the narrative and their perspectives on the wars becomes in a way more real, because it is not an abstract narration.

## **Conclusion**

The Spanish Civil War and Northern Ireland Troubles were both silenced by the government and societal pressures immediately after the end of the wars, and it was not until recently that either society recognized the various and opposing perspectives of the conflicts. The University of California, San Diego and Ulster University both engaged in projects of creating an archive that recognizes the experiences of those previously forgotten; however the archives in actuality embody the very act of amnesia it is trying to prevent. The archives serve as a reminder of what happened during the civil wars, they both memorialize the individual experiences and acknowledge the different perspectives.

While the archives have a number of limitations, socially, politically, and culturally. While these archives are online, they can be lost in the mass of information on the internet unless one knows of their existence, therefore the reconstruction of the collective memory surrounding the civil wars cannot occur on the societal scale, because few have actually taken the time to go through the archive and listen to a number of the testimonies. Politically, the archives and the testimonies have very little power on their own because they were not recorded in an official,

judicial capacity. Additionally the two governments have laws in place that continue to exonerate those involved in the civil wars. Even though there are these limitations for both archives, the archives do in fact demonstrate the individuality of each speaker despite the fact that they are collectivized.

Due to the hegemonic discourses surrounding the two civil wars an individual discourse/framework for the wars never formed. Thus the testimonial speakers in the archives rely upon the collective discourse while simultaneously developing an individual discourse thereby reforming the collective. The consolidation of the individual and the collective effectively requires the polyphonic discourse for the memorialization discourses of traumatic events. Polyphonic trauma discourse encompasses the consolidation of the individual discourse and the institutionalized collective, and the empowerment of the individual speaker his or her experiences and trauma in his or her representation of the civil war. This term encapsulates the necessity for multiple voices to discuss the trauma, and accounts for the speaker's ethical sense of responsibility for speaking and telling the stories of those who either cannot discuss his or her past or those who are no longer alive to talk about his or her experiences. The polyphonic discourse thus explains the creation of the community of speakers in the archives in which people can rely upon the knowledge that he or she is not the only one discussing his or her past. The rise of a new discourse illustrates a revolutionary manner of representation of civil wars and national trauma, and creates a framework in which the individual becomes privileged in his or her perspective of the historical event.



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