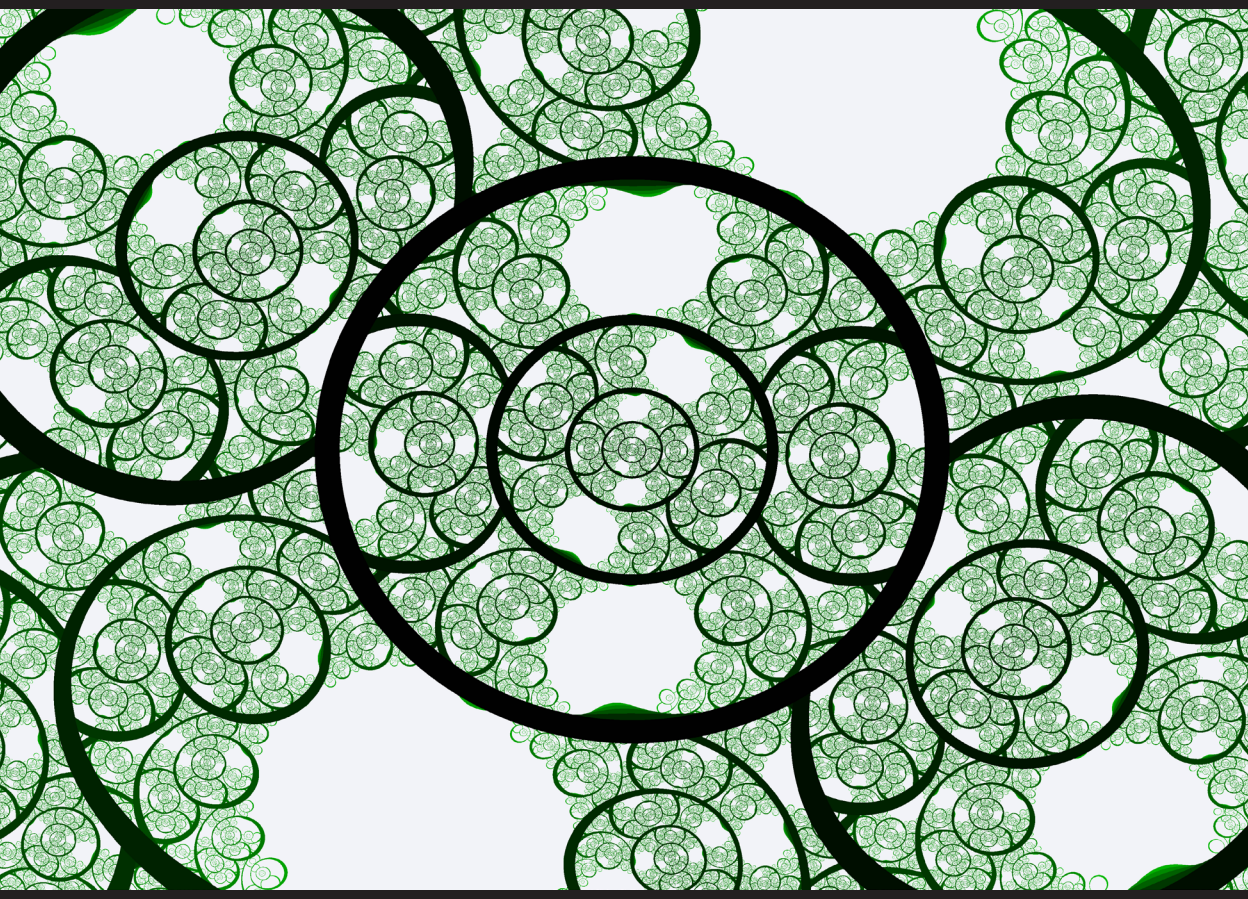
Ege Üniversitesi Yayınları
Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayın No: 214

Memory & Men

From Antiquity to the Middle Ages



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> The one who swims against the stream reaches the source.
>
> - Zhuangzi

Literature is a passion that takes root in one's soul. It opens up avenues of thought and the urge to lose oneself among words written on pages. It is something that seeps into the flesh giving life to multiple layers of meaning. Thus the disparity between heart and mind, feelings and thought, arise once again. Although literature may be read with the heart, we that are in the "business" of literature are academically required to analytically analyse and write with the mind. Nevertheless, it is still possible to get lost in time, in the author's world, or even among the multifaceted, multi-layered strata of human experience and knowledge. So, similar to archaeologists, philologists are also required to use fine bristled brushes whilst silently and meticulously uncovering layers into the past, trying to understand what came before, interpreting these works with our contemporary baggage, trying to see with our mind's eye the truth(s) hidden amongst the pages changing forevermore. Philosophers of old have remarked that the *aretē* of the eye was to see. But what do we actually see?

Literature is something open to interpretation (as most things are); it contains multiple meanings that are likely to change in time, possibly differing from culture to culture, from person to person. Even when we ourselves reread a work once time has lapsed, and we have undergone some of life's experiences we realise that the work we are holding in our hands is not the same as it was long ago. Nor are we for that matter.

Through growth and change comes transformation and a deeper comprehension of things. We learn to temper the soul and see things in a different light.

This work is the result of the unification of heart and mind, of stitching together the personal and the professional. This study is also partially based on the research conducted for my doctoral dissertation completed in September 2013. I would like to extend my gratitude to Günseli Sönmez İşçi, Nevin Yıldırım Koyuncu, Nevzat Kaya, Dilek Direnç and Nilsen Gökçen Uluk for their guidance, helpful comments, challenges, and support. I would like to especially thank Gülden Hatipoğlu for her mindful feedback, her patience listening to me ramble but mostly for her friendship especially through turbulent times. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family Ali, Deniz, and Kaan for always being there, through thick and thin.

Introduction

> Great is the power of memory, an awe-inspiring mystery, my God, a power of profound and infinite multiplicity.
>
> -Saint Augustine *Confessions*

Any philosophical inquiry into an abstract concept generally solicits two questions: What is it? What purpose does it serve?[1] These two successive questions are essential in understanding the essence and nature of the concept under review. In an attempt to comprehend memory, the same line of questioning may be utilised: What is memory? What purpose does memory serve?

The difficulty that lies in defining memory is not only due to its level of abstractness but is equally due to the variety of definitions it has come to inherit. In the vast ocean of memory, we come across designations such as individual memory, collective memory, natural memory, artificial memory, religious memory, cultural memory, and so forth. Yet, whatever definition these subclasses may come to signify they must in some way correspond to the whole. In other words, parts of memory should be correlative with the all-encompassing term memory. Therefore, logical reasoning inherently

[1] The philosopher's quest for truth, knowledge and understanding begins by first defining what the thing is and then by contemplating on what purpose it serves, as everything in existence must have a purpose or serve a purpose. For if it does not have a purpose then there is no reason for its existence. Hence philosophical inquiry begins with these two fundamental questions "What is it? What is its purpose?" These subsequent questions form the backbone of many of the arguments discussed in the works of Plato and Aristotle, creating a tradition, or a template which successive philosophers have worked from.

suggests that through exploring the relative strands of memory, we may be able to comprehend the entirety of it.

Though trying to understand what memory may or may not be tends to become rather complicated, one of the purposes, or functions, of this faculty seems to be accessing the past and another commonality, that it is comprised of images. When speaking of memory as a pathway wherein the past is accessed, the vehicle employed in arriving at the destination appears to be through the image. In everyday language "We say interchangeably that we represent a past event to ourselves or that we have an image of it, an image can be either quasi visual or auditory."[2] So it is the mental image in myriad forms that gives memory articulation. The image itself delineates the abstractness of memory lending it a corporeal form which the mind can then comprehend.

The prominence of memory, from a general historical perspective, was well-established in antiquity, running through the medieval era and the Renaissance well until the nineteenth century. Yet during the post-print period the earlier eminence attributed to memory began to fade as the written text gradually replaced the halls of the mind. Especially now in the digital age we inhabit, we are able to access all sorts of knowledge in all kinds of formats via the World Wide Web; thus, the need to make use of memory grows less and less. Although we may find the advance of technology to be a marker of an advanced civilisation, it is also the foundation of a new culture that relies heavily on this technology and as a result our "treasure-houses"[3] of memory are being replaced, or have already been replaced to a great extent, by virtual space. At this junction other problems begin to present themselves in the form of an endless stream of questions such as: How does remembering function? How does the individual remember? How do societies remember? What kind of a link exists between the individual and the collective when it comes to remembering? Is this a selective process? If so, what do we choose to remember or forget? Does memory entail more than just the acts of remembering and forgetting? These questions have long been dealt with by

[2] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 5.
[3] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* II.vii.4.

many thinkers and theoreticians who have treated memory as the realm where imagination dwells. It is this intersection, this relationship memory has with imagination that draws my attention. Thus, from a philological perspective my concern is if images and imagination are aspects of memory then how is this phenomenon related to the arts, to literature specifically? And more importantly: Is it possible to view literature as a site of memory, as a medium that preserves cultural memory?

As ease of access paves the way for ease of forgetfulness in our own age of images, not only individual memory but collective memory seems to be continuously transforming, or being transmuted and reconstructed, in the digital moment as Holy Screens replace the book. Another way of interpreting this situation would be pointing out that the constant flux of renewed images only enhances the endless renewal of collective memory, lending fluidity and expansion to collective memory formation. Rather than investing in our own minds and attempting to retain our cultivated knowledge within ourselves, we are forevermore storing our "memory" so to speak, on hard drives or somewhere in virtual space. In other words, instead of investing in our own inner images we frequently tend to rely on outer images; so the need to remember ceases to become significant since we can always just Google the information we need. So the treasure house of memory and the source which retains knowledge becomes something external rather than internal. Yet even before the advent of digital culture, though the Web visibly accelerated this process, the study of memory was dismissed mainly because it was considered to be pure memorization (rote memory), thus unworthy and cumbersome as *memorizing* could not be a part of modern *learning*. Accordingly, contemporary western culture, with its emphasis on technology, no longer stresses the role of memory and remembering in learning.

Remembering, however, according to ancient Greek philosophers, was an activity interrelated with reasoning, whereas the Roman rhetoricians considered a good memory to be the storehouse of eloquence. These two paths inevitably take us to two different destinations: one leads us to philosophical or dialectical memory while the other leads us to rhetorical memory. Though both accentuated a different aspect of memory, the Greco-Roman world concurred on two points: the first, that memory was an

active process that entailed the activities of storing and retrieving; and second, that these acts were at the core of knowledge and understanding.[4] Another comparison between the two is the image-making aspect of memory. Though both schools of thought discuss the image within memory, the function attributed to the image varies as one is concerned with the formation of the image and the latter deals with how the image may be utilised as a port from whence memory may be accessed for the retrieval, or the re-collection, of a specific memory.

Since memory, namely the acts of collecting and recollecting, was fundamental for knowledge and understanding in the classical era, being able to access and retrieve relevant material from the treasure-house of memory was perfected into an art and this art of memory, or *ars memorativa*, was also used prominently throughout the Middle Ages. As these ages were dissimilar to one another in many ways, so was the manner in which memory was perceived. In the classical era, memory was mainly studied under rhetoric, whereas in the medieval period, along with the advent and expansion of Christianity, memory came to possess an ethical stance alongside its rhetorical heritage. This is not to say that the classical period was completely devoid of ethics in handling memory—one only needs to look at the Sophists for this matter—but the medieval era further emphasised ethics as it carried and expanded on the classical tradition of memory. This slight shift that occurs in the perception of memory in the medieval era may be attributed to the rise of Christianity, where memory was interpreted as necessitating an ethical or prudential stance. Thus, the medieval mind preferred to don the philosophical and theological robes of memory rather than walk down the path of pure rhetorical memory even though both considered the image to be prominent in their treatment of it. Consequently, by analysing the ancient and medieval sources on the theory of memory, it becomes possible to trace the philosophical, rhetorical, ethical (spiritual), and poetical trajectory of the memory image.

In this vein, the first two chapters trace the history of the memory image from antiquity to the Middle Ages. As previously mentioned, in the

[4] Richards, "Classical and Early Modern Ideas of Memory," in *Theories of Memory*, 20-21.

classical period, there were two complementary lines of thought that handled the memory image: one was the philosophical or dialectical and the other was rhetorical. The philosophical aspect of the memory image was drawn from the Greek heritage founded by Plato and Aristotle whereas the Roman orators provided the architectural mnemonic of the rhetorical tradition wherein the image was placed for the purposes of retention and recall. The Middle Ages with thinkers such as Augustine of Hippo, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas fused the philosophical and rhetorical strands of memory and produced an ethical, prudential understanding of the memory image by emphasising the affinity between the image and its intended meaning. In chapter three, from the accumulated knowledge of memory and the formation and retention of the memory image, the poet is identified as one who preserves the memory of a culture and poetry as a medium where cultural memory is stored and transmitted to future generations. Accordingly the memory image is traced from its philosophical, rhetorical, and ethical origins to its poetical roots where it becomes an active archive of individual, social and cultural memory. In this sense, the literary narrative, becomes the canvas onto which a wide range of differing images may be imprinted, enabling the textual space to retain poetical imagination.

Due to the vast images within poetical imagination, the memory image(s)that forms the basis of this study has been limited to the culturally generated images of men and their masculinities. The method of evaluating these images of men not only relies on the theory of memory but also draws from the terminology generated by masculinity studies. This method, being a conscious choice, regards the male body as an image etched within memory and masculinity as a referent to this image that incorporates the intended meaning. In chapter four, three distinct yet overlapping types of image representations are defined: internal, external and mythocultural. In the following chapters, the dominant images of men are then analysed according to these classifications textually ranging from Homer to the late medieval era.

To briefly sum up, the present study analyses the memory image or rather the narrative construction of masculinity within literary texts ranging from the classical to the late medieval period. By analysing the

attitude and treatment of men and their various masculinities within poetical imagination, this study also endeavours to embrace the concept of cultural memory, namely literary memory as it is, in of itself, a part of cultural heritage. Through a background of extensive discussions which have separately been made regarding both masculinity and memory in classical and medieval narratives, this analysis attempts to unite these two distinctive areas of study by specifically exploring the ways in which the male body has been shaped and reshaped within the realm of cultural memory. This undertaking draws on and hopes to contribute to the current literature in memory, gender, classical, and medieval studies by analysing the perception of the male body and the definitions that (pre)conceived forms of masculinities have come to inherit within the poetical imagination of western culture.

1 Memory in Antiquity

Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, does not play a great role in the myths of ancient Greece other than being one of the many entities whose bed was visited by the all-mighty Zeus.[1] Yet, as anthropomorphic personifications and the underlying meaning of their exploits go, Mnemosyne's story and what she signifies is quite significant. Mnemosyne embodies the concept of being able to remember and her existence is strongly linked to that of Metis; for wisdom and memory complement each other. In Zeus' case before experiencing memory, he chooses to first and foremost possess knowledge, or rather acquire wisdom; hence, the story goes: "Now Zeus, king of the gods, made Metis his wife first, and she was wisest among gods and mortal men. But when she was about to bring forth the goddess bright-eyed Athene, Zeus craftily deceived her with cunning words and put her in his own belly, as Earth and starry Heaven advised."[2] Though the godhead of Zeus literally devours wisdom, incorporating her within his body, this does not suffice. For what could one do with wisdom alone if they did not remember that they were in possession of it? Thus, after a brief interval of other lovers, Zeus visits the sacred bed of Mnemosyne where "For nine nights did wise Zeus lie with her, entering her holy bed remote from the immortals."[3] Unlike Metis's fate, Mnemosyne is

[1] Mnemosyne is mostly mentioned as the mother of the nine muses, the daughters that are born to her after Zeus visits her sacred bed for nine consecutive nights: Calliope (Epic Poetry), Clio (History), Erato (Love Poetry), Euterpe (Music), Melpomene (Tragedy), Polyhymnia (Hymns), Terpsichore (Dance), Thalia (Comedy), and Urania (Astronomy). It is no surprise that the daughters of Mnemosyne are far more famous than herself, as they are invoked, or called upon, for inspiration and guidance mostly by poets at the beginning of their work. In a way, the nine muses constitute a vast part of collective memory, establishing the cultural foundation of a society. Yet, without their mother Memory, the function of the muses would practically be non-existent.

[2] Hesiod *Theogony* 886-891.

[3] Ibid., 53-58.

not consumed. Her body represents remembrance which is something we may have, and yet lose to forgetfulness. This constant reinforcement of remembrance may be one of the reasons behind Zeus' frequent visits to her holy bed. What is remarkable in Hesiod's lines is the emphasis that Zeus' union with Mnemosyne took place in a sacred place and that the other immortals were unaware of this relationship; hence it was a purely divine and individual experience. Another significant point is the length of this involvement, since it lasts for nine nights it involves the passage of time. The duration of this relationship creates a timeline where Zeus comes to have a history with Mnemosyne, thus, a past. By considering both of these aspects (place and time), we may surmise that memory inherently engages the individual as much as it involves the element of time.

The Philosophy of Memory: Plato and Aristotle

Following the few myths behind Mnemosyne, which stress the divinity and pastness of memory, we are led down a philosophical path where we naturally arrive on the doorstep of Plato and Aristotle. These two diverse yet complementary lines of thought, one Platonic and the other Aristotelian, accentuate memory as an active process entailing the acts of collection and recollection which establish the basis of knowledge and understanding; however, where the former regards memory as the soul's connection to divinity, the latter considers memory to be of the past. Where memory and imagination are interwoven, we find Plato's theory of the *eikōn* discussing the present representation of an absent thing resolving the problem of memory within imagination and Aristotle's premise on *mnēmē* and *anamnēsis* that bind the image, imagination, and memory.

In order to grasp the Platonic view of memory, we could start by visiting Socrates in jail in Athens during his last hours before his execution, where we would find him in the midst of a heated argument with Simmias and Cebes concerning the immortality of the soul. After having established his theory,[4] the next hypothesis following would be, if the soul is truly immortal then "for us learning is no other than recollection. According to

[4] Plato *Phaedo* 71c-72e.

this, we must at some previous time have learned what we now recollect."[5] Thus, all three "agree that if anyone recollects anything, he must have known it before."[6] Knowledge that comes to mind in this manner is defined as being recollection. The example used to describe this phenomenon is through an association of ideas: "when a man sees or hears or in some other way perceives one thing and not only knows that thing but also thinks of another thing of which the knowledge is not the same but different, are we not right to say that he recollects the second thing that comes into his mind?"[7] This recollection through association is linked to prior knowledge; hence memory, or remembering, in Platonic terms, is a process that takes place within the immortal soul which is essentially linked to the divine from whence we receive the true essence and knowledge of things. Yet, this argument is troubling in itself because if this deduction holds true then all men should be wise and never forgetful which is hardly the case.

The reason why some are able to remember better than others and some prone to forget is further explored in the *Theaetetus* where Socrates wants us to imagine "that we have in our souls a block of wax, larger in one person, smaller in another, and of purer wax in one case, dirtier in another; in some men rather hard, in others rather soft, while in some it is of the proper consistency."[8] This, Socrates calls "a gift of Memory [Mnemosyne], the mother of the Muses. We make impressions upon this of everything we wish to remember among the things we have seen or heard or thought of ourselves; we hold the wax under our perceptions and thoughts and take a stamp from them, in the way in which we take the imprints of signet rings."[9] Furthermore, "Whatever is impressed upon the wax we remember and know so long as the image remains in the wax; whatever is obliterated

[5] Ibid., 72e.
[6] Ibid., 73c.
[7] Ibid. Another example that further defines recollection with association is the situation that occurs between lovers: "whenever they see a lyre, a garment or anything else that their beloved is accustomed to use, they know the lyre, and the image of the boy to whom it belongs comes into their mind. This is recollection (...) and there are thousands of other such occurrences." 73d.
[8] Ibid., *Theaetetus* 191d.
[9] Ibid.

or cannot be impressed, we forget and do not know."[10] By supplying a vivid description on the notion of memory as being a block of wax in our souls, Socrates is hinting that individual memory is derived from the universal which in turn feeds the individual. To expand on this interpretation further, if the immortal soul is connected to the divine then it is also connected to the universal which is devoid of individualism as it must encompass the collective. Yet once the soul is reborn and begins to recollect, remember, or relearn, as its initial ties to the universal are not as strong, the impressions made on the block of wax are derived from individual experiences, perceptions and thoughts which are all obviously part of the collective and only selective for the individual.

The same passage also associates the problematics of memory and forgetting. Following Ricoeur's reading, Plato's *Theaetetus* is wound around the problem posed by the relationship between memory and imagination where Plato's views centre on the *eikōn* emphasizing the present representation of an absent thing. According to Ricoeur, Plato solves the problems caused by memory within the realm of imagination.[11] Yet the argument that brought us to this junction begins with the enigmatic question "If a man has once come to know a certain thing, and continues to preserve the memory of it, is it possible that, at the moment when he remembers it, he doesn't know this thing that he is remembering?"[12] Rephrasing the question Socrates asks "Can a man who has learned something not know it when he is remembering it?"[13] It seems having acquired knowledge and memory is still insufficient, as the individual is prone to not only false judgement but to forgetfulness as well if the faculty of memory is itself deficient. Exploring the case of false judgement in line with knowledge and memory leads us to further analyse the act of a flawed memory which is neither a case of true remembrance nor of absolute forgetfulness. For if one thinks that they remember something yet the thing that is remembered does not hold true with what should have been remembered, it is hardly fair to call this forgetting because the complete

[10] Ibid., 191e.
[11] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 8-10.
[12] Plato *Theaetetus* 163d.
[13] Ibid.

absence of what should have been remembered does not exist. Interestingly, such cases of memory where the truth or falsehood of what is remembered are correlated with wisdom and ignorance;[14] thus, "In some men, the wax in the soul is deep and abundant, smooth and worked to the proper consistency; and when the things that come through the senses are imprinted upon this 'heart' of the soul (…) the signs that are made in it are lasting, because they are clear and have sufficient depth. Men with such souls learn easily and remember what they learn; they do not get the signs out of line with the perceptions, but judge truly."[15] So these are the people that are considered to be wise, whereas "it is a different matter when a man's 'heart' is 'shaggy' (…), or when it is dirty and of impure wax; or when it is very soft or hard. Persons in whom the wax is soft are quick to learn but quick to forget; when the wax is hard, the opposite happens."[16] Since such people are considered to be liable to false judgement and be in error, they are labelled with ignorance. Yet this definition of wisdom and ignorance would have created a problem within itself instead of enlightening the argument as it bears with it the question as to how one would know if what they have remembered is true or untrue were it not for the resolution of defining what true knowledge was.[17]

Strands of the argument of distinguishing what true and false judgement are and further definitions of the concepts at hand are handled

[14] We are once again brought before Metis and Mnemosyne, the paired concepts of wisdom and memory. However, the idea emphasised here is that although one may have acquired knowledge using or accessing this is then bound to how well it is remembered: if they are unable to remember, or remember falsely, they are ignorant; whereas if they are able to recollect, thus remember accurately, they are wise. It seems that having one and lacking the other creates a deficit in attaining the true nature of things. cf. Plato *Theaetetus* 163e-164c; See also *Philebus* 21b+, in which a very similar vein of thought occurs where Socrates argues that one could not enjoy any pleasure in life if one were devoid of memory as it would be impossible for them to remember that they had enjoyed themselves, and that if this person did not possess right judgment, then they would not be aware that they were enjoying themselves at that present moment in time, and if they were unable to calculate, then they would not be able to envision any future forms of pleasure. Thus, the argument in *Philebus* necessitates one to possess reason, memory, and knowledge intertwining these complementary concepts.

[15] Plato *Theaetetus* 194d.

[16] Ibid., 194e-195a.

[17] Ibid., 210a. The long debate of answering the question "what is knowledge?" is handled throughout the *Theaetetus* in minute detail. The end result being in Socrates' words "Correct judgment accompanied by *knowledge* of the differentness."

in *Philebus* where memory is defined as "the preservation of perception,"[18] forgetting as "the loss of memory"[19] and remembering as "recollection"[20] which is said to differ from memory as recollection is "when the soul recalls as much as possible by itself, without the aid of the body, what she had once experienced together with the body."[21] The differentiation of recollection is solved once the nature of true knowledge, or eternal truth, is once again revisited. From the totality of Plato's Socratic dialogues, *Phaedrus* specifically, it is possible to deduce that true knowledge is inscribed on the soul of every individual and that knowing the truth is a matter of being completely aware of what one inherently comprehends without consciously knowing it; and it is this that Plato refers to as recollection. So knowledge resides within the immortal soul imbued with eternal truth and we are able to access this knowledge through recollection. To put it more poetically, this "is the recollection of the things our soul saw when it was traveling with god, when it disregarded the things we now call real and lifted up its head to what is truly real instead."[22] Since, only a remnant of this ultimate reality experienced and inscribed upon the soul is recollected by the body, the imprints or traces or markings made on the waxen device in the soul are significant as they are the link or gateway to true knowledge. When we turn from these *inner* markings to the matter of *external* markings, we find ourselves *vis-à-vis* a whole new perspective where the written word is scrutinized under a harsh and critical light. The deep affinity Plato places between the soul and memory in the quest for attaining true knowledge may be one of the main reasons why he condemns writing arguing that it will inevitably diminish the faculty of memory. This idea is expressed by Socrates in *Phaedrus* as he recounts the story of Thamus, the Egyptian king and Theuth the inventor of the written word. In this story, Theuth presents his new invention *writing* to King Thamus, informing Thamus that "here is something that, once learned, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory"

[18] Ibid., *Philebus* 34a.
[19] Ibid., 33e.
[20] Ibid., 34b.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., *Phaedrus* 249c.

claiming he has "discovered a potion for memory and wisdom."[23] Although this *new invention*, so to speak, unites Mnemosyne and Metis in Theuth's eyes, King Thamus rejects it as a tool of recollection rather than retained knowledge arguing that "it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own." Thamus contends that Theuth has "not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding;" thus, providing only a semblance of wisdom rather than reality.[24] As a result, writing is considered as something that would severely diminish human access to the eternal truth that lies within the soul as it is not possible to carry out a dialectic method of reasoning with a written work. There is also the consequence that those relying on the written word will tend to rely less on their own capacity to retain knowledge; the individual, then, will inherently be prone to forgetfulness as their memory markers, or traces of memory, will no longer be internal but external, hence further removed from the divine, ultimate truth.

Although the written word in Platonic terms is only a reminder, only a semblance of the truth but not truth itself, another dilemma presents itself when the reliability of the spoken word is analysed under the metaphorical microscope. Worthy of note is the *Phaedrus* dialogue where the trustworthiness of speech is questioned since rhetorical composition does not always necessarily convey the truth. As much as the written word, or external markings, further removes the individual from the truth, so can the spoken word though it is the verbal expression of inner markings. The *Phaedrus*, as Frances Yates has also noted, is actually "a treatise on rhetoric in which rhetoric is regarded, not as an art of persuasion to be used for personal or political advantage, but as an art of speaking the truth and of

[23] Ibid., 274c-275a.

[24] Ibid., 275b. On another note, writing may be considered as a source of knowledge that constantly "reminds" future generations. As much as the written word was deemed to be a source that would ultimately diminish individual memory and wisdom, it is undeniable that it is a fountain of knowledge on societal and cultural levels. In our own day and age, written sources are what we rely on most for accuracy as we consider these sources to be one of the most reliable transmitters of knowledge handed down through the ages.

persuading the hearers to the truth. The power to do this depends on a knowledge of the soul and the soul's true knowledge consists in the recollection of the Ideas."[25] For Plato, only the Forms hold the real essence of things and the presentations used are mere semblances of the truth. Hence true knowledge comes from grasping the world of Forms and the manner in which the mind would be able to comprehend the abstract Forms would only be possible through reason.[26]

On another note, "Memory is not a 'section' of this treatise, as one part of the art of rhetoric; *memory in the Platonic sense is the groundwork of the whole*."[27] So, in this respect, knowledge and understanding, knowing and remembering, and all else could not exist without memory; for memory is the foundation which everything else is built upon. Furthermore, this dialogue, as far as written evidence suggests, is one of the initial texts that draw attention to the significance of *places* necessary for training the memory which will carry great import in the later rhetoric tradition. The advised technique mentioned in this passage is to locate a serene setting—the open country being preferable—to utilise when rehearsing or memorizing the speech at hand. Unlike the Roman rhetoricians who prefer vast structures and buildings, the emphasis in this dialogue is wound around the tranquil countryside as a place for recollection (or memorizing) and speech making.[28] In this respect, the *Phaedrus* with the importance attached to the necessity of a place for recollection, or training the memory, may be seen as one of the founding texts on which the rhetorical tradition fashioned itself.

As much as memory meant "recollection" and the soul's umbilical cord to the divine truth for Plato, Aristotle felt the need to stress the "pastness" of memory and differentiate between memory and recollecting; thus, we have his work *On Memory* which has come down to us under the Latin title *De memoria et reminiscentia* as part of his *Parva naturalia*. "Why a double

[25] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 51.
[26] Though this idea on the theory of Forms may be traced in many of Plato's dialogues the most vivid examples are found in *The Republic*. See specifically the Analogy of the Divided Line 6.509+ and the Allegory of the Cave 7.514a+.
[27] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 51. Emphasis added.
[28] Plato *Phaedrus* 228b-229b.

title?" asks Ricoeur and replies "To distinguish, not the persistence of memories in their relation to recall, but their simple presence to mind (…) in relation to recollection as a search. Memory, in this particular sense, is directly characterized as affection (pathos), which distinguishes it precisely from recollection."[29] In this sense, memory for Aristotle was the knowledge of things, senses, and experiences held in the mind of the individual whereas reminiscence, or remembering, required a specific search within memory. Although Aristotle also handles memory from a philosophical perspective, the distinction from Plato's views lies not only in the prominence Aristotle places on the lapse of time in his treatment of memory, but also the importance he places on memory as a re-collection of sense-impressions individuals collect throughout their lives rather than a divine source. Consequently, for Aristotle "memory relates to what is past"[30] and it is his comparison with the future which inherently invokes prediction and the present that calls for sense perception that characterises this definition. Thus, "there is no such thing as memory of the present while present; for the present is object only of perception, and the future, of expectation, but the object of memory is the past."[31] Generally speaking, even in current memory theories, whether studying individual memory which falls under the jurisdiction of psychology or collective memory which is where sociology dwells, Aristotle's statement that memory belongs to the past is undeniable. Inevitably there can be no memory of the present at the present but perception, whereas the future is more or less apt to prediction or theorizing but memory is of the past: "For we are said to know things present and future (e.g. that there will be an eclipse), whereas it is impossible to remember anything save what is past."[32] Even though memory belongs to the past, it is in the present from which we are able to access this past in order to retrieve memories. More importantly, "only those animals which perceive time remember,"[33] yet although "Many animals have memory (…) no other creature except man can recall the past

[29] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 15.
[30] Aristotle *On Memory* 449b14.
[31] Ibid., 449b25.
[32] Ibid., *Topics* 111b30.
[33] Ibid., *On Memory* 449b25.

at will."[34] In other words, humans are attributed with the ability to selectively search within their mental archives of stored memory and bring to mind that which they seek as they can perceive time. But where is memory located and how does it function? It is at this point perhaps where the essence of Plato is felt most, the point where Aristotle considers memory as being a part of the soul[35] and its association with internal markings: what Plato defined with the imprint on a waxen device Aristotle explains with the image. To be more precise, Plato considered knowledge to be dormant in the form of Ideas within our memories, whereas Aristotle sought to establish that there was also a form of knowledge derived from sense impressions. Moreover, the disparity of thought between the two philosophers exists when instead of simply equating the soul and memory, Aristotle defines the part of the soul memory belongs to, which is the part where perception takes place as it involves perceiving time cognitively and also cognizing the thing remembered that inherently involves images since "Without an image thinking is impossible."[36] This statement suggests that all thought processes, namely the act of thinking, require an image that correlates with perception previously harboured within the memory. Also, "memory even of intellectual objects involves an image and the image is an affection of the common sense. Thus memory belongs incidentally to the faculty of thought, and essentially it belongs to the primary faculty of sense-perception."[37] In other words, all notions, abstract and concrete, are associated with an image which is stored within memory and it is through this association that we are able to activate the process of thought. So it is the mental image in myriad forms that gives memory articulation. The image itself delineates the abstractness of memory lending it a corporeal form which the mind can then comprehend. Incidentally, this part of the soul which harbours memory is also where imagination is found; thus inevitably linking the arts with memory, or rather symbolically reuniting the muses with their mother. This line of thought makes it possible to state

[34] Ibid., *History of Animals* 488b25.
[35] Ibid., *Topics* 125b10. The lines read "Memory, then, is found in knowledge, seeing that it is a persisting of knowledge. But this is impossible; *for memory is always found in the soul*." (emphasis added)
[36] Ibid., *On Memory* 450a1.
[37] Ibid., 450a11.

that literature as an art constitutes a part of collective memory, as literature, specifically poetry, provokes us to think in images. Since all thought or the acts of perception and cognition require a correlative image, we are inherently brought back to the matter of the soul, for memory belongs to the image-making part of the soul and this is where imagination dwells. More crucially, since "all objects of which there is imagination are in themselves objects of memory;"[38] literature, in this sense, is also an object of memory.

The argument continues with the inevitable dilemma as "One may ask how it is possible that though the affection is present, and the fact absent, the latter—that which is not present—is remembered."[39] In other words, how is it possible to remember a thing when the thing itself is absent?[40] The response to this query is found in conceiving "that which is generated through sense-perception in the soul, and in the part of the body which is its seat,—viz. that affection the state whereof we call memory—to be some such thing as a picture."[41] Thus memory is linked directly with the image and imagination, both of which are placed on centre-stage, or rather explained through a similar notion such as the waxen device that Plato had conceived since "The process of movement stamps in, as it were, a sort of impression of the precept, just as persons do who make an impression with a seal."[42] Hence, the presence of the image that constitutes memory is clarified by means of an imprint; that is to say, memory involves an image in the soul which is like an imprint in the body. So the making of an image derived from sense impressions necessitates a movement, a movement such as an impression made on wax with a signet ring. Obviously the matter of the duration of the memory in question is dependent upon not

[38] Ibid., 450a23.
[39] Ibid., 450a25.
[40] See also Ricoeur's analysis of Plato's *Sophist* and *Theaetetus* regarding the present representation of an absent thing where the impact on the theory of imagination and memory is taken into consideration. The argument wound around the *eikōn* as opposed to *phantasma*, or eikastic art versus fantastic art is especially worthy of note. Also see the discussion on the *eidōlon* where the nature of a copy of a thing is trying to be established via the questions: What is a true thing? What is another thing? And what is meant by something like it? 7-15.
[41] Aristotle *On Memory* 450a30.
[42] Ibid.

only the age but also the disposition of the person who has formed an impression of an object obtained by the use of the senses.[43]

The problematic wound around the perception of the image itself as retained by one's memory becomes at this point a contemplation of a copy of the original as well as something distinct. The example of such an image Aristotle presents to us is that of a picture: "A picture painted on a panel is at once a picture and a likeness: that is, while one and the same, it is both of these, although the being of both is not the same, and one may contemplate it either as a picture, or as a likeness."[44] Likewise, "we have to conceive that the image within us is both something in itself and relative to something else."[45] If we regard it as something in itself "it is only an object of contemplation, or an image; but when considered as relative to something else, e.g., as its likeness, it is also a reminder."[46] Thus, the meaning of the image is derived from the manner in which one would perceive it: if one considers the image as is, the image itself is being presented as thought, whereas if the image is regarded as a likeness to the original, it then acts as a reminder. Interestingly, Aristotle is not opposed (as Plato was) to having the mind occupied by these reminders which are not pure thought but only a likeness of the true thing; in fact, he considers this as a way one might protect their memory.[47]

All things considered, memory or remembering has been defined as being an image in the soul which is related as a likeness to the image in question; and as to its function, it has been deemed to be the function of the primary faculty of sense perception where we perceive time. If a definition of memory along with its function has been provided, then why does

[43] See specifically Ibid., 450b1-10.

[44] Ibid., 450b21. The debate presented here is highly reminiscent of Plato's *Sophist* where the nature of the copy is being described as "something that's made similar to a true thing and is another thing that's like it." Though not being true in itself, the copy is seen simultaneously as something "that which is not" (because it is not the original) as well as "that which is" (since it is a likeness to the original). 240b.

[45] Ibid., 450b23.

[46] Ibid., 450b25.

[47] See for example Ibid., 451a13, where Aristotle says, "Mnemonic exercises aim at preserving one's memory of something by repeatedly reminding him of it; which implies nothing else than the frequent contemplation of something as a likeness, and not in its own right."

Aristotle feel the need to expand on his argument regarding the nature of recollection as something distinctive from memory? For when it comes to recollection, which is not the same as remembering, Plato and Aristotle could not have differed more. The phenomena of recollection Plato relates directly with previous knowledge inscribed upon the soul, whereas according to Aristotle "recollection is not the recovery or acquisition of memory"[48] but "recollecting must imply in those who recollect the presence of some source over and above that from which they originally learn."[49] More interestingly, "Acts of recollection are due to the fact that one movement has by nature another that succeeds it."[50] Thus, in a manner of speaking, we are given the prerequisites and method of recollection: images are naturally fitted to occur in a certain order (which seems to be the precursor of the rhetoricians handbook) wherein "when one wishes to recollect, (…) he will try to obtain a beginning movement whose sequel shall be the movement which he desires to reawaken."[51] It is from this order of antecedent movements where we locate that which we seek: "Accordingly, things arranged in a fixed order (…) are easy to remember, while badly arranged subjects are remembered with difficulty."[52] Hence the soundness of mind and the orderly fashion in which images and thoughts are stored within our internal archives play a significant role when it comes to recollecting. Yet in order to recollect "one must get hold of a starting-point. This explains why it is that persons are supposed to recollect sometimes by starting from 'places'."[53] So, in order to recollect a memory that is already located within the individual one must begin from any given place within the specific series in question and internally continue to *hunt* or *search* for the point one wishes to recollect. Perceivably, recollecting is not the same as remembering, for though many animals remember only

[48] Ibid., 451a18.
[49] Ibid., 451b9.
[50] Ibid., 451b10.
[51] Ibid., 451b30.
[52] Ibid., 452a1.
[53] Ibid., 452a13. From the point of view of philology, the basic narrative structure of stories carries a similar precept with this argument. Especially in oral cultures, the memory (of both the individual and the collective) was where stories were stored with striking images that would enable ease of recall. These narratives, as Aristotle defines in his *Poetics*, have a beginning, middle and an end; where the narrative flow is not only easily retained but is also easily brought to mind at will. See also Ibid., 452a17.

humans can remember and recollect. Recollection, in this sense, is deliberate as one can only collect again that which one is aware of; hence, re-collecting is considered to be a search, a hunt entailing reflection on time and the objects recalled through the orderly association of ideas and images.[54] This passage, with its emphasis on association and order will carry great import in understanding the foundation on which the training of one's artificial memory via a mnemonic locus is based. Though Aristotle's references to the mnemonic technique act only as illustrations to support his argument, "The scholastics proved to their own satisfaction that the *De memoria et reminiscentia* provided philosophical justification for the artificial memory."[55] Yet, although "Aristotle is essential for the scholastic and medieval form of the art [of memory]"[56] the methods laid out in his treatise may still be the antecedent work on which the Roman handbooks on oratory during the first century B.C. and first century A.D. were based on; for, it is during these centuries when rhetoric (or, oratory, the art of persuasion) gained prominence and memory training began to be recognised as an art or craft.

The Art of Memory in the Latin Sources

Our journey continues from philosophical Greece to rhetorical Rome where both schools of thought have a mutual view of memory in the image-making aspect it entails. Though both discuss the image within the theory of memory, the former considers it a presentation of an absent thing related with the past while the latter views it as the trigger for retrieval, as a key to unlocking the treasure-house of memory. The rhetoricians were concerned with how things may be loaded on to the image and how this image would then be stored, or archived, ready for recollection at the moment one desires. Memory, thus viewed, is no longer a pathway to divine knowledge nor is it recalling the past, but it is now a mental space where learned things are stored ready for retrieval. The three Latin sources regarding the classical art of memory: the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, Cicero's

[54] Ibid., 451b18, 453a5-10.
[55] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 49.
[56] Ibid., 53.

De oratore and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, are all treatises wherein memory is being discussed as a part of rhetoric. Nevertheless, all three sources in one sense or the other relate the significance the image has in retaining and retrieving material from the vaults of the mind.

Almost all tracts related with the classical art of memory begin by retelling the story of Simonides[57] who is attributed with having "first invented the science of mnemonics."[58] According to the tale, situated around the year 500 B.C., Scopas, the king of Thessaly, commissioned a poem to be recited in his honour during a banquet. The poet charged with this task was none other than Simonides of Ceos. Yet Simonides dedicated the poem not only to Scopas but also to the twins Castor and Pollux, giving them equal praise. When Simonides approached to receive the reward that was promised, Scopas paid him only half the sum, pompously telling the poet to ask the twins for the other half. A while later, Simonides received a message informing him that two young men were waiting for him outside and that they wished to speak with him. He left the banquet to look for these two young men but no one was to be found. During his absence the roof of the banquet hall fell in crushing all that were there, mangling their bodies so horridly that it was impossible to identify the dead. Fortunately, Simonides, supposedly saved by the twin gods, was able to identify the bodies by remembering where they were seated during the banquet. The manner in which he was able to do so lies in the fact that he had attached a fix position to each person and thus, the act of recollecting, or the art of memory is said to have been born. Through this experience the poet realised that orderly arrangement was the key to a good memory.[59] Though

[57] Simonides of Ceos (born c. 556 BC - died c. 468 BC) was a Greek poet renown for his innovations in poetry. He is the first known poet to actually charge payment for poetry commissioned by a patron and he is also the one considered to have invented the art of memory. Another attribute which I find to be relevant is that Simonides defined poetry as a speaking picture and painting as mute poetry. This definition, in a way, unites poetry and memory via the image. See chapter 3, (Poetical Imagination as Cultural Memory) for a more detailed version of this discussion.

[58] Cicero *De oratore* II.lxxxvi.352.

[59] See Ibid., II.lxxxvi.354. According to this passage: "[Simonides] inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty must select localities and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities, with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts, and the images of the

this story is highly reminiscent of Aristotle's serialisation for recall and Plato's waxen device, the soul is no longer the vessel for this imprint as external places have replaced the inner waxen tablet. In the rhetorical perception of memory, the acts of storing and retrieving have been transferred from the soul to the mind as mental imprints of images were loaded on to externally existent places.

In the exploration of memory, we find that remembering is certainly very crucial, for without the faculty of remembering we would not be able to speak of memory at all. The act of recalling and recollecting relative material from the vaults of memory with great precision was considered to be an accomplishment which only the trained mind was capable of realising. Remembering with great accuracy, as the story of Simonides emphasises, was in itself a great feat of the mind. Although memory *per se* was not studied as a solitary concept, it was nevertheless dealt with under the heading of rhetoric; thus, the art of memory belonged to the school of rhetoric as a technique that enabled orators to eloquently deliver long speeches from memory. Therefore, it was essential that the orator trained this faculty by using contemporary architecture to store mental images and later retrieve these from the memory places at will, enabling them to accurately remember *what* to say, along with *how* to say it. This type of memory—artificial memory—was highly regarded as it necessitated a certain discipline where one would meticulously exercise and train their artificial memory.

The oldest surviving source compiled on the classical art of memory both in the Greek and in the Latin world is the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*. Mistakenly attributed to Cicero by the medieval tradition,[60] this work considers memory to be "the guardian of all the parts of rhetoric."[61] Rather

facts will designate the facts themselves, and we shall employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it."

[60] The medieval tradition mistakenly attributed the *Ad Herrenium* to Cicero whom they frequently referred to as Tullius, or Tully. In the MSS the *Ad Herrenium* was placed after Cicero's *De inventione*, so it was also called *Rhetorica secunda* and even *Rhetorica nova* later on. But generally Cicero's *De inventione* and the *Ad Herrenium* were referred to as the First and Second Rhetorics of Tullius. See Harry Caplan's Introduction to the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium*, viii; and Frances A. Yates *The Art of Memory*, 36.

[61] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.16.

than the essence or nature of memory, the art itself and the method used in employing it is deemed more significant. The two types of memory, both natural and artificial that should complement each other, are defined: the former is said to be "imbedded in our minds, born simultaneously with thought," whereas the latter "is that memory which is strengthened by a kind of training and system of discipline."[62] So we are naturally endowed with the capacity to hold memories within our minds but we also need to strengthen that which we have through habitual practice. For the rhetorician, utilising and enhancing artificial memory was of great import and the means whereby one would go about training and strengthening the artificial memory was through a systematic technique that relied heavily upon imagery. Since "artificial memory includes backgrounds and images,"[63] the foundations on which these images were to be placed, carried equal weight. The backgrounds that would in a way be the template for artificial memory to inscribe its precepts on should be "scenes as are naturally or artificially set off on a small scale, complete and conspicuous, so that we can grasp and embrace them easily by the natural memory—for example, a house, an intercolumnar space, a recess, an arch, or the like."[64]

Remarkably, the author of the *Ad Herrenium* uses the letters of the alphabet to illustrate how external markings could enhance artificial memory: through our knowledge of the alphabet we are able to write whatever is dictated and then read what we have written down. "Likewise, those who have learned mnemonics can set in backgrounds what they have heard, and from these backgrounds deliver it by memory. For the backgrounds are very much like wax tablet or papyrus, the images like letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading."[65] So, if we had the desire to keep in mind a large number of things, we would require the acquisition of a large number of backgrounds, or templates, onto which the correlative images would

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., 3.17. This specific example metaphorically converges the background with the book and the image with the letter, which when taken literally may well allude to considering the medieval manuscript as a *loci* for memory and the letters therein as the images required to trigger the memory.

then be placed. Our author finds it "obligatory to have these backgrounds in a series, so that we never by confusion in their order be prevented from following the images—proceeding from any background we wish, whatsoever its place in the series, and whether we go forwards or backwards—nor from delivering orally what has been committed to the backgrounds."[66] The systematic and orderly arrangement of these backgrounds seems to be a requirement in training and enhancing the artificial memory. "So with respect to the backgrounds. If these have been arranged in order, the result will be that, reminded by the images, we can repeat orally what we committed to the backgrounds, proceeding in either direction from any background we please. That is why it also seems best to arrange the backgrounds in a series."[67] Thus these adopted backgrounds should be carefully studied "so that they may cling lastingly in our memory, for the images, like letters, are effaced when we make no use of them, but the backgrounds, like wax tablets, should abide."[68]

> Further, backgrounds differing in form and nature must be secured, so that, thus distinguished, they may be clearly visible; for if a person has adopted many intercolumnar spaces, their resemblance to one another will so confuse him that he will no longer know what he has set in each background. And these backgrounds ought to be of moderate size and medium extent, for when excessively large they render the images vague, and when too small often seem incapable of receiving an arrangement of images. Then the backgrounds ought to be neither too bright nor too dim, so that the shadows may not obscure the images nor the lustre make them glitter. I believe that the intervals between backgrounds should be of moderate extent, approximately thirty feet; for, like the external eye, so the inner eye of thought is less powerful when you have moved the object of sight too near or too far away.[69]

Thus, by placing prominence on sight, a direct link is formed between the external eye being what one actually sees with and the inner eye of thought

[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 3.18.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., 3.19.

which is the portal that allows one to "see" internally, in order to recall previously stored images. So if the place, or *loci*, the external gaze rests on to form the initial background is obscure so too will the inner memory palace be vague; hence the images placed on this ambiguous background will not hold. The form and nature of these actual backgrounds, or initial templates, must be clearly visible so that they may be able to hold the imprints comprised of images.

After explaining the nature of the backgrounds and how they may serve in retaining any number of images within the memory, our unknown author turns now to the theory of images where he states that since "images must resemble objects, we ought ourselves to choose from all objects likenesses for our use. Hence likenesses are bound to be of two kinds, one of subject-matter the other of words."[70] These two types of memory images—one for the general gist of the subject and the other, a separate image for every single word—have proven to be a topic of much debate. Some would argue that memorising an image for each and every word would be cumbersome as it would be much simpler to just memorise the material at hand; but the advice given by the *Ad Herrenium* is that memorising words serves a purpose "as an exercise whereby to strengthen that other kind of memory, the memory of matter, which is of practical use."[71] Thus "memory for things" is deemed more practical whereas "memory for words" is thought to be the hard training necessary to enhance artificial memory so that "In this way art will supplement nature."[72] In his Introduction to his translation of the *Ad Herrenium*, Harry Caplan contends that the "section on Memory is our oldest surviving treatment of the subject. Based on visual images and 'backgrounds,' the mnemotechnical system which it presents exerted an influence traceable to modern times."[73] Yet one may note that this mnemotechnical system rooted in visual images and backgrounds promoting serialisation and archival traits lends a certain prominence to the image forming a platform where the dialectic and rhetoric meet.

[70] Ibid., 3.20.
[71] Ibid., 3.24.
[72] Ibid., 3.21.
[73] Ibid., "Introduction," xix-xx

Under the heading of rhetoric, Cicero considers feats of memory to be "almost divine."[74] His *De oratore* may be viewed as a highly dense version of the *Ad Herrenium* where Cicero goes through the usual points necessary for training the artificial memory: starting with the Simonides story, relating how the art of memory uses places and images similar to inner writing on wax, discusses both natural and artificial memory by concluding that whatever was bestowed by nature may be enhanced through this art. On a similar vein with the *Ad Herrenium*, Cicero suggests that the senses, specifically the sense of sight is influential in retaining images.[75] It is possible to assert that the mental imprint of the image will hold if it is initially encountered through the eyes, through the act of seeing, and even though there may be images which are not actually seen at that moment, it is still possible to retain them in memory by means of internally visualising them. "But these forms and bodies, like all the things that come under our view require an abode, inasmuch as a material object without a locality is inconceivable."[76] It is at this point when a "place" is required to store the image that Cicero roughly explains the rules for places, stating that this subject, the art of memory, is well known and familiar, he gives us a short version of the rules covered in the *Ad Herrenium*: "one must employ a large number of localities which must be clear and defined and at moderate intervals apart, and images that are effective and sharply outlined and distinctive, with the capacity of encountering and speedily penetrating the mind."[77] The image now has a location in which it is stored ready for retrieval, yet the ability to do so lies in practice and in systematically organising these images in their proper places. A single image may be used to represent a whole concept or a single word. But Cicero is of the opinion that "memory for words" is less essential and holds that "memory for things" is more useful, for "this we can imprint on our minds by a skilful arrangement of the several masks that represent them, so that we may grasp ideas by means of images and their order by means of localities."[78] Perceiving abstract concepts or ideas without concordance with an image

[74] Cicero *De oratore* II.lxxxviii.360.
[75] Ibid., II.lxxxvii.357.
[76] Ibid., II.lxxxvii.358.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., II.lxxxvii.359.

does not seem possible and the image itself must be given a certain location to enable recollection, just like inscribing letters on wax which we can then return to read. Nonetheless, this system of recall cannot be used to jog the memory if no memory has been given by nature but this art can be used to improve existing memory. Yet, it is not his *De oratore* that I am interested in as much as his *De inventione* which he wrote almost thirty years earlier about the same time the *Ad Herrenium* was being compiled (first century B.C.). Although the *De inventione* is only concerned with the first part of rhetoric, being *inventio*,[79] it is this work where Cicero provides a definition of virtue that would enable memory to be considered a part of the cardinal virtue of Prudence in the Middle Ages.[80] According to Cicero, "virtue is a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature" and may be fully explored through its four parts which are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. Prudence, as a subdivision of virtue is further defined as "the knowledge of what is good, what is bad and what is neither good or bad. Its parts are memory, intelligence, foresight. Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it ascertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs."[81] This categorisation of memory, intelligence, and foresight filed under Prudence would later be quoted by both Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas in their discussions on the virtues.

On a similar vein with the earlier philosophical understanding of memory, in the *Tusculan Disputations,* Cicero contends that the soul is immortal and of divine origin. As proof to the soul's immortality and divinity Cicero follows that the soul possesses memory "which Plato will have to be a recollection of a former life."[82] In this sense, memory is proof of the soul's divinity. Moreover, he asks "can you imagine this wonderful

[79] First codified in classical Rome the five parts of rhetoric are as follows: *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (disposition or arrangement), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (memory) and *actio* or *pronuntiatio* (delivery).

[80] An earlier template for the cardinal virtues may also be found in Plato's *Protagoras* (329c-330b) where piety is also considered to be a part of virtue, the other parts being justice, temperance, wisdom, and courage.

[81] Cicero *De inventione* II.liii.160.

[82] Ibid., *Tusculan Disputations* I.xxiv.

power of memory to be sown in or to be a part of the composition of the earth, or of this dark and gloomy atmosphere?"[83] So memory cannot be a part of this earthly existence "For what is there in natures of that kind which has the power of memory, understanding, or thought? which can recollect the past, foresee the future, and comprehend the present? for these capabilities are confined to divine beings; nor can we discover any source from which men could derive them, but from God."[84] Considering the divine nature of memory, it should not come as a surprise that Cicero places memory on an equal footing with wisdom and invention.[85] By linking *inventio* with *memoria*, Cicero is in a way hinting that material held in the memory would lead to new creations, hence invention, attributes which are considered to be of divine origin. Likewise, Carruthers indicated that the Latin word *inventio* correlates to two separate words in the English language. The first word derived from *inventio* is "invention" which means "the creation of something new or different" and the second English word is "inventory" which refers to things that are systematically stored or arranged in an orderly fashion.[86] Thus, creativity in classical culture requires having an "inventory" for "invention" and "Not only does this statement assume that one cannot create ('invent') without a memory store ('inventory') to invent from and with, but it also assumes that one's memory-store is effectively 'inventoried,' that its matters are readily-recovered 'locations'."[87] So an inventoried memory was considered to be the internal archive from whence one would be able to create or compose new material.

Quintilian's twelve-volume textbook, *Institutio oratoria* (first century A.D.) deals with the theory of rhetoric and has been considered to be the culmination of Greek and Roman thought on the subject. Although Quintilian's own views regarding artificial memory is unclear,[88] as he has drawn from numerous sources when compiling his work, Cicero seems to be one of his chief sources. Hence, when discussing the rhetorical strand of

[83] Ibid., I.xxv.
[84] Ibid., I.xxvii.
[85] See for example Ibid., I.xxvi.
[86] Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 11.
[87] Ibid., 12.
[88] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 37.

memory in Book XI, he also begins by retelling the famous story of how Simonides invented the art of memory.[89] So after emphasising the link between place and memory, and how these localities may aid in the retention of information through association, Quintilian notes that ideas in of themselves may lead to other ideas by means of this associative function; therefore, the localities to be used as memory templates carry great significance. The next step of his discussion leads to the import of the image as it must be something distinctive, a "symbol which will serve to jog the memory."[90] It may refer to the whole subject or may "be found in some particular word. (For even in cases of forgetfulness one single word will serve to restore the memory.)"[91] Then these images must be orderly arranged within the memory place.

The detailed explanations laid out by Quintilian[92] enable us to comprehend the rules purported by the ancient art of memory. By walking us through step-by-step we come to understand how the orators of antiquity placed what they wanted to remember in localities and how through association were able to recall these objects previously fixed in the memory. But, unlike Platonic Cicero, he does not consider this art to be of divine nature. The memory exhibited by Metrodorus was "almost divine" for Cicero, but Quintilian considers him to be vain and boastful. It is through such examples that Quintilian questions the method arriving at the opinion that memory for words will only impede the fluidity of speech, whereas memory for things will prove to be of a more practical nature.[93] Thus, as an alternative to the mnemonic system which Quintilian explains in detail, he proposes another device that bears some resemblance to this system and that is basically "to learn a passage by heart from the same tablets on which he has committed it to writing. For he will have certain tracks to guide him in his pursuit of memory, and the mind's eye will be fixed not merely on the pages on which the words were written, but on individual lines, and at times he will speak as though he were reading

[89] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* XI.ii.17-18.
[90] Ibid., 19.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 20-22.
[93] Ibid., 23-26.

aloud."[94] What Quintilian proposes is to "see" the tablet on which one writes through the internal eye, rather than creating an elaborate system which one must exert extra effort to recall from the storehouse of memory. It seems that we have once again returned to Plato's waxen device of the soul, where the heart is named as the abode where memory lies. In everyday language we say that "we know something by heart" meaning that we have committed it to memory.[95] Through this usage it is possible to discern that the act of "knowing" and the act of "memorising" are indeed connected with one another; hence, "knowledge" and "memory" have always been interwoven concepts which we seem to have forgotten.

Allowing for slight differences, these three principal sources on the art of memory concur on three points: that the orator must know (1) what to remember, either "memory for things" or "memory for words;" (2) how to remember, by associating things or words with specific images that would allow for recall; and (3) in which order to remember these images, meaning a series of *loci* or backgrounds on to which the images are to be placed. On the whole, although memory was deemed to be the guardian of all the parts of rhetoric for the author of the *Ad Herrenium*, proof of the soul's divinity for Cicero, and the source of the oratory's power for Quintilian, all three Latin sources inherently seem to focus on the centrality of the image; for "without an image thinking is impossible."[96]

[94] Ibid., 32.

[95] Carruthers in "The Mystery of the Bed Chamber," in *The Rhetorical Poetics of the Middle Ages* indicates "One must keep in mind that 'heart' was a common-place synonym for 'memory.' Learning 'by heart' is an English translation of the Latin *recordari*, linked by Varro to the root *cor*, *cordis*, 'heart'; Italian has preserved the Latin verb in *recordarsi*, French in *recorder*," 73.

[96] Aristotle *On Memory* 450a1.

2 Medieval Memory and the Image

Memory for the Middle Ages was an art of composing or inventing rather than simply a place for retaining and storing experiences and facts.[1] In this form it was not far from the dialectical and rhetorical contexts of memory previously handled in the Greco-Roman era. The medieval world fused these strands of memory where rhetorical memory allowed the composition of an oration whilst the dialectical, or philosophical, aspect was reserved for the analysis and composition of an argument. The early monastic traditions of memory centred on "the prayerful, ruminative contemplation of biblical texts"[2] where memorization was considered to be devotional practice as well as spiritual improvement;[3] whereas the later Middle Ages focussed on the recollection of content where it was essential to remember, for example, the virtues and vices necessary for pious meditation.[4] As "Christians in hope of salvation had always needed to

[1] Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 2-6.
[2] Ibid., 20.
[3] Ibid., 21.
[4] Here it should be noted that not only was the "content" of the image tailored to fit the necessity of the times but the place where these images were to be stored also changed in a way. It might be mere coincidence, but earlier remarks on how the image was to be thought of as written on a tablet, stored in the mind in mental architectural settings which the mind's eye could easily behold, and on physical intercolumnar spaces not too far apart and not too close to one another might well allude to why the page layouts of manuscripts are neither to small nor too large (so at first glance we can see the page as a whole), why columns are initially used rather than the whole page where this would allow one to literally remember the content of the page as this image may easily be retained internally, in one's own memory, and why pictorial images were used as they would serve as reminders that accompanied the text (text and pictorial representations were both seen as complementary reminders). So, in a way, the three-dimensional imaging of antiquity was now two-dimensional. In other words, the actual architectural structures that served as

imprint upon their memories elaborate schemes of images of virtues and vices in order to arrive at heaven and avoid slipping into hell"[5] the images used obviously carried biblical overtones. Thus, in a manner of speaking, the Middle Ages transformed the classical art of memory into a solemn and religious art.[6] But the centrality of the image did not lose any of its previous significance; in fact, the image became even more prominent than before specifically in memory formation and retention as it was through the image that allowed space for invention from whence new compositions were woven.

> The age of scholasticism was one in which knowledge increased. It was also an age of Memory, and in the ages of Memory new imagery has to be created for remembering new knowledge. Though the great themes of Christian doctrine and moral teaching remained, of course, basically the same, they became more complicated. In particular the virtue-vice scheme grew much fuller and was more strictly defined and organized. The moral man who wished to choose the path of virtue, whilst also remembering and avoiding vice, had more to imprint on memory than in earlier, simpler times.[7]

For the medieval mind, memory had many connotations, as Carruthers has noted, memory was a part of literature, in a sense this was what literature was for;[8] memory was the noblest of the five divisions of rhetoric; and among other things memory was an integral part of the virtue of prudence

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loci for memory in antiquity transferred itself to the page of a medieval manuscript which may also be considered as *loci* for memory. Also, considering that medieval culture read books externally, the constant reading out loud would enable one to retain the page as an image and would later allow for rumination and contemplation as one had to keep in mind what one studied, for manuscripts were rare and not everyone had them ready at hand in their libraries.

[5] Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 21.

[6] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 227.

[7] Ibid., 95.

[8] According to Carruthers, in a memorial culture such as that of the Middle Ages, the purpose of a book was vastly different from our own perspective. "A book is not necessarily the same thing as a text. 'Texts' are the material out of which human beings make 'literature.' For us, texts only come in books, and so the distinction between the two is blurred and even lost. But, in a memorial culture, a 'book' is only one way among several to remember a 'text,' to provision and cue one's memory with 'dicta et facta memorabilia.' So a book is itself a mnemonic, among many other functions it can also have." Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 8.

which allowed for moral judgement. Thus, "Training the memory was much more than a matter of providing oneself with the means to compose and converse intelligently when books were not readily to hand, for it was in trained memory that one built character, judgment, citizenship, and piety."[9] Yet, during the decline of the Roman Empire when barbarian invasions were afoot, "the voices of the orators were silenced"[10] as it was not possible for people to come together peacefully to listen to speeches when the land was in strife and there was no sense of security. "Learning retreated into the monasteries and the art of memory for rhetorical purposes became unnecessary, though Quintilianist memorizing of a prepared written page might still have been useful."[11] This transition from the dying breath of Rome to the rise of Christian Europe brings us first and foremost to Augustine of Hippo as a representative bridging this gap between the intellectual tradition of antiquity and the religious feeling found bountiful in the medieval world.

Augustine and Inner Memory

In his early pagan years Augustine was a rhetoric teacher well-taught and well-skilled in this art; thus one would assume that the form of memory he was most probably exposed to was of the rhetorical strand. Yet, in his *Confessions*, besides the use of occasional metaphors similar to the architectural mnemonic, there is no mention of any of the techniques used in rhetorical memory. After his conversion to Christianity the only interest Augustine seems to have had in rhetoric was its sole utilisation in persuading Christians to lead a holy life.[12] Thus, in the *Confessions*, Augustine devoted a whole book to memory where he deals with the theological, or rather the philosophical, understanding of this concept. Following the Platonic view of memory, albeit with an internal gaze, Augustine in Book X of the *Confessions* focuses on the idea of memory as unconscious knowledge. His meditation on memory begins with the search

[9] Ibid., 9.
[10] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 65.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Corbett and Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 498.

for God and it is through the inner gaze, by looking into one's own self, that Augustine believes we can truly sense God. For Augustine, to know thyself was to know God and knowing God was also the way to self-knowledge; so it was through his inward gaze, within his own personal memory where this knowledge could be attained.

Memoria for Augustine was a deeper and wider concept than our understanding of memory as it was based on the Platonic doctrine of *anamnēsis* where the experience of learning is explained as bringing to the conscious mind the knowledge which the soul already knew from an earlier existence. Yet Augustine develops this conception of memory by associating it with both the unconscious (as "the mind knows things it does not know it knows") and with self-awareness.[13] Ascending a step further to God, Augustine speaks of memory as a "vast palace" which, according to Ricoeur "provides interiority with a specific kind of spatiality, creating an intimate place."[14] This intimate and personal space is further explored through the metaphors of memory concerned with remembrance where memory and recall take on the task of meditation and thinking as a process of roaming through his spatially conceived memory. The manner in which images of sense-perceptions were stored in memory is explained through the function of the five senses with their correlative parts. Thus, our eyes relate to our mind what we see, the ears what we hear, the nose what we smell, the mouth what we taste and our skin informs us about what we touch. So the experience and information we gain through the senses are stored and contained in our memory until the moment arrives when we need to re-collect what we had previously collected.[15] Yet, these various images of sense-perceptions stored within the memory are accessed precisely at the moment of recollection; thus, it is in the *present* that these *past* images are recollected. "These actions are inward, in the vast hall of my memory" says Augustine, to which he adds "I combine with past events images of various things, whether experienced directly or believed on the basis of what I have experienced; and on this basis I reason about future

[13] Chadwick in Augustine's *Confessions*, 185n12.
[14] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 98. See also Augustine *Confessions* 10.8.12.
[15] Augustine *Confessions* 10.8.13. Quotations from the *Confessions* are taken from Henry Chadwick's translation unless otherwise noted.

actions and events and hopes, and again think of all these things in the present."[16] So, even though the image was formed in the past and held in internal memory, it is in the present that recollection takes place and it is from these images, or notions, memory contains that allows for future reasoning. In a way, Augustine seems to be simultaneously hinting at the relationship memory has with prudence—which will be the concern of later theologians—and also stating that memory is the present of the past—which will be explored in the Augustinian philosophy of time.

As much as the depths of natural memory astound Augustine,[17] it is not only the images of sense-perceptions that are stored in this "infinite profundity" but the vast archival trait of memory also contains "the innumerable principles and laws of numbers and dimensions."[18] These "intellectual notions," therefore, "can be said to be learned and, from then on, known."[19] Alongside intellectual notions and images of sense-perceptions, the memory of emotions, or the "passions of the soul" as Ricoeur puts it, is also included among the things stored within the memory. But when it comes to the containment and extraction of emotions to and from the vast recesses of memory, the mind and body display a great disparity as the "mind is one thing, the body another."[20] For the mind is capable of recalling gladness without being glad and sadness without being sad; or the memory of a fearful event without being afraid. Moreover, the memory is also capable of remembering "with joy a sadness that has passed and with sadness a lost joy."[21] It is at this point of his argument where Augustine bestows an interesting metaphor of memory as he likens it to the "stomach of the mind, whereas gladness and sadness are like sweet and bitter food. When they are entrusted to the memory, they are as if transferred to the stomach and can there be stored; but they cannot be tasted."[22] One of the connotations this metaphor inherits is that of digestion. For as the stomach is where these images of emotions are stored,

[16] Ibid., 10.8.14.
[17] Ibid., 10.8.15.
[18] Ibid., 10.12.19.
[19] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 99.
[20] Augustine *Confessions* 10.14.21.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

so it is here that they are also digested. In a way, this also connotes the digestion of knowledge within the realm of memory. "Perhaps then, just as food is brought from the stomach in the process of rumination, so also by recollection these things are brought up from the memory."[23] So from a general perspective, there is a sense of re-using and making learned things one's own which medieval thought considered to be the natural outcome of "keeping in mind," of "memorising by heart," material from which new compositions would then be invented.

Recollection is considered to be a process of thought and rumination where objects are designated by the images imprinted by the physical senses and also by the notions of things themselves. What Augustine fails to realise is that even notions are imprinted and held within the memory through the image enabling the process of thought; as Aristotle had emphasised, thinking is impossible without an image. According to Augustine, since notions are not received through any bodily entrance, they cannot leave a sense-impression; hence they do not acquire a correlative image. The mind, nevertheless, "perceives them through the experience of its passions and entrusts them to memory; or the memory itself retains them without any conscious act of commitment."[24] In the act of reminiscence, although the objects themselves are absent to the senses, the images of these are available in the memory and it is through the act of recognition located within memory itself that enables us to comprehend what we are speaking about.[25] Yet if recognition is located in memory then how would we recognise forgetfulness? If we had forgotten the object completely then we would be incapable of recognising it. Thus the analogy follows that if we are capable of recognising forgetfulness then forgetfulness is obviously retained within the memory. But "when we are remembering forgetfulness, it is not through its actual presence in the memory but through its image" because "If forgetfulness were present through itself, it would cause us not to remember but to forget."[26] But how can this be true if "forgetfulness deletes whatever it finds," and how can we

[23] Ibid., 10.14.22.
[24] Ibid., 10.14.21.
[25] Ibid., 10.15.23.
[26] Ibid., 10.16.24.

remember forgetfulness if "forgetfulness destroys what we remember."[27] The enigma presented here concerns the image of forgetfulness and how such an image could have been impressed upon the memory. No solution is offered but the double-edged blade of memory—where on one side we have remembrance and on the other forgetfulness—hinted at even from the start of Augustine's appreciation of memory.

The power of memory is indeed very great but how are we supposed to overcome the fear of forgetting as there is the possibility that the "treasures" collected by the mind may be "swallowed up and buried in oblivion."[28] Unable to solve the enigma presented by forgetfulness, Augustine returns to his search for God within memory and beyond memory. "I will transcend even this my power which is called memory. I will rise beyond it to move towards you, sweet light." Yet, as Ricoeur has also noted, moving beyond memory presents yet another enigma:[29] "As I rise above memory, where am I to find you? If I find you outside my memory, I am not mindful of you. And how shall I find you if I am not mindful of you?"[30] Within these lines, a much crucial aspect of forgetfulness presents itself to Augustine, and that is the possibility of forgetting, hence not knowing, God. Yet when something is forgotten and an attempt is made to recall it, the only place where we can search for what has been lost is again in the memory. This is where recognition comes into play as when something other than the object sought comes to mind, we are capable of rejecting it; and we would not be able to do so if we had not recognised what we were truly searching for. The only way recognition would work would be if a partial imprint of the image had remained in memory as this would give us a starting point to seek for the missing element.[31] So "finding is recovering, and recovering is recognizing, and recognizing is accepting,

[27] Ibid., 10.16.25.
[28] Ibid., 10.8.12.
[29] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 100.
[30] Augustine *Confessions* 10.17.26. R. S. Pine-Coffin's translation of these lines is as follows: "Where am I to find you? If I find you beyond my memory, it means that I have no memory of you. How, then, am I to find you, if I have no memory of you?" (10.17.224).
[31] Ibid., 10.19.28. See also 10.18.27-10.19.28.

and so judging that the thing recovered is indeed the same as the thing sought, and thus considered after the fact as the thing forgotten."[32]

After long deliberations on the *what*, *how* and *where* regarding memory, recollection, and forgetting Augustine asks himself "But where in my consciousness, Lord, do you dwell?"[33] It is in this attempt to comprehend God that prompts more questions than any definitive answers. And so the queries line up one after the other. "You conferred this honour on my memory that you should dwell in it. But the question I have to consider is, In what part of it do you dwell?"[34] If God exists within the memory then there must be a part of memory that is not liable to change, for God cannot be subject to change. The divine must be immutable, therefore, cannot have a past, present and future as this would inherently inflict transformation, a passage "from" somewhere, "to" someplace else. Here, we find ourselves at yet another impasse. Thus, it is his attempt to solve, or at least understand, the present enigma that Augustine links his analysis of memory to time. In a way, Book X on memory and Book XI on time are complementary, one notion forming a basis for the other and the latter applicable to the former. "It is against this backdrop of admiration for memory, an admiration coloured with concern about the danger of forgetfulness, that the great declarations of book 11 on time can be placed. However, to the extent that memory is the present of the past, what can be said about time and its relation to interiority can readily be applied to memory."[35] Interestingly, if we did not know that most of Aristotle's works were inaccessible during Augustine's time, we would most likely presume that he drew, or formulated, his ideas directly from Aristotle. Recalling that Aristotle had discussed memory in line with time where he argued that there could be no memory of the present as this was perception, the future was expectation, but memory was of the past; and it was the human being that was attributed with the capability of recollection as they could

[32] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 99.
[33] Augustine *Confessions* 10.25.36.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 100-101.

perceive time,[36] it is remarkable to note how Augustine develops similar ideas of memory and time, albeit from a theological perspective.

Augustine's analysis of time is based on his meditations concerning the relation between eternity and time where he debates the very nature of the concept by posing an elementary question: "What is time?"[37] This question is not naïve as it is usually the simplest questions to which we find ourselves unable to find an easy answer. In our everyday language we speak of time, and we speak meaningfully about it. We know what others are referring to when they talk about time. So "What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know."[38] Considering the past, present and future, how can we say that there is a past when it is "no longer," or there is a future when it is "not yet" and if the present were always present, "it would not pass into the past: it would not be time but eternity."[39] Thus, viewed from this aspect, time tends towards non-being as the future is not yet, the past no longer and the present does not remain as it is instantaneous. Yet we speak of time as having being and we do this through articulated language. It is through the intellect and reasoning that we are able to comprehend what is meant by these segments of time. If only the present instant "is" and it is immeasurable, then what do we measure? Here a quasi-solution presents itself as we can perceive and measure time at the moment when it is passing.[40] Yet if past and future do not exist, how is it possible to narrate past events and sing of future prophecies? This line of thought brings us to yet another question: "If future and past events exist, I want to know where they are. If I have not the strength to discover the answer, at least I know that wherever they are, they are not there as future or past, but as present."[41] Here, the idea of a threefold present begins to emerge as the nature of the human conception of time is further explored as existing solely in the present.

[36] Aristotle *On Memory* 449b25.
[37] Augustine *Confessions* 11.14.17.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 11.16.21.
[41] Ibid., 11.18.23.

As much as remembering past events entrusted to memory through the image occurs in the present, premeditating future events conceived in the mind by "causes or signs which already exist"[42] also seems to occur in the present. Thus, after much deliberation and excruciating frustration, Augustine reaches the conclusion that the sense of time exists for humans in the threefold present as: "a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come."[43] These three aspects of time are found in the soul where the present of the past exists in memory, the present of the present finds expression with intuition, attention, or immediate awareness, and the present of the future is expectation.[44] Hence, the frustration and despair felt in defining the essence of time is somewhat founded in *distentio animi* (time is a distension of the soul) which is the painful experience the soul undergoes as it is being stretched out in diverse directions between memory, attention and expectation. Thus, coupled with *intentio*, there exists the intention of the soul, the intuition of eternity within the self that allows Augustine to make sense of the psychological, hence personal experience of time, for what is time but the distension of the eternal. The mental present, however, does not occupy space but has duration within the attentive faculty. This attentive faculty is what links the three aspects of time. The example of reciting a psalm that Augustine gives illustrates how the theory of *distentio* is intertwined with that of the threefold present and how the theory of the threefold present is expressed within the threefold intention. This example of reading a poem lends a better comprehension of how the soul is distended towards memory, attention, and expectation simultaneously.

> Suppose I am about to recite a psalm which I know. Before I begin, my expectation is directed towards the whole. But when I have begun, the verses from it which I take into the past become the object of my memory. The life of this act of mine is stretched two ways, into my memory because of the words I have already said and into my expectation because of those which I am about to say. But my attention is on what is present: by that the future is transferred to

[42] Ibid., 11.17.24.
[43] Ibid., 11.20.26.
[44] Ibid.

> become the past. As the action advances further and further, the shorter the expectation and the longer the memory, until all expectation is consumed, the entire action is finished, and it has passed into the memory.[45]

According to Ricoeur's reading, "this entire paragraph is the dialectic of expectation, memory, and attention, each considered no longer in isolation but in interaction with one another."[46] Moreover, the question is no longer "of either impression-images or anticipatory images but of an action that shortens expectation and extends memory."[47] Expectation and memory are both engaged simultaneously whereas attention is engaged with the active transition from expectation to memory and it is the combination of these three actions that continue. So the *distentio* is seen as a shift in the noncoincidence of these three modalities, and also related with the passivity of the impression.[48] Nevertheless, it seems as if "speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity alone can respond. Not that this activity solves the aporias through substitution. If it does resolve them, it is in a poetical and not a theoretical sense of the word."[49] From this perspective, it is possible to contend that poetical transfiguration alone enables the mind to comprehend aporias which are otherwise entangled within the realm of knowledge; and it is through the narrativity of poetical imagination based on images that we may be able to catch a glimpse of the culmination of human experience.

In the *Confessions*, Augustine does not mention nor discuss artificial memory[50] but considers natural memory itself as the matrix of all human temporal perception.[51] Even though memory is accessed in the present, where it remains still seems to be in the past. Moreover, the act of thinking prudently about present and future events is grounded in memory. Hence, the statement "that memory is the matrix within which humans perceive present and future is also to say that both present and future, in human

[45] Ibid., 11.28.38.
[46] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 20.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 6.
[50] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 62.
[51] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 192.

time, are mediated by the past. But 'the past,' in this analysis, is not itself something, but rather a memory, a representing of what no longer exists as itself but only in its memorial traces."[52] Since the perception of present and future is mediated by the memorial traces of the past, Augustine, in his search for God, embarks on an inward journey into his own personal memory of the past. The only way to find God is by remembering his past in memory so as to provide him with the means of understanding his present.[53] Such is the significance of natural memory in the Augustinian sense.

Albertus Magnus and the Image Laced with Intent

The later medieval period sought to reconcile natural memory and artificial memory. By merging Aristotle with Cicero, the Scholastics delicately removed artificial memory from the realm of rhetoric to that of ethics where memory became a part of the cardinal virtues. Both Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas regarded memory images from a moral and religious perspective by emphasising artificial memory as a part of the virtue of Prudence.

In his ethical treatise, *De bono*, Albertus Magnus discusses the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, and Prudence. When investigating the parts of Prudence, Albertus refers to three authorities, namely Tully, Macrobius, and Aristotle. Tully at the end of his First Rhetoric says "there are three parts to prudence, memory, intelligence, foresight."[54] Whereas Macrobius considers knowledge of prudence to lie in "intellect, circumspection, foresight, a willingness to learn, and caution"[55] and Aristotle categorises prudence, practical wisdom, and intelligence as parts of the intellectual virtues. Since it is Tully alone who files memory under Prudence, it is to him that Albertus turns to when inquiring into what

[52] Ibid., 193.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, Tractatus 4, Quaestio 2 "De Partibus Prudentia," quoted in translation by Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 267.
[55] Ibid.

memory is. Then he methodically discusses the art of memory which Tully teaches.[56]

In the first Article, Albertus puts forth the objections that might be made against categorising memory as a subdivision of Prudence. The five objections he cites and his refutation of these objections are illustrative of how Albertus contrives to formulate an ethical understanding of memory; yet as Yates has also noted, they may be summarised under two headings. The first main point being if memory is a part of the sensory soul and prudence is in the rational soul, then how can memory be a part of prudence. To which he replies that reminiscence according to Aristotle pertains to the rational part, therefore, reminiscence is the kind of memory that is a part of prudence. The second main point discussed is if memory is considered to be a function of the soul whereby past things are recalled, then it cannot be a habit developed by training, whereas every part of prudence is a matter of learning therefore prudence is a moral habit. To which he replies that it is possible for memory to be a habit if it is used to recollect past things under the consideration of prudent conduct both in the present and pertaining to the future.[57] In the *solutio* Albertus resolves the previous objections by considering memory to be "a part of prudence, insofar as memory comes under the definition of reminiscence." [58] Towards the end of Article One, in responses 3 and 4, Albertus seems to have successfully placed his definition of memory within the realm of ethics where the double function of memory is described as "a condition for what we know rationally [habitus cognitivorum], and a condition for making ethical judgments [habitus moralium];" moreover, "memory takes in an event that is past as though it stayed ever-present in the soul as an idea and as an emotional effect on us, and so this event can be very effective for providing for the future."[59] Thus the first Article concludes that memory

[56] As previously mentioned, the Middle Ages called Cicero Tully, or Tullius, and the art of memory compiled by the unknown author was erroneously attributed to Cicero. Thus Cicero's *De inventione* and the anonymous work the *Ad Herrenium* were referred to as the First and Second Rhetorics of Tully.
[57] See Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 74; and also Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 267-269.
[58] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, quoted in translation by Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 268.
[59] Ibid., 269.

can be a part of prudence insofar as the function of reminiscence is employed.

In the second Article, Albertus turns to the art of memory where his discussion meticulously follows the *Ad Herennium* which he calls the Second Rhetoric of Tully. In the course of the twenty-one points compiled and commented on, Albertus seems to have certain reservations in acknowledging an art which seems to be promoting the lower modes of human understanding due to the role imagination plays. Albertus feels a theological concern specifically when the discussion turns to examining the rules laid out for places and images, the two significant components of artificial memory, which he eventually unravels within an ethical understanding that lays to rest his fears.

The use of vivid visual images against visualised backgrounds is the feature of artificial memory that Albertus recommends for the purpose of leading a just life. To begin with, these places that are to be so strongly and vividly impressed on the memory are corporeal places, physical backgrounds that are in the image-making faculty and not in the intellectual part of the soul. Yet, although reminiscence is located within the rational soul, it still subjects itself to memory and thus they bring together the *imaginabilia* within the backgrounds.[60] Furthermore, since according to Boethius from whom Albertus quotes from that "every particular thing is created or has being in some place"[61] the images that the mind stores are such creations that must exist in some place. Albertus deduces from Tully that this "place" refers to "that which the soul itself makes for storing-up images, and this also follows because, since reminiscence has no storehouse except only the memory, and reminiscence is part of the rational soul, it is necessary that something which exists as part of reason be stored-up in corporeal images."[62] But more importantly, "something which exists as part of reason cannot, by means of its own nature, exist in corporeal images, it is necessary that it exist there in them through likeness and translation and metaphor."[63] So a mental place for

[60] Ibid., 279.
[61] Ibid., 277.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

"joy" would be a cloister-garden, for "feebleness" an infirmary or hospital, for "justice" a courtroom. According to Carruthers, Albertus considered these mnemonic places from an entirely pragmatic viewpoint, maintaining that "they are cognitive schemata rather than objects. They may entail likenesses of existing things (a wing, a tower, a garden) but they are not themselves real. They should be thought of as fictive devices that *the mind itself makes* for remembering."[64] Thus, an associative bond is formed between these mental places and the content to which they must refer, "through analogy and transference and metaphor."[65] This is what we would call an allegorical connection where we would seek to attach to some real content but Albertus considers this as a convenience, "made necessary by the epistemological condition that no human being can have direct knowledge of any 'thing.' All human knowledge, it was thought, depends on memory, and so it is all retained in images, fictions gathered into several mental 'places' and regrouped in new places as the thinking mind draws them together."[66] Furthermore, Albertus maintains that memory retains not just the images but the *intentiones* received from these images as well. Thus, does one need further images to remind of the intentions? To which he replies that the memory image includes the *intentio* within itself as these *intentiones* are imprinted simultaneously with the images.[67] This insight into the nature of the image alleviates the memory image as it becomes more potent since the image chosen will inherently also contain the intention (intended meaning) within itself. "An image to remind of a wolf's form will also contain the *intentio* that the wolf is a dangerous animal from which it would be wise to flee; on the animal level of memory, a lamb's mental image of a wolf contains this *intentio*."[68] Moreover "on the higher level of the memory of a rational being, it will mean that an image chosen,

[64] Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 13.
[65] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, quoted in translation by Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 14.
[66] Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 14. For a more detailed analysis of Albertus Magnus on Locational Memory see Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, 7-8; and Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, 12-14.
[67] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, quoted in translation by Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 279.
[68] Example provided by Albertus in his *De anima* in *Opera omnia*, quoted from Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 76.

say, to remind of the virtue of Justice will contain the *intentio* of seeking to acquire this virtue."[69]

When the discussion turns to images for things and images for words, Albertus writes that "these images convey much to the memory and are as much for the purpose of making the thing intelligible, as they are for producing copies."[70] Cicero and Quintilian had argued that images for words was taxing and unnecessary and that images for things was sufficient, Albertus also seems to be promoting an image for things that would remind of the content rather than using an image for words. Albertus also stresses the usefulness of utilising vivid metaphors to secure recollection, as he says "although literal words make for more accuracy about the thing itself nevertheless the metaphors move the mind more and convey more to the memory."[71] So, metaphorical use extends the meaning of a single image whereby the image inherits a deeper and wider connection to the content it is meant to signify as it becomes more memorable. Furthermore, "what is marvellous [mirabile] is more moving than what is ordinary, and so when images of this metaphorical sort are made out of marvels [ex miris] they affect memory more than commonplace literal matters."[72] To justify his opinion Albertus quotes from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that this is the reason why early philosophers transferred their ideas through poetry, because fables composed out of marvels were more affecting, more moving to the memory and to inquiry. Thus, again quoting from Aristotle, Albertus contends that all inquiry begins with wonder because the thing that is marvellous leads to questioning, which then leads to investigation and recollection; for philosophical thinking first began by wondering about the befores and afters.[73] Carruthers has noted the implication invoked by Albertus in etymologically connecting *miris* [marvellous] and *admirari* [wondering],

[69] Example given by Yates in *The Art of Memory*, 76.
[70] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, quoted in translation by Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 279.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 280. Albertus Magnus quotes from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Jonathan Barnes's translation regarding Albertus' citation of these lines is as follows: "For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize." Aristotle *Metaphysics* 982b11.

and thus hinting at a connection between *fabula* [poem, story, legend] and *philosophari* – the bonding link being the requirements of memory.[74] This connection inherently germinates the idea that in the transference of ideas or concepts, the means that would best awaken a sense of wonder, thereby making memorable what is to be conveyed, would be through a poetical form that uses metaphorical language drenched in the marvellous. Though Albertus most probably had in mind the use of metaphorical language in the Holy Scriptures, we may wantonly expand his expression to incorporate all forms of poetical discourse; thus the lowest form of representation embodied in poetry and metaphor may come to articulate something much richer in meaning among the layers of textual evidence.

Thomas Aquinas and the Moving Image

On a similar vein with Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologica* questions whether Holy Scripture should use metaphors and in his reply to the various objections he not only seems to support but also defend the use of metaphors in scripture.[75] Thomas's views according to Lerud "could almost in itself constitute a defense of similitudes, and thus of art."[76] The centrality of the image in both human understanding and retention in memory is yet again established whilst simultaneously, if not intentionally, promoting the bond between memory and poetical expression. Following in the wake of Albertus, Aquinas also analyses memory by merging Aristotle and Tully into his understanding of memory and the image. In his *Summa*, Aquinas not only delves into the cognitive workings of memory but also handles artificial memory, like Tully, under the virtue of prudence; yet it is in his commentary on Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscentia* and specifically *De anima* where Aquinas comments on the association memory has with the image and imagination synthesising Aristotle's concept of the image as a necessity in the process of thinking and thus spiritually understanding. Aquinas' model of human

[74] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 141.
[75] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, I, Q.1, art.9.
[76] Lerud, *Memory, Images and the English Corpus Christi Drama*, 44.

cognition centres on the significance of *sensibilia* and the correlative corporeal images.

In his commentary on *De anima*, Aquinas relates the relationship the image has with imagination and the affinity images and imagination share with the intellect. Imagination is defined as a sort of movement provoked by appearances called phantasms.[77] This movement is caused by the senses in their act of sensing, and imagination cannot exist without sensation; hence, since movement is in question, it gives occasion to the imagining subject a variety of actions and passions.[78] The reason as to why actions and passions are governed by imagination is because images "dwell within in the absence of sensible objects, as traces of actual sensations; therefore, just as sensations arouse appetitive impulses whilst the sensed objects are present, so do images when these are absent."[79] Although images may determine behaviour to a large extent, it is the intellect that controls the imagination. The recurrent idea that there is no act of the intellect without a phantasm and that phantasms are derived from sensation formulates the basis required for human understanding. The intellectual faculty understands through phantasms and if the intellect is related to phantasms as the sense to their object, then just as the senses cannot sense without an object, so the soul cannot comprehend without a phantasm.[80] For whenever the intellect actually regards anything, a phantasm, a likeness of something sensible must be formed in us simultaneously. These phantasms differ from things of sense by their immateriality because the senses receive the forms of things immaterially; thus phantasms are regarded as movements initiated by actual sensation.[81] Here, to emphasise and confirm his point, Aquinas comments on Avicenna's assertion: "It will be clear now that Avicenna erred in saying that once the mind had acquired knowledge, it no longer needed the senses. For we know by experience that in order to reflect on knowledge already gained we have to make use of phantasms."[82]

[77] Thomas Aquinas, *De anima*, III-III, Lectio 6, par. 656-657.
[78] Ibid., Lectio 6, par. 659.
[79] Ibid., Lectio 6, par. 669.
[80] Ibid., Lectio 12, par. 770-772.
[81] Ibid., III-VIII, Lectio 13, par. 791-792.
[82] Ibid., Lectio 13, par. 792.

Thus, all forms of human knowledge and comprehension are dependent on these phantasms.

Returning to the discussion of imagination as a sort of movement, the two moving forces are later defined as intellect and appetency. Thus, imagination is included under the concept of the intellect, for it resembles intellect in that it impels to action in the absence of sense-objects.[83] Although many people act impulsively without reflection by following the changes in their imagination rather than their rational knowledge, only humans are impelled to action through both the intellect and imagination.[84] If imagination moves like the intellect, then it does so only in virtue of an object desired where appetency becomes the moving force; for when "the moving principles are considered formally and specifically they are reducible to one, to the object of desire or appetite; for this is the absolute starting point of movement, inasmuch as, being itself unmoved, it initiates movement through the mind or the imagination."[85] So, if imagination is a movement provoked by phantasms and if the phantasm is a movement initiated by sensation, then appetency as the prime mover is inherent in both the imagination and the phantasm. The rhetoric tradition had emphasised the necessity of an image to be striking, or moving, for it to be easily retained within the memory (though this sense of movement is mental rather than physical, it nevertheless is still a sort of movement and Thomas most probably thought of the moving image as spiritually moving). Both lines of thought seem to converge on the point that at the core of the neutral image we find it entangled with not only intention but also with emotion. Thus, the image of itself is seen to be objective and it is our perception of it in relation to time and place where it gains meaning through the associative function of our mental activities. Carruthers remarked that since the image embraces both the neutral form of the thing perceived and at the same time the *intentio* which is our reaction to it, the phantasm inherently invokes emotion by its very nature:

[83] Ibid., III-X, Lectio 15, par. 818.
[84] Ibid., Lectio 15, par. 819.
[85] Ibid., Lectio 15, par. 830.

> This is how the phantasm and the memory which stores it helps to cause or bring into being moral excellence and ethical judgement. Every emotion involves a change or movement, whose source is the soul, but which occurs within the body's physiological matrix: such "affects" are "movements of the soul through the body" (…) Thus the phantasm is "conceived as a controlling factor in the whole mechanism of emotion and action, with which moral excellence is concerned."[86]

This intuitive analysis of the image as embracing intention along with emotion puts even more weight on the basic building block of memory, without which any process of thought would be possible.

The discussion concerning the image is further continued in his commentary on *De memoria* where Aquinas repeatedly echoes Aristotle in that human beings cannot understand in the absence of images. By analysing the image as a form of sense-impressions as the bedrock of knowledge, the image is considered to be the raw material from which the intellect functions: we are once again reminded of Aristotle's notion that thinking is impossible without an image. "It might seem incongruous to someone that a man cannot understand without a phantasm, since the phantasm is the likeness of the physical [corporeal] thing, while understanding is of universals, which are abstracted from particulars."[87] This statement seems to formulate the foundation of the theory of knowledge of both Aristotle and Aquinas.[88] That man cannot understand without images and that the intellect requires a phantasm is constantly repeated throughout Aquinas' commentary on *De memoria*.

Memory is defined as being not only of sensible objects (as when we remember that we have sensed) but also of intelligible objects (when we remember that we understood) and both forms require a phantasm. "For sensible objects, after they have passed away, are not perceived by the senses except in a phantasm; understanding also is not without a

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[86] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 68. Carruthers citing Theodore Tracy, *Physiological Theory and the Doctrine of the Mean in Plato and Aristotle*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1969), 251.
[87] Thomas Aquinas, *De memoria*, Lectio II, par. 311.
[88] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 81.

phantasm."[89] Therefore, although memory essentially belongs to the sensitive part of the soul that inherits the images from sense impressions, thus belonging to the same part of the soul as imagination, it also accidently belongs to the intellectual part as the intellect considers an absent thing through the phantasm. "Hence, memory pertains essentially to the appearance of phantasms; accidentally to the judgement of the intellect."[90] So, with a single brushstroke the sensitive faculty and the intellectual faculty are painted onto the canvas of memory with the image being the common denominator.

> [Aristotle] says that the part of the soul to which memory pertains is clear from what has been said, because it pertains to that part to which the imagination belongs, and because the things which are essential objects of memory are those of which we have phantasms, namely, sensible objects, while intelligible things, which are not apprehended by man without the imagination, are accidental objects of memory. For this reason we cannot remember well those things which have a subtle and spiritual consideration; those objects that are gross and sensible are better objects of memory. It is necessary, if we wish to facilitate the remembering of intelligible reasons to bind them to certain phantasms, as Cicero teaches in his *Rhetoric*.[91]

Thus, this inevitable reference to Tully's Second Rhetoric gives Aquinas the justification he needs to link philosophical memory to artificial memory in that the weak human condition cannot remember things that are "subtle and spiritual" but can easily retain those that are "gross and sensible" so if we wish to remember those that are "subtle and spiritual" we should link them to images as Tully advises.[92]

The synthesis of Aristotelian and Ciceronian lines of thought resume in the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa theologica* when discussing the parts of prudence as Aquinas puts forth the question of whether memory is a part of prudence.[93] The three objections to this question are as follows: (1)

[89] Thomas Aquinas, *De memoria*, Lectio II, par. 320.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., Lectio II, par. 326.
[92] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 82.
[93] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, II-II, Q.49, art.1.

Memory is in the sensitive part of the soul as the Philosopher [Aristotle] proves in his *De memoria*; whereas prudence is in the rational part. Therefore memory is not a part of prudence. (2) Prudence is acquired and perfected by experience; whereas memory is in us from nature. Therefore memory is not a part of prudence. (3) Memory regards the past; whereas prudence of the future. Therefore memory is not a part of prudence. Nevertheless, Tully places memory among the parts of prudence. In reply to these three objections, Aquinas contends that (1) Prudence applies universal knowledge to particulars which are objects of sense. Thus, many things belonging to the sensitive faculties are requisite for prudence and this includes memory. (2) Just as prudence is a natural aptitude while its perfection is due to exercise so too is memory. As Tully says in his Rhetoric that memory not only arises from nature but is perfected through art and diligence. (3) Prudence uses the memory of the past in order to provide for the future. So Aquinas justifiably positions memory as a part of prudence in accord with Tully. Moreover, in the second reply to the objections, by fusing both Tully and Aristotle, Aquinas relays his own understanding of memory under four precepts whereby a man would be able to refine his memory.

> (1) The first of these is that he should assume some convenient similitudes of the things which he wishes to remember; these should not be too familiar, because we wonder more at unfamiliar things and the soul is more strongly and vehemently held by them; whence it is that we remember better things seen in childhood. It is necessary in this way to invent similitudes and images because simple and spiritual intentions slip easily from the soul unless they are as it were linked to some corporeal similitudes, because human cognition is stronger in regard to the sensibilia. Whence the memorative power is placed in the sensitive part of the soul.
>
> (2) Secondly it is necessary that a man should place in a considered order those things which he wishes to remember, so that from one remembered point progress can easily be made to the next. Whence the Philosopher says in the book *De memoria*: "some men can be seen to remember from places. The cause of which is that they pass rapidly from one step to the next."
>
> (3) Thirdly, it is necessary that a man should dwell with solicitude on, and cleave with affection to, the things which he wishes to remember;

> because what is strongly impressed on the soul slips less easily away from it. Whence Tullius says in his Rhetoric that "solicitude conserves complete figures of the simulachra."
>
> (4) Fourthly, it is necessary that we should mediate frequently on what we wish to remember. Whence the Philosopher says in the book *De memoria* that "meditation preserves memory" because, as he says "custom is like nature. Thence, those things which we often think about we easily remember, proceeding from one to another as though in a natural order."[94]

These four rules for memory Aquinas puts forth not only resonates with the two main principles of artificial memory, namely that of places and images, but also facilitates philosophical and theological reasoning. Referring to the analysis made by Yates: the first rule focuses on the image; yet the striking and unusual choice of images of the *Ad Herennium* that are more memorable have been replaced by corporeal images that are charged with preventing "subtle" and "spiritual impressions" to easily slip from the soul. The reason for using these corporeal images is because human knowledge is stronger when it has a hold on sensible objects. Thus, these spiritual impressions are made memorable through corporeal forms. The second rule focuses on place and order for the storage and retrieval of memories. The third rule introduces a devotional atmosphere which was completely devoid from the classical rules of memory and the fourth rule converges, yet again, Aristotle and the *Ad Herennium* in their advice on frequent meditation and repetition for stimulation and retention of memories.[95] Although Aquinas's precepts are based on the rhetorical and philosophical rules of antiquity, they inherently carry a theological colouring as devotion and medieval piety are imported into the fold where the art of memory and the image specifically are used for ethical and religious purposes.

[94] Ibid., *Summa theologica*, II-II, Q.49, art.1, quoted in translation by Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 85-86.
[95] Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 86-87.

3 Poetical Imagination as Cultural Memory

Frances Yates appropriately notes the paradoxical occurrence in the age of scholasticism that insistently emphasised abstract and spiritual matters while disregarding poetry and metaphor as they were thought to carry inferior attributes; yet this was also "an age which saw an extraordinary efflorescence of imagery, and of new imagery, in religious art."[1] One of the most prominent poetical examples that embody this scholastic paradox is none other than Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Yates observes that "the Middle Ages might think of virtues and vices as memory images, formed according to the classical rules, or of the divisions of Dante's Hell as memory places"[2] and briefly analyses Dante's *Divina Commedia* where she suggests that "Dante's *Inferno* could be regarded as a kind of memory system for memorizing Hell and its punishments, with striking images on orders of places;" moreover, if we were to consider the poem as a whole with its orders of places located in *inferno*, *purgatorio* and *paradiso*, we could easily compare it to the cosmic order of places where the spheres of Hell are like the spheres of Heaven in reverse. Thus seen, the poem takes on the appearance of "a summa of similitudes and exempla, ranged in order and set out upon the universe." Furthermore, if we were to take Prudence as a similitude, as a main symbolic theme of the poem, "its three parts can be seen as *memoria*, remembering vices and their punishments in Hell, *intelligentia*, the use of the present for penitence and acquisition of virtue, and *providentia*, the looking forward to Heaven." This interpretation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* informs us that "the principles of artificial

[1] Ibid., 89.
[2] Ibid., 12.

memory, as understood in the Middle Ages, would stimulate the intense visualization of many similitudes in the intense effort to hold in memory the scheme of salvation, and the complex network of virtues and vices and their rewards and punishments;" this being "the effort of a prudent man who uses memory as a part of Prudence." [3] Moreover, with this interpretation, the *Divine Comedy* would embody "the supreme example of the conversion of an abstract summa into a summa of similitudes and examples, with Memory as the converting power, the bridge between the abstraction and the image." On the other hand, nevertheless, "the use of corporeal similitudes given by Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa*, besides their use in memory, would also come into play; namely that the Scriptures use poetic metaphors and speak of spiritual things under the similitudes of corporeal things." Thus, continues Yates, "If one were to think of the Dantesque art of memory as a mystical art, attached to a mystical rhetoric, the images of Tullius would turn into poetic metaphors for spiritual things."[4] But it is not only spiritual things that become clarified through images but the whole of human experience that once expressed through poetic metaphors becomes universal, thus comprehensible not only for the learned but for the illiterate as well. Yates also suggests that "the cultivation of images in devout uses of the art of memory could have stimulated creative works of art and literature"[5] and I agree with her that it is quite possible for the image thus perceived to have carved a path for other creative works pertaining to spiritual matters to come into being; but I would also like to add that although these works of art and literature might have sprung from a religious foundation, they soon came to possess the secular as well. One only needs to consider the body of poetic work brought forth by Chaucer in which the current cultural values of fourteenth century England and the mythical past of antiquity are emphasised rather than the mystical and spiritual stamp of the Middle Ages. His *House of Fame*, for example, has frequently been considered a parody of the *Divine Comedy* due to references to various personalities and the three-part structure of the poem. Rather than finding divine love Chaucer is led to the

[3] Ibid., 104.
[4] Ibid., 104-105.
[5] Ibid., 105.

dwelling of Fame which gives him the opportunity to contemplate the role of the poet in selectively transmitting stories about famous personages and to question the truth about these stories told.

From the philosophical and rhetorical perspective of memory to a philological point of view, literature in this sense may be identified as the "stomach" of the body of society wherein all forms of knowledge pertaining to the culture of any given people are digested, ruminated, absorbed and re-written. The individual memory of the poet and the collective memory of society pour into this receptacle we name literature where it brews and becomes an aspect of cultural heritage. Both personal (individual) and public (communal) memory feed off one another in shaping the literary tradition and forming a segment of cultural memory. There seems to be a dialogue, or interplay, between the two where literature serves as a mnemonic device that informs cultural memory. At this point one might ask whether the poet's memory is significant at all, or is it overridden by the collective? I would like to suggest that they are intertwined and it does not seem possible to draw a clear-cut line between the two. As Halbwachs' study also shows: "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember."[6] Although it is the individual who remembers, this act cannot be carried out alone. The individual draws from a specific group context in which they are situated, to remember or recreate the past. Thus the poet's memory cannot be separated from the collective which is the culmination of collected knowledge and the material from whence the poet draws from, for "the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but (…) the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories."[7] So, the two become inseparable because "We can understand each memory as it occurs in individual thought only if we locate each within the thought of the corresponding group." Yet, "individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory (…) to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu."[8] Thus, from this

[6] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 48.
[7] Ibid., *On Collective Memory*, 40.
[8] Ibid., 53.

perspective, we may deduce that the poet through the act of composing evokes mental images and past events which are conveyed or communicated to the social milieu that recognises these images. In order to fully transmit what has been composed, the memory images of the poet must overlap with the memory images of that particular society. The only absolute creative aspect, it would seem, is the manner in which the poet portrays the events as the composition inherently pours forth from the selective memory of the poet. Only those images from the vast depository of memory that are chosen and orderly arranged to formulate a direct manifestation of the poet's selective memory become incorporated within the cultural memory of the collective. Even so, "Both the collective and the individual turn to the archive of cultural traditions, the arsenal of symbolic forms, the 'imaginary' of myths and images, of the 'great stories,' sagas and legends, scenes and constellations that live or can be reactivated in the treasure stores of a people."[9] Along these lines, literature may be seen as a space where individual imprints of memory overlap, where various fingerprints are impressed on the same waxen surface of society, forming the very basis of the culmination of cultural values and experiences. Literary memory and poetical imagination thus become the knot that ties the imaginative with reality by bringing together the "thing remembered" with the "remembered as such." The problem that this poses is that literary memory may not only reflect reality but also has the power to re-create, thus manipulate, cultural memory. The images within poetical imagination, the basic building blocks of memory, may be used to re-define meaning both on the individual and on the societal scale so the differentiation between memory makers, memory users, and memory consumers becomes obscured.

In line with Paul Connerton's work *How Societies Remember*, it becomes possible to identify two overlapping types of social memory where images and recollected knowledge of the past are transmitted and sustained. First, there are "incorporating practices" of remembrance where the body, its movements and dispositions are the main focus; and secondly, there are "inscribing practices" of remembrance which centre on

[9] Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 7-8.

commemorative ceremonies and rituals but may also incorporate monuments, images and texts. Thus, by focussing specifically on inscribed literary texts or documentary evidence, it becomes possible to argue that literature is a culmination of knowledge impressed upon the memory not only of a particular society but of the whole of humanity. Thus, it is possible to observe that the recollection and reconstruction of the past generates many forms of expression, playing a fundamental role in cultural production which specifically in oral cultures (both past and present) are the stories, myths, and legends handed down from one generation to the next that serve as a medium of stored memory for that particular culture. The memorial retentiveness of such poetic productions is inherently bound to the existence of the image where the image is perceived as the fundamental memory marker.

The deep affinity between poetry and memory established earlier is again brought to the fore as well as the governing function of the poet in the words adequately expressed by Jacques Le Goff in his *History and Memory* where he reminds how the Greeks made Memory a goddess—Mnemosyne—and charged her with reminding men of past heroes and their deeds through poetic expression. The poet was considered to be a diviner of the past, an inspired witness of the heroic age and of the age of origins:

> When poetry is identified with memory, this makes the latter a kind of knowledge and even of wisdom, of *sophia*. The poet takes his place among the 'masters of truth' and at the origins of Greek poetics the poetic word is a living inscription inscribed on memory as it is on marble. It has been said that of Homer, "to versify was to remember." By revealing the secrets of the past to the poet, Mnemosyne introduces him to the mysteries of the beyond. Memory then appears as a gift reserved for initiates, and *anamnesis* or reminiscence as an ascetic and mystical technique. (…). It is the antidote for Oblivion. In the Orphic underworld the dead must avoid the springs of oblivion; they must not drink the waters of Lethe, but on the contrary drink from the fountain of Memory, which is a source of immortality.[10]

[10] Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 64.

Poetry in this sense becomes the very fountain of memory but more interestingly the waxen tablet of memory has been replaced by marble when the origins of poetical expressions are explored which lends the poetic word a sense of immortality. Thus, the divine nature of poetic memory and its relationship with wisdom fundamentally elevates the role of the poet as the intermediary between the immortal and mortal realms.

From a different perspective, also drawing a parallelism between memory and poetry, Freeman remarks that "just as memory may disclose meanings that might have been unavailable in the immediacy of the moment, poetry may disclose meanings and truths that might otherwise have gone unarticulated."[11] Moreover, "poets strive neither for a mimetic re-presentation of the world nor a fictive rendition of it. Rather, what they seek to do is rewrite the world through the imagination, such that we, readers, can see or feel or learn something about it that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or undisclosed."[12] Such is the compositional and creative force behind poetical imagination which informs cultural memory, as James Redfield has noted, the poet becomes "a maker of culture."[13] Likewise, as much as the poet is a maker of culture, he is also bound to it, for "The poet may or may not imitate the details of his culture. But if his work, as a whole, is to be intelligible to his audience, he must have a profound understanding of his culture. Therefore, if we assume that the work is intelligible, we can deduce the culture from the work."[14] Hence the memory of the poet though individual in itself plays off or complements cultural memory and cultural memory in return re-instructs the poet's memory. Similar to the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, or Halbwachs' unification of language and memory, one cannot exist without the other. Each shape and reshape the other in a constant harmonious dance or sometimes in constant battle where one wishes to overcome the other. The tides ebb and flow and from the outcome we receive what we may call the

[11] Freeman, "Telling Stories: Memory and Narrative," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, 276.
[12] Ibid., 275.
[13] Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, xi. See also M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, especially 26-40, where the role of the poet is discussed along with poetry as recall, construction, weaving and carpentry.
[14] Ibid., 79.

interplay of memory, or the dialogue of memory, in creations derived from poetical imagination. Furthermore, poetic memory, according to Ricoeur, is required to transcend the opposition between natural memory and artificial memory.[15] So poetic memory, in this sense becomes the amalgamation or rather the free territory where both forms of memory meet on neutral ground. Poetical imagination takes spatial form within the narrative that is distended as the narrative "is" (being). The images then use the narrative as a space onto which they have been collected and the act of reciting/reading the poem actively brings forth these images; hence the "presentness" of the narrative in the Augustinian sense.

Considering that imaginative representation seeks to move, as previously noted by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, poetry in this sense may be seen as the means whereby such movement can be made possible as poetry speaks in images which enables acts of thought, and correlates eye and ear, sight and sound.[16] Simonides is considered to be the first known person to call "painting inarticulate poetry and poetry articulate painting;"[17] following along the same lines Horace concurs with his statement "ut pictura poesis" that a poem is like a picture.[18] The equivalence of poetry and painting rests on the belief in the primacy of vision, for the *aretē* of the eye is to see, and what we see is the image either through mental images or corporeal images. Hence, poetry and memory are uniquely fused through the presence of the image. This synthesis may be justified through the formulation of a simple syllogism: if images form memory, and if poetry is composed from images, then poetry forms memory. Following on this premise, it becomes possible to assume that poetical imagination is a part of cultural memory as literary images are the culmination of overlapping imprints on the waxen slab. Thus, by adjusting

[15] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 64.

[16] For a more detailed analysis of the correlation between sight and sound see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 221-229, where the function of the image in medieval culture is exemplified through "painture" and "parole" and where writing itself is considered to be an image that acts as an aid for recollection. Carruthers explains how *pictura* and *litteratura* were linked in the Middle Ages and points out that *painture* which served the eye and *parole* the ear were both means of accessing the house of memory in medieval culture. See also M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 278-293.

[17] These lines are attributed to Simonides by Plutarch in *De gloria Atheniensium*, III, 346.

[18] Horace, *Ars poetica*, line 361.

memory between dialectic, rhetoric, ethics, and poetics, it becomes possible to justly consider poetical imagination as cultural memory that rests on a palimpsest of images that retain the totality of human knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

4 Mapping the Memory of the Male Body

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him (…) And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.
>
> Genesis

> Appelata est enim a viro virtus: viri autem propria maxime est fortitude, cuius munera duo sunt maxima, mortis dolorisque contemptio.
>
> -Cicero *Tusculanae quaestiones*

In his *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty views the body as that which perceives itself and is also perceived by others. This dual perception, running along the axis of body-subject and body-object, comes to rest on the gaze. For when we look at an object we not only attribute to it the qualities visible but also consider them as objects that are part of a system or world. Merleau-Ponty's theory regarding the body falls on the precept that we perceive the lived body and its relationship to the world in which it is placed as well as the world it part constructs from its own physical presence.[1] Hence, a dialogical, interconnected relationship between body

[1] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 67-72: 90-97. See Schilder's ideas on the sociology of the body-image, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, 213-282, esp. 218; and also Weiss' argument of overlapping multiple body images that are "constructed,

and the space it occupies is constituted. What is significant in Merleau-Ponty's work, and relevant to the theory of memory, is that the body as object is perceived spatially through the gaze. Thus, it becomes possible to posit the body as an image perceived through the senses and, likewise, it becomes possible to consider spatial factors as a type of architectural mnemonic wherein these images are located. Since the initial perception of the image is through the gaze, primacy of vision (whether mental or physical) becomes significant in the perception of any object or image; furthermore, from the perspective of memory, the phenomena of perceiving an image inherently occurs in the present. Even though perception is subjected to the present, for it is in the present that an object or image is perceived, the manner of *how* we perceive it lies partly in the past within memory. The word partly is used, for it is quite possible that, as Albertus Magnus had suggested, the image being currently viewed already incorporates the intended meaning; however, preconceptions of previously archived memory images tend to colour the present perception of any image. Nevertheless, since the intention is eventually intertwined with the image, constantly being re-written as fresher perceptions re-shape the intended meaning of images, the image and its intention become a fluid compound that is stored within memory, continuously subject to re-evaluation and re-interpretation.[2]

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reconstructed, and deconstructed through a series of ongoing, intercorporeal exchanges," *Body Images*, 165.

[2] From a medievalist perspective concerning the bodily images of men Cohen and Wheeler have indicated that "Theorizing gender does not sublime the body's solidity to melt, suddenly, into air. The categories 'man' and 'woman' have profoundly material effects on the production of human subjects, and theorizing gender (…) only historicizes the process of this sedimentation," Cohen and Wheeler, "Becoming and Unbecoming," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, x. Nevertheless, I agree with Robin Hass Birky that this theorization would in fact enhance our understanding of these bodies even in the fluidity of their representation. See Birky, "'The Word Was Made Flesh' Gendered Bodies and Anti-Bodies in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Arts of Poetry," in Troyan, *Medieval Rhetoric*, 167. Thus, the challenge becomes being able "to see sexuality and its categories not simply as system-bound surfaces permanently encoded by the social process that produced their coherence, but as virtualities, bodies, and affects in motion that are always crossing lines, (…) always becoming something other than an immobile and eternal self-same. Gender is a culturally specific process of becoming," Cohen and Wheeler, "Becoming and Unbecoming," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, x-xi. Although these definitions allude to the

Specifically for this reason, the discussion tends to become rather complicated when speaking of the human body as an image, for not only is there no singular body but there is also no single intention with which a body could possibly be associated. On such an account, then, given the fluidity between images and intentions related to the perception of the body, it becomes possible to discuss the image of the male body and its intended meanings under the categories of men and their masculinities respectively.[3] As poetic narratives in constant dialogue with cultural memory have long depicted images of men and their masculinities in multifaceted forms throughout literary history, literary texts offer a functional platform wherein male bodies may be analysed as images incorporating the multi-layered *intentio* within themselves. Therefore, poetic narratives will act as the mnemonic structure wherein the images of these male bodies have been placed and the *intentio* will refer to various forms of masculinities.[4]

To further explicate the argument, the images of men and their masculinities portrayed in the poetical imagination of pre-Christian and pre-modern western cultures begins by comprehending the images of men impressed upon the waxen tablet of cultural memory as initially perceived physical entities. These physical bodies are perceived under the dual gaze of both self and society. The image of the male body, referring, of course, to

transitory and fluid nature of gender, it is equally plausible to apply them to the image of men under the theory of memory.

[3] Gender theorists have contended that there is no single type of masculinity but various forms of masculinities. Since most discussions of masculinity are handled under gender and since gender is bound to history and culture, masculinity is considered as a socially constructed term that is in a continuous process of reinterpretation. Thus, we can only speak of "masculinities" in the plural. For a more detailed analysis of the term "masculinities" see Arthur Brittan, *Masculinity and Power*, 1-18. See also R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 87-181. On the other hand, there are those that use masculinity in the singular and refer to a single type of masculinity such as historicist George L. Mosse in *The Image of Man* where he argues for an ideal image of man that is immutable focussing only on the positive masculine stereotype that all men want to be and the counter-type which inherits all the negative aspects of manliness. Thus, Mosse over-simplifies masculinity by disregarding the many varieties and reducing it to a single stereotype.

[4] Crucial to my understanding of the diverse constructs of masculinities were collected works provided by medieval studies such as *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler; *Masculinities in Chaucer* edited by Peter G. Beidler; *Medieval Masculinities* edited by Clare A. Lees; and *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* edited by Karma Lochrie et al.

the physicality represented by the corpus of what is called man, inherits socio-cultural identifiers under the term masculinities. These images of male bodies having been imprinted in poetic narratives within cultural memory become observable objects on which the physical and/or mental gaze rests. The images of men thus perceived harbour certain attributes associated with the male body as they are inherently coloured with connotations of masculinity. According to Connell, "The body (…) is inescapable in the construction of masculinity;"[5] furthermore, "The materiality of male bodies matters, not as a template for social masculinities, but as a *referent* for the configuration of social practices defined as masculinity."[6] As the body carries with it "the intentional threads linking it to its surrounding"[7] and since "male physicality and masculinity seem symbiotically connected"[8] analysing images of men depicted in the poetical imagination of pre-modern western cultures becomes inseparable from their referents embodied under the term masculinities. Since the body and its referents are closely knitted in relation to social and cultural structures notwithstanding how the body views itself within these formulations, the urge to discuss how the images of men and their masculinities have been informed by individual, social, and cultural forms of memory becomes an almost unavoidable necessity.

To begin with, the poetical imagination of antiquity and the early Middle Ages represented the ideal male in the body of the warrior-hero where attributes such as virility, courage and honour were considered to be the ultimate culmination of manhood; whereas the late Middle Ages with the spreading of Christianity identified the ideal male body with virtue in institutions such as knighthood and priesthood where maleness meant humility, piety and humbleness. Both "virility" and "virtue" are words derived from the Latin word *vir* which denotes a man endowed with all manly attributes. Although virtue means moral excellence in both antiquity and the Middle Ages, the moral values that guided pre-Christian western cultures were mainly based on fortitude and courage where contempt for

[5] Connell, *Masculinities*, 56.
[6] Ibid., *The Men and the Boys*, 59.
[7] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 72.
[8] Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities*, 182.

pain and death were prevalent, as Cicero says "courage is the peculiar distinction of a man: and this virtue has two principal duties, to despise death and pain."[9] Whereas with the expansion of Christianity, virtue more or less referred to moral excellence on a spiritual level rather than the representation of physical strength and embraced pain and death as an aspect of redemption. Such were the values under which maleness was defined and individual men pursued in order to establish a prominent place within their culture in order to give meaning to their existence.

Secondly, on a grander scale, one of the templates on to which the male body has been inscribed, or measured against, is that of the deity: namely, the pantheon of pre-Christian cultures and the body of Christ in the later period. These images of men remain imprinted on the memory of western culture because they not only possess an emotive force behind them but also because they are correlated to certain aspects of the divine depicting them as representations of manhood on a mythic and cultural level. Man was created in the image of God, thus man shared aspects of the deity. But one must be wary of the level of connectedness and likeness, for men and gods cannot be equal. In ancient and medieval literature, this type of a representation where the male crosses the boundary equating himself with the divine almost always ends with his demise. Ironically, this upstart of a man generally receives some form of punishment for attempting to be too much of a male by assuming divine qualities.

Lastly, besides these representations in comparison with the deity, a man's image was also measured against the physical strength and moral virtues of other men. The constant need to prove one's manhood within the values upheld by society was strenuous and often led to battles and bloodshed. This type of representation is prevalent mostly in heroic epics. Another means of resolving the problematic of establishing male identity was through lineage. In a way, a man's virility was first determined through his bloodline and later proven through various heroic deeds. This second form of identity formation is dominant in early medieval literature and is highly demanding as the male doubly-bound must not only prove his

[9] Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* II.xviii.

worthiness to his peers and other members of his society but he must also continue, if not surpass, the virtues of his father and ancestors.

In order to give some sort of a structure to these various manifestations of masculine identities within the theory of memory, I turn first to Jan Assmann who contends that a sense of selfhood, hence identity, constructed on both the individual and collective level is made possible through the faculty of memory. Identity formation, as with the dialectical form of memory, is related to time. According to Jan Assmann, the "synthesis of time and identity is effectuated by memory" and the relationship between time, identity, and memory may be distinguished on three levels: inner, social, and cultural.[10] The inner level is considered to be our personal memory where our inner self is constructed during subjective time, the social level is concerned with communication and interaction where the social self that carries social roles is formed during social time, and the cultural level is a form of collective memory, where cultural identity is formed in a historical, mythic or cultural time.[11] Though the distinction of these various forms of memory may look like a structure "it works more as a dynamic, creating tension and transition between the various poles. There is also much overlapping;" especially when the relationship between memory and identity is considered.[12] I also turn to Caroline Walker Bynum, who defines identity as individuality, group affiliation and spatiotemporal continuity. According to Bynum,

> [I]dentity is that which makes me particularly, distinctively, even uniquely me. But identity is also used in current debates to mean something almost the opposite; it can mean identity position. In this sense, my identity is that which signals group affiliation—often race

[10] Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 109.

[11] Ibid., 110. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann working from Halbwachs's concept of "collective memory" introduced the term "communicative memory" in order to differentiate it from "cultural memory." Halbwachs had excluded the cultural sphere in his analysis, thus by preserving Halbwachs's concept, Aleida and Jan Assmann distinguish the two different forms of remembering under the concept of "collective memory." See also Aleida Assmann, "Memory, Individual and Collective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*; and Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*.

[12] Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 113.

> or biological sex but sometimes also statuses generally understood as more socially shaped, such as class, language group, or religion. Finally, identity can mean spatiotemporal continuity. In this sense, identity refers to the fact that I am the same person I was a moment ago. This third understanding of identity carries the connotation of oneness or integrity.[13]

Yet for any form of identity to be comprehensible, it must work together with its other definitions, as we comprehend one set of identities in relation to its other forms which become inseparable. So for any given identity to be sensible, its interlaced relation with the other two definitions must also be taken into consideration. It is at this junction that memory plays its crucial role. Memory is significant in the formation of any identity, as identity is constructed on a projected image. As a cultural construct, the image and identity of the body are acknowledged and represented in relation to other socially constructed memory images. The representation of the male body is almost always defined in relation to other impressions, other likenesses, creating a moving image perceivable by the senses. Whether this representation is established through metaphorical language or societal values, this relational and associative bonding of the image of men inherently generates forms of masculinities that are memorable within poetical imagination.

Working from Assmann's and Bynum's definitions regarding memory and identity, I would like to propose a similar, adapted model where the formulations of masculinities may be analysed in light of the literary evidence stored by classical and medieval culture, where the images of men that have manifested themselves in poetical imagination become themselves "carriers of memory."[14] Given the fluidity of masculinities and the dynamic nature of memory, these representations of masculinities, that tend to overlap, may be analysed under three main headings:

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[13] Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity*, 163. For a more detailed discussion on the question of identity in the third sense handled here, see also Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 244-252.

[14] Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 110.

1. Internal representations: (the inner gaze) the individual's acceptance / rejection of societal norms; inward search for self and identity
2. External representations: (the outer gaze) society's acceptance / rejection of the individual; search for identity in relation to social group
3. Mythocultural representations: (the omnipotent gaze) mythic / divine portrayals of the "golden mean" that characterise the ideals of manhood

As a culturally constructed entity, the male body is not self-referential as it always seems to be represented in relation to something else. To begin with, *internal representations*, establishes individual identity that is inherently linked to the cultural values of society, which encompass the male's acceptance of these values and his inner reactions to them. This acceptance then imposes the male to become the type of man that is formulated and dictated by societal values which may or may not overlap with the male's own values. In cases of conflict, where the self-image and public image clash, the male embarks on a journey to establish his manhood first to himself rather than others and the form of this journey, physical and/or spiritual, takes on the guise of the quest motif, albeit on a personal scale. So the outcome of this quest is related more with the male's sense of a return to self in search for a reconciliatory image that would establish his identity and sense of self rather than proving his manhood to others; yet, through a triumphant return the latter is also simultaneously accomplished. In this type of representation, it is through the inner gaze where a search for self begins. In other words, he must construct his maleness within his own memory before he can return to society. So this becomes a lone path that allows for self-awareness and inner growth where one's identity is established.

At the core of both internal and external representations lies the most fundamental questions "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" in establishing identity.[15] Aleida Assmann notes that "self-definition meant establishing

[15] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 53.

one's sexual, ethnic, and political position."[16] And Teresa de Lauretis, identified identity as "an active construction and a discursively mediated political interpretation of one's history."[17] That is to say, "we define ourselves through that which collectively we remember and forget. A reconstruction of identity always entails a reconstruction of memory, which applies as much to communities as it does to individuals."[18] Thus, *external representations*, embrace poetic narratives through the outer gaze. The male image in these narratives is doubly formulated under the external gaze as the male rests his gaze on others and is also gazed upon by his peers where both sides attempt to portray manly virtues and embody the ultimate ideals of manhood. Thus establishing a worthy bloodline becomes one of the most significant aspects of manhood where reciting/recalling the patriarchal line would serve as initial acceptance into society; yet, the male must then prove his worth by being at least as manly as his ancestors. The memory of one's hereditary past is significant as it is through the hero's genealogy that society first defines his maleness in the present moment with an expectation that he will perform manly deeds in the future. This construction of identity through lineage is bound to the remembrance of the dead as well as the need to achieve posthumous fame acquired through "great deeds, a record of them, and remembrance by posterity" where one would be allowed to join their ancestors in the Hall of Fame.[19] Another important societal representation is the rite of passage motif where boy becomes man through a series of training and education, trials and experience, which mould his manhood according to the expectancy of societal norms; thus establishing his identity within society.[20] These

[16] Ibid.

[17] Teresa de Lauretis, "The Essence of the Triangle or, Taking the Rise of Essentialism Seriously: Feminist Theory in Italy, the U.S. and Britain," in *Differences* I, 1991, 12, quoted in Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 53.

[18] Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 53-54. The reconstruction of identity through the reconstruction of memory is further explained as taking place through rewriting history books, demolishing buildings, and renaming official buildings, streets, and squares. But adding to Aleida Assmann's definition, we could quite easily include literature as a form of culture that reconstructs memory.

[19] Ibid., 23-39.

[20] Ruth Mazo Karras has an excellent study entitled *From Boys to Men* that analyses how adult masculine identities in medieval culture were shaped in the institutions of the aristocratic household and court, the university, and the craft workshop. Besides the

representations in a way indicate as to how men are defined and re-defined according to the roles they play within culture.

Due to the prevalence of mythic memory within various cultures, *mythocultural representations* may be seen as a platform where the idealised and historicised pasts of men are constantly being recreated and rewritten as identification of self and society shift and change over time. Ever since man was created in the image of god/s, the relationship between the "celestial and terrestrial" or "gods and men" has been oppositional[21] on many levels. First of all, "the gods are of heaven, and immortal; mankind is of the earth, and subject to death. Each of us is conscious that he is but one of a countless number who have lived, are living, or are yet to be born, and that his individual life is a brief detail in the long tale of generations, soon to be cut short and in all probability sunk in oblivion."[22] So in order for the male body to endure in the pool of Mnemosyne and not be washed down the river of Lethe, the warrior-hero seeks immortality through fickle Fama who preserves the memory of the hero in accordance with the great deeds accomplished through the virtues of masculinity. Thus, the male body having been deified would be codified and preserved within cultural memory. Secondly, the ideal place for the image of man to be set against was that of the image of the deity. Pre-Christian cultures advocated forms of virtues that were inherent in their anthropomorphic pantheons; for example, the ideal image of the warrior-hero was established against such virtues as strength and courage prevalent in the bodies of deities such as Ares and Thor; but more importantly, the warrior-hero was expected to embrace pain and death heroically as it was a part of his fate to do so. The afterlife was not the location the male body wished to be a prisoner in; hence worldly strength and courage were deemed significant. Once the concepts of worldly values and the afterlife were transformed so too were the values that defined man. The transference from a fate-based form of manhood to a faith-based manhood occurs gradually with the spreading of Christianity where the male body was considered to be a transient

institution of marriage these other civic institutions played an important role in shaping young apprentices and initiates into the future role they would later inherit once they became men.

[21] M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, 124.

[22] Ibid., 375.

substance and the immortal soul was deemed more important. Thus, the body that the soul inhabited was in need of new definitions as faith in divine providence gained altitude. So the new terms that would dictate manhood became identified with the image of Christ who embodied virtues such as humility, mercy, and passivity; as Holly Crocker writes:

> Perhaps most obviously, *manhed* simply refers to the human condition, or the qualities of humanity writ large. As a signifier of that which counts as human, the term issues ethical demands, only some of which are gendered according to a recognizable binary logic. As a borrowing from the Latin tradition of *virtus*, *manhed* signifies masculine virtues, including strength, loyalty, and bravery. But aspects of steadfast fortitude are not the only requirements for the medieval rendering of this masculine ideal, so that humility, mercy, and compassion also constitute its meaning. Potentially the most surprising elements of *manhed*, therefore, are qualities that valorize passivity. Indeed, passivity is often associated with *manhed*, though in a very specific sense, as the fifteenth-century Digby mystery demonstrates: "That for man diete, the maker of all, / By his manhed passyve." As devotional literature suggests, late medieval piety associates Christ's passivity with strength since it is an expression of love. Despite (…) the maternal imagery used to vest Christ's agony with emotive force, the association of obedient passivity with idealized femininity is difficult to maintain, at least in exclusive terms.[23]

Thus this third form of male representations explores the level of association between the mortal body of man and the immortal body of the deity. The ideal forms of manhood find expression in the celestial sphere to which the image of the earthly-male is shaped and re-shaped against within the memory of western culture. Mythocultural representations deal with the images of men and their masculinities as they are portrayed in the mythic memory of culture by moving beyond self and society back to a timeless space where these bodies are suspended in time lending a sense of universality and creating templates or images that are distended to encompass memory, knowledge, and prudence.

[23] Crocker, *Chaucer's Visions of Manhood*, 10.

The *loci* (places) for these *imagines agentes* (active images) become the poetical narratives from whence men and their masculinities are remembered. As we move forward in time and through different cultures the referents of men and maleness as represented in major poetic works of classical and medieval literature also shift and change. The impact societies have on the way values and virtues are inscribed on the waxen soul of the male is undeniable but the individual is equally effective in the composition of this inscription. In light of the above discussions, the following chapters will draw out a sketch of various men and their masculinities depicted within the poetical imagination of classical and medieval narratives.

5 Sons of Fate: Men in Antiquity

The classical body has often been defined as that which is closed and complete.[1] In tune with the physically aesthetic body, the classical hero also follows a route where depictions allude to ideal forms of masculinities which are more or less finished and complete. These contending male bodies are set on a path from which there is no return. Bound to fate and destiny, the ultimate goal is to be able to live not only in the memory of their own generation but to be immortalised throughout all of history. Thus, their words and deeds become their defining properties and ironically also their inevitable downfall.

Remembering Homer's Men: The External Image of the Warrior

Such performative forms of masculinities are inherent in Homer's *Iliad* where the male body engaged in war seeks glory in both life and death. As much as the *Iliad* with its focus on heroic individuals offers a buffet of masculinities each striving for excellence in battle during the great siege of Troy, it is Achilles and Hector who embody variations within the defining factors of masculinity and its contingents on the highest level. Though they form the foundations of ideal maleness, both Achilles and Hector portray aspects of *hamartia* that takes the form of irrational thought for which they are then punished.

In the opening lines of the epic we are introduced to the emotive influence of anger, wrath, death, and destruction that will forcefully be unravelled throughout the rest of the plot that begins *in medias res*:

> Anger be now your song, immortal one,

[1] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 25-26.

> Akhilleus' anger, doomed and ruinous,
> that caused the Akhaians loss on bitter loss
> and crowded brave souls into the undergloom,
> leaving so many dead men—carrion
> for dogs and birds; and the will of Zeus was done.[2]

The muse is invoked to sing a song of anger that is identified with Achilles throughout the epic where his honour having been slighted by Agamemnon causes the former to withdraw from the Trojan war and death ensues. To have one's prize of honour taken away degrades the hero, thus the rage and fury that dominates the character of Achilles is comprehensible as he now sees himself less of a warrior, less of a man. The references throughout the epic that define Achilles to be "godlike" are reinforced through his actions in his striving for excellence or *aretē*. Yet, during the course of events with successive victories on the battlefield "godlike" Achilles gradually turns to thinking that he is no different from any god. Thus, striving for *aretē* now becomes a point of hubris, of arrogance where Achilles deems himself above his peers.

In Achilles' case, the internal representation of self collides with the external representation of manhood. One of Achilles' key moments takes place in Book 9 where, conflicting with the representation of the ideal form of masculinity for his time and place, he chooses life over glory:

> A man may come by cattle and sheep in raids;
> tripods he buys, and tawny-headed horses;
> but his life's breath cannot be hunted back
> or be recaptured once it pass his lips.
> My mother, Thetis of the silvery feet,
> tells me of two possible destinies
> carrying me toward death: two ways:
> if on the one hand I remain to fight
> around Troy town, I lose all hope of home
> but gain unfading glory; on the other,
> if I sail back to my own land my glory
> fails—but a long life lies ahead for me. (9.495-506)

[2] Homer, *The Iliad* 1.1-6. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. (Henceforth indicated in the text by book and line number.)

In the great speech given in Book 9, of which the above excerpt is only a fraction, Achilles undergoes a futile attempt of rejecting societal values that discern and define the men of his era. Achilles' lengthy speech, as Redfield has noted "is the speech of a man who feels himself evicted from his community."[3] The hero, in Redfield's terms, is considered to be "a man on the margin between culture and nature. Achilles has, as it were, been pushed over the edge; he looks back at culture from the outside."[4]

> In the story of Achilles the poet dramatizes a fundamental contradiction: communities, in the interest of their own needs, produce figures who are unassimilable, men they cannot live with and who cannot live with them. This contradiction is not less puzzling for being familiar. (…) In such stories the hero and his community stand as problems to each other. The hero behaves in a way he has been told is admirable and then is baffled to find that, in meeting the declared expectations of his community, he comes to conflict with it.[5]

It is quite possible that Achilles' rage is shaped partly by his social eviction, by a community that had previously defined his maleness. The conflict arising between social- and self-definition leads to an impasse where either acceptance or rejection of the warrior's role would crucially mar Achilles' honour; as Redfield says:

> The warrior's role (…) generates the warrior ethic. The community asks of some members that they leave the community and enter the anticommunity of combat. There they must overcome mercy and terror and learn to value their honor above their own lives or another's. The community praises and honors those who have this capacity. As this praise is internalized, it becomes a self-definition. Achilles is trapped by this self-definition, which permits him neither reconciliation nor retreat.[6]

Nevertheless, since Achilles' maleness seems strictly bound to the societal values of ideal manhood, any act that would deprive him of this

[3] Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, 103.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 104.
[6] Ibid.

image generates extreme reaction, such as his unappeasable rage. The only reason his rage against Agamemnon ends is due to the untimely death of Patroclus who went into battle wearing Achilles' battle gear and was mistakenly killed by the hand of Hector. Stricken with grief, this instance only infuriated Achilles even further, giving him the means to transfer his rage from Agamemnon to Hector. Godlike yet not a god, Achilles' sense of self established through the ideal form of maleness under the warrior's role requires reinforcement and this comes in the form of retribution. Hence, we come to the climactic battle between Achilles and Hector that occurs towards the end of the epic in Book 22.

By looking deeper into this episode through the eyes of Hector, it will be possible to draw out both internal and external representations of the virtues expected from an aristocratic warrior and leader of men: in this case, honour, courage, and glory.[7] Realising the imminent battle, Hector finds "fatal destiny pinned him where he stood / before the Skaian Gates, outside the city" (22.6-7). Seemingly unmoved by Priam and Hecuba's words which implore him to save himself, he stands firm awaiting the looming battle with a heavy heart. Hector's inner dialogue reveals the motivating force behind the virtues and vices portrayed by the male to which all eyes are diverted. Moreover, according to Spier,

> When a man of honor is faced with a difficult decision he is in danger of losing his honor as long as he is uncertain whether he should follow its demands of him. Since he is divided into two parts, he represents two persons: as the man whose personal honor demands

[7] In reply to Andromache's speech where she tries to persuade Hector to refrain from fighting beyond the city's walls, Hector replies "But I should die of shame / before our Trojan men and noblewomen / if like a coward I avoided battle, / nor am I moved to. Long ago I learned / how to be brave, how to go forward always / and to contend for honor, Father's and mine" (6.514-519). This is an example depicting how attaining fame and glory was made possible through deeds in battle. Similarly, in the dialogue between Thetis and Achilles he replies referring to Hercules' fate "Likewise with me, if destiny like his / awaits me, I shall rest when I have fallen! / Now, though, may I win my perfect glory / and make some wife of Troy break down / … / They'll know then / how long they had been spared the deaths of men, / while I abstained from war!" (18.138-145). This is one of those instances when Achilles' hubris overwhelms the epic itself. His excessive pride goes far enough to imply that he is the sole arbiter able to change the tide of war, and his victory is inevitable.

> that he do *this*, he is to himself the image of the right life; as he whose convenience, or safety, or comfort, suggests that he do *that*, even though it violate his honor, he is a potential apostate from that image. His moral monologue is in reality a dialogue, which corresponds to the relation existing in public honor between the observers and the bearers [of honor], where the two are different persons.[8]

Hector's inner dialogue where he "seeks to discover himself is itself the internalization of a social process; the man 'comes to himself' to the degree that he recognizes what society expects of him."[9] Hector's evaluation of his self-image embellished with examples of how the male sees and is seen lends comprehension to how important it is that he retain his image of courage, for it will be through this image that he will become imprinted onto the memory of his society, and if his deeds are deemed great he will be remembered for all time.[10]

> Here I am badly caught. If I take cover,
> slipping inside the gate and wall, the first
> to accuse me for it will be Poulydamas,
> he who told me I should lead the Trojans
> back to the city on that cursed night
> Akhilleus joined the battle. No, I would not,
> would not, wiser though it would have been.
> Now troops have perished for my foolish pride,
> I am ashamed to face townsmen and women. (22.119-127)

These lines reveal the struggle Hector is faced with between self-preservation and preservation of social identity. In other words, the internal representation and the external representation of identity are in conflict. Yet, it is the external values that reshape his internal definition of self. So rather than be called a coward and probably live, Hector feels the

[8] Hans Spier, "Honor and Social Structure." Chap. 4 in *Social Order and the Risks of War*. New York: George W. Stewart, 1952, 44, quoted in Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, 227n22.

[9] Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, 227n22.

[10] M. L. West notes that "The winning of fame is associated especially with deeds of battle." See West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, 401.

compulsory force to stay outside the gates and face Achilles. As much as this passage was full of regret, the next is full of anxiety:

> Someone inferior to me may say:
> 'He kept his pride and lost his men, this Hektor!'
> So it will go. Better, when that time comes,
> that I appear as he who killed Akhilleus
> man to man, or else that I went down
> fighting him to the end before the city. (22.128-133)

It is the yoke of societal values that keep Hector transfixed. Respect of society is a major factor in the composition of manhood. But Hector goes a step further as he not only considers the respect of society that he will lose but also that of his enemy. In the inner workings of his mind, Hector is trying to find a way of avoiding battle. Thus, thoughts of appeasing Achilles with wealth and gifts from the treasures of Troy swiftly pass through his mind to which he soon rejects as he "must not go before him and receive / no quarter, no respect!" (22.148-149). Hector also refrains from being shamed in the eyes of his enemy and leaves it to the fates to resolve the situation as he says "No chance, now, for charms a girl and boy / might use when they enchant each other talking! / Better we duel, now at once, and see / to whom the Olympian awards the glory" (22.152-156). The warrior culture seems to be based on many factors but the main dichotomy that pushes to the fore is that of fame through glory versus shame through cowardice and retreat from battle. In her analysis of the Homeric hero, Donna Rosenberg writes:

> The Homeric hero strives to be the best among his peers. His goal is to achieve the greatest glory in order to earn the highest honor from his peers, his commander, and his warrior society. He has the opportunity to exhibit the greatest *aretē*—and thus win the greatest glory—on the battlefield, for armed conflict presents the ultimate challenge to his abilities. How well the Homeric hero fights, how heroic his adversary is, and how well he faces death all combine to determine how well he will be remembered and honored, not only by his companions but by society and posterity. Given that suffering and

> death are an inevitable part of the human condition, honor, glory, and lasting fame compensate the Homeric hero for his mortality.[11]

Rather than be shamed by society, his peers and even worse, his enemy, Hector chooses to leave the outcome of this battle for the fates to decide: such are the thoughts that run through Hector's mind. Nevertheless, standing immobile before the gates, Hector's sense of self-preservation becomes an overwhelming force that causes his body to tremble before the wrath of Achilles as "Akhilleus like the implacable god of war" (22.158) comes charging towards Hector. Unable to hold his ground Hector begins to run while Achilles is "hard on his heels" (22.166); thus the two become hunter and prey as they are metaphorically defined as hawk and dove, literally pursuer and pursued. This interaction does not label Hector with cowardice as his "godlike" adversary is certainly a force to be reckoned with. So after running around the walls of the city the two warriors are finally brought face to face through the involvement of the heavenly spheres. The battle of spear and word between the two heroes reaches a climax when Hector realises his death is imminent and it is at this point where individual self and social self collide with the hope that the memory of his deeds will transcend time and place as Hector remarks: "the appointed time's upon me. Still, I would not / die without delivering a stroke, / or die ingloriously, but in some action / memorable to men in days to come" (22.360-363). The notion of being the agent of an "action memorable to men in days to come" was also the motivating force that drove Achilles into being a part of the Trojan War.

These examples illustrate how internal and external representations of self merge with the underlying expectancy that through performative actions the male body will have the opportunity to be elevated to the mythocultural level where he will gain transcendency and immortality not only in the eyes of his own society but also in the minds of people from various places and different times. In a way, attaining deification through fame seems to be the pinnacle of the warrior-hero's brief mortal life.

[11] Rosenberg, *World Mythology*, 119-120.

Remembering Homer's Men: The Inner Memory of the Warrior

The tale of Odysseus, on the other hand, narrated in the *Odyssey* harbours the memory of a very different type of manhood, one that is based on remembering and forgetting.[12] Set in the aftermath of the Trojan War, the *Odyssey* focuses on the long arduous journey of Odysseus who is burdened with the memory of reaching his home in Ithaca. The obstacles laid out before him hinder Odysseus' homecoming and at times even erase the immediacy of home and hearth from his heart and mind; yet the image of Ithaca along with what it signifies seems to be the leitmotif that constantly reminds the audience of the significance of the hero's destination as well as his rootedness to his *oikos* and the importance of familial bonds. Nevertheless, although the *Odyssey* narrates the hero's prolonged homecoming with Odysseus frequently remarking his deep longing for home, it takes him almost a decade to land on the shores of Ithaca. The reasons behind this delay are attributed to divine and fantastic forces that are constantly moving against him, forestalling his fate of reaching home by clouding his memory. Or so we are told.

From the perspective of memory, this point merits attention as it is mainly through Odysseus' individual memory that the audience learns of these exploits. Through the hero's own voice where the events are unfolded in the manner which he remembers or forgets, we are informed of the obstacles that delay his journey, but as a character that constantly weaves

[12] Memory plays a prominent role on many levels in the epic *Odyssey*. The first four books, for instance, focus on how the body of Odysseus is forgotten in his own realm as the suitors do not remember how he had ruled as a gentle father (2.244-245)§ a sentiment that recurs in Book V, lines 13-14. Moreover, as Telemachus travels for news of his father the ones that remember Odysseus are those that had fought with him side by side in the Trojan War. So "home" represents those that remember less (except of course his immediate household) and the further out Telemachus travels the more Odysseus is remembered well by such people as Nestor, Menelaus and Helen who recall vividly the deeds of Odysseus. These instances of remembrance and forgetfulness are through the eyes of others whereas there is also the case of Odysseus himself who relates his adventures from memory.

§ Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Robert Fitzgerald. (Hereafter indicated in the text by book and line number.)

new narratives when in disguise[13] or when his identity is undisclosed[14] it becomes quite challenging to separate fact from fiction. From this perspective, the adventures of Odysseus may be read as a psychological experience where body and soul are in constant combat as the various external representations of self and manhood shift in definition and form. The sea becomes the ultimate force controlling the hero's destiny and it is his journey over this body of water that may be analysed as a journey into his mind for it projects more of a spiritual voyage than a physical one. Many have attempted to plot Odysseus' voyage from Troy to Ithaca on the map but have been unable to accurately do so for "the hero is wandering in a fantasy world,"[15] one created by Odysseus himself. Thus, the dangerous forces he encounters are instances where Odysseus must face himself and come to terms with the shifting definition of his manhood from warrior to the head of his *oikos*. The body of Odysseus is no longer required to fight for fame and honour on a universal level but to carry out the roles given by society where he must now protect his local household and lands. So by submitting to the terrors encountered on the sea (which is his inner acceptance of the shift in his roles) and by promising to pay penance to the gods (that is a spiritual development of his soul) is he allowed to return home. In other words, by the end of this physical and spiritual journey when the internally constructed self successfully overlaps with the external representations of manhood Odysseus allows himself to return to Ithaca. Thus, the type of manhood depicted in the *Odyssey* becomes that of the personal kind, one we witness through the male telling his tale; through the internal visions of Odysseus' own memories where he constructs his

[13] See for example Book XIII, especially lines 326-365, where Odysseus weaves an extraordinary tale to Athena who after quietly listening says "Whoever gets around you must be sharp / and guileful as a snake; even a god / might bow to you in ways of dissimulation. / You! You chameleon! / Bottomless bag of tricks! Here in your own country / would you not give your stratagems a rest / or stop spellbinding for an instant? / You play a part as if it were your own tough skin. / No more of this, though. Two of a kind, we are, / contrivers, both. Of all men now alive / you are the best in plots and story telling. / My own fame is for wisdom among the gods— / deceptions, too." (13.371-383), and Book XIV that recounts the story Odysseus weaves in his encounter with his swineherd who gives Odysseus food and shelter.

[14] See Book VI for his encounter with the Phaeacians where Odysseus does not reveal his identity until he is ready to depart.

[15] Rutherford, *Classical Literature*, 26.

manhood against the backdrop of his travels. Considering the adventures he speaks of as *imagines agentes* occurring in systematically arranged *loci* the monstrous and treacherous figures he encounters become images that are loaded with metaphorical signifiers which the architectural mnemonic emphasises.

Rutherford has remarked that where "the *Iliad* is a poem of disintegration, the *Odyssey* tells of reintegration"[16] and it seems that Odysseus has a strenuous time adapting to his many roles of father, husband and leader. From the identity of a warrior hero, Odysseus is expected to shift into these everyday social roles, reintegrating his body into the collective. Though the narrative emphasises Odysseus' ultimate goal to return home, it could well be read as a deliberate wandering.[17] By forestalling his return, it becomes possible to evaluate Odysseus as an oikophobic male where his journey over the "winedark sea" may be seen as the conflict of identities as his journey is more of a voyage of the unconscious where the warrior identity is in strife with the multiple identities awaiting him in Ithaca as he does not feel ready to embody the multiple roles he is expected to carry out. Thus, unable to face the societal robes that he is required to wear, he journeys in order to lose himself, or to come to terms with the new definitions that would establish his manhood. But the many adventures and events that befall Odysseus overseas are more or less related with losing sense of self, whether it be changing names or wearing disguises. Yet the most tantalising loss is loss of mind and consciousness which, according to Odysseus, is avoided due to the cunning nature of his mind. Being able to withstand the treacherous forces of forgetfulness, Odysseus seems to be able to employ a certain type of *metis* that is not typical of the warrior hero but more akin to feminine intelligence. The *Odyssey* is not the only narrative that emphasises

[16] Ibid.

[17] Rutherford notes that "Though Dante and Tennyson cast Ulysses as the eternal wanderer, in Homer he does not lose sight of the ultimate goal of homecoming." See Rutherford, *Classical Literature*, 26. Nevertheless, it is through Odysseus' own words that we learn of his yearning to reach Ithaca and bearing in mind that he is a witty, deceitful hero that is able to weave tales without being prompted to do so, the truth behind his stories and sentiments seem to require more evidence than is offered. Thus the restless hero in Dante and Tennyson wilfully seeking adventures into the unknown rather than sitting at the head of his household becomes, in a sense, more plausible.

Odysseus' feminine knowledge and wisdom embodied by Athena. The *Iliad* also refers to the diverse nature of Odysseus especially when compared to the ideal hero portrayed by Achilles and Hector. It is the cunning and trickery of Odysseus alone that is able to change the tide of the Trojan War. Moreover, as much as strength and skill in arms were necessary on the battlefield for the warrior heroes in the *Iliad*, *aretē* of mind comes to the fore in the *Odyssey* as Odysseus requires intelligence and ingenuity for self-preservation. The disparity displayed by Odysseus from the ideal form of manhood not only lies in the type of *metis* he possesses but also lies in a more subtle form that is in his choice of weapon: Odysseus is not a warrior of the sword favouring close combat but a man that wields the bow and arrow.[18]

By frequently being referred to as the master of strategies, or the great tactician, it becomes possible to locate Odysseus' main strength not in the arm but rather in the mind donned with cunning and deceit. Along the winding route back to Ithaca, Odysseus' voyage brings him to the abodes of many entities where he must utilise his wit in order to keep hold of his senses. The land of the Lotus-Eaters, for instance, presents such a diversion as it symbolises the land of forgetfulness. All those that eat of the honey-sweet fruit forget and do not recall who they are or what their purpose is, leaving the bodies of men as empty husks which lack any substance as their minds and bodies are numbed. Being able to withstand the temptations of the Lotus-Eaters, Odysseus and his crew land on the shores of the Cyclops and it is here that Odysseus' cunning wit vividly comes into play. Naming himself "Nobody" and in a way becoming nobody,[19] Odysseus is able to escape from the clutches of Polyphemus, the Cyclops that had devoured several of Odysseus' men. Where the physical bodies of his shipmates are consumed by a greater force thus rendering them non-existent, Odysseus is able to preserve his body metaphorically by becoming nobody.

[18] As the archer is able to inflict harm from a distance without risking his own life, this type of warrior is not as respected as those that favour close combat with sword and spear. Thus, the factor that elevates Odysseus among other contending male bodies becomes his wit and wisdom.

[19] Rutherford has noted that "the word for 'wit' in Greek also punningly means 'nobody', alluding to the pseudonym Odysseus has used," in *Classical Literature*, 26.

In contrast to the Cyclopes, Circe's island represents the devouring of mind and soul along with the transformation of body. As Odysseus' men are magically turned into swine their human thoughts and human souls disappear transforming them into docile animals. Whatever representations of manhood they might have had all disappear once their manly bodies are shifted into animals. Nevertheless, even though Hermes warns Odysseus against the power wielded by Circe and gives him an antidote he still falls under her spell of forgetfulness. Since Odysseus was not made "sluggish with [Circe's] wine" (10.367) she offers her bed to which Odysseus replies:

> "Kirkê, am I a boy, / that you should make me soft and doting now? / Here in this house you turned my men to swine; / now it is I myself you hold, enticing / into your chamber, to your dangerous bed, / to take my manhood when you have me stripped. / I mount no bed of love with you upon it. / Or swear me first a great oath, if I do, / you'll work no more enchantment to my harm." / She swore at once, outright, as I demanded, / and after she had sworn, and bound herself, / I entered Kirkê's flawless bed of love. (10.379-390)

Although Odysseus is aware that his "manhood" is at stake, he nevertheless enters Circe's bed where another transformative power of memory loss surfaces, one that temporarily causes forgetfulness of his ultimate goal of reaching home. After requesting that his companions be freed from her spell from whence they become "man again, / younger, more handsome, taller than before" (10.439-440) a sign of Circe's rejuvenative power, Odysseus chooses to become Circe's companion losing himself in Circe's body, lingering in her abode, "feasting long / on roasts and wine, until a year grew fat" (10.516-517). Circe might not have trapped Odysseus' mind and body through magic but her ingenuity in seemingly freeing Odysseus while enticing him to stay by other means of feminine enchantment worked just as well; for it is her power over man and beast that forcefully and alluringly embodies loss of memory and manhood on many levels. However, Odysseus himself seems to wilfully delay his journey and it is only when his shipmates begin to grow restless and remind Odysseus of

home that he is forced to "shake off this trance, and think of home" (10.521).

Yet before he is allowed to journey back to Ithaca, Circe urges Odysseus to first travel to the underworld to "hear prophecy from the rapt shade / of blind Teirêsias of Thebes, forever / charged with reason even among the dead; / to him alone, of all the flitting ghosts, / Perséphonê has given a mind undarkened" (10.546-550). Thus, in order to travel forward to his future, he must visit his past collected in the underworld in the form of the shades of warriors long dead. In this respect, Hades' realm constitutes an archive of the dead where the underworld offers "the panorama of the past."[20] The underworld scene in the *Odyssey* not only acts as a reminder of the glorious deeds of the past but also questions the previous definitions of the constructed male. The interaction between Odysseus and Achilles' shade reaffirms the futility of war and death by emphasising the necessity of longevity through the bloodline rather than becoming immortal through fame. Achilles asks Odysseus "How did you find your way down to the dark / where these dimwitted dead are camped forever, / the after images of used-up men?" (11.559-561) to which he replies:

> I had need of foresight [prudence] / such as Teirêsias alone could give / to help me, homeward bound for the crags of Ithaka. / I have not yet coasted Akhaia, not yet / touched my land; my life is all adversity. / But was there ever a man more blest by fortune / than you, Akhilleus? Can there ever be? / We ranked you with immortals in your lifetime, / we Argives did, and here your power is royal / among the dead men's shades. Think, then, Akhilleus: / you need not be so pained by death. (11.563-574)

Having been held in high esteem during his lifetime as the epitome of what the best of men closest to the immortal gods should be, Achilles inherently defined the ideal male and his role in society. Yet, in death he seems to regret his decision for ever-lasting fame as he answers:

[20] Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, 28.

> Let me hear no smooth talk / of death from you, Odysseus, light of councils. / Better, I say, to break sod as a farm hand / for some poor country man, on iron rations, / than lord it over all the exhausted dead. / Tell me, what news of the prince my son: did he / come after me to make a name in battle / of could it be he did not? (11.577-584)[21]

Life and what it signifies is better comprehended in death as Achilles' sentiment centres on his son signifying the preservation of the continuity of his line rather than his own fame as he realises the futility of war. Rather than be king among the mindless shades, Achilles prefers to have been a slave, still alive in the land of the living. Hades' realm harbours those who have lost their essence of life but more importantly the underworld portrays death as the loss of memory, intelligence and wit, thus as the loss of self. It is highly likely that this loss of self is at the core of Achilles' regret. But not all the shades wandering in the underworld are dim-witted as there is the case of Teiresias. "The Theban prophet is singled out by [Homer] as being the only dead man whose wits are unshaken by death, to whom Persephone has granted *nous* and the capacity to be wise."[22] It is this person in particular that Odysseus must consult on how to return home safely, but as other scholars have also noted, "Teiresias tells him no such thing" but rather forewarns him not to anger the sun.[23]

> Only the sun, in its intelligence, comes intact through the darkness and the water beneath the world, and may draw a mortal caught in that darkness out with him again into the light. A mortal may force his wishes on the sun, as Herakles demands the sun's golden bowl for

[21] Ironically, when Achilles was in the land of the living his thoughts on immortality seem to be on a similar vein: "A man may come by cattle and sheep in raids; / tripods he buys, and tawny-headed horses; / but his life's breath cannot be hunted back / or be recaptured once it pass his lips. / My mother, Thetis of the silvery feet, / tells me of two possible destinies / carrying me toward death: two ways: / if on the one hand I remain to fight / around Troy town, I lose all hope of home / but gain unfading glory; on the other, / if I sail back to my own land my glory / fails—but a long life lies ahead for me." (Homer, *Iliad* 9.495-506)

[22] Vermeule, *Aspects of Death*, 28. On a side note, only shades that are allowed to drink from the sacrificial blood are able to regain memory of self; otherwise, they are without mind, without memory, they are simply lost souls wandering in the underworld for all of eternity.

[23] Ibid.

> travel back out of the western seas, but an intelligent man like Odysseus should honor the sun's intelligence, as the only mechanism of survival.[24]

Helios, and later Apollo, represents the pinnacle of knowledge in the form of intelligence, wisdom and enlightenment. But for Odysseus to attain even a fraction of the knowledge provided by the sun he must continue his spiritual journey and withstand the temptation of other dark and dismal entities such as the Sirens, the devouring aspect of Scylla and the dark waters of Charybdis. Out of these three forces that tend towards stripping Odysseus from mind and memory, body and identity, the Sirens prove to be the better foe thus meriting a more detailed account. Moreover, the Siren episode in Book 12 is truly significant as it plays directly on the memories of Odysseus in terms of his perceived manhood. To elaborate further, Circe had previously warned Odysseus about the bewitching song the two Sirens would sing: "woe to the innocent who hears that sound! / He will not see his lady nor his children / in joy, crowding about him, home from sea; / the Seirênês will sing his mind away / on their sweet meadow lolling. There are bones / of dead men rotting in a pile beside them / and flayed skins shrivel around the spot" (12.50-56). The danger the Sirens inherently signify is that of losing one's mind. Thus, the song of the Sirens possesses the power to make one forget their memories, hence sense of self, allowing the Sirens as a feminine entity to devour all aspects of manhood. Furthermore, the Sirens use the perfect combination of flattery and temptation to reel Odysseus in by "conjuring up the quality of Odysseus' performance at Troy as an *eidolon*, an image of himself to please his greedy soul."[25]

> This way, oh turn your bows, / Akhaia's glory, / (…) Sea rovers here take joy / Voyaging onward, / As from our song of Troy / Greybeard and rower-boy / Goeth more learned. (12.220-236)

The irony here is that though the Sirens evoke past memories, they mean to deprive Odysseus of them through a form of seduction. Thus, the Sirens'

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 203.

song holds the promise of bestowing knowledge on Odysseus concerning his glorious future reputation while still alive, which is devastatingly tempting as the heroes of this world strive for *aretē* so that they can be remembered after their deaths.

In the end when Odysseus does finally reach the shores of Ithaca, it is not with his warrior identity wielding swords and shields but alone and in disguise. Hence, in the *Odyssey* memory and the formation of masculine identity vary greatly from the rich exhibit displayed in the *Iliad*. Against the straightforwardness of the *Iliad* where heroes strove to be the best of men in the eyes of others, the *Odyssey* depicts a man questioning his own values against those posited by culture and having been caught in the middle between battlefield and *oikos* wanders until he attains the necessary wisdom and enlightenment to handle the challenges awaiting him back home in Ithaca.

Recreating a Cultural Myth: Virgil and Duty-Bound Aeneas

At first glance, the Roman attitude towards masculine ideals seems to be akin to that of Greek culture and values; yet upon a closer examination one comes to realise that a different sort of hero is surfacing. Considering that Rome was more militaristic in her approach as she strived to expand her boundaries through conquest, so the men she birthed were expected to display selfless acts of sacrifice for a higher purpose. But these sacrifices did not necessarily entail the decimation of the male body but rather the preservation of it for procreative purposes. Such a son adopted by Rome is embodied in Aeneas, the Trojan hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, who carries similar burdens with both Achilles and Odysseus but surpasses both; for Aeneas fame and glory on an individual level are not the goals to be pursued but rather become the inevitable outcome of following one's fate as destiny ordained in birthing a new nation. Hence, the poetic narrative moves beyond the boundaries of individual and societal realms by forging a mythic memory in the present time of the poet. Since "The *Aeneid* views

recent history through a mythical perspective"[26] which was "absent in Homer, who does not attempt to relate his narrative to the world of his own time,"[27] Aeneas becomes a mythocultural beacon in Rome's past that shines forward to Virgil's present as he represents the ideals Rome has become to stand for, such as law and justice, with a deep respect for ancestral customs and loyalty to familial bonds. Thus the whole narrative incorporates Augustine's sense of *distentio animi* as the first six books glance back at the past through an Odyssean framework[28] and the last six books foreshadow the future in an Iliadic form;[29] meanwhile the poetic narrative is in the ever-present moment.

Likewise, the distension prevalent in the narrative structure also seems to be echoed in the body of Aeneas where the male hero is forced to be a representative of the surviving Trojans strung between the ashes of the past and the prospect of a bright future while the present moment is fleeing away. The distension caused in Aeneas' soul may be viewed from two diverse perspectives: the first, that the past is a burden that he must

[26] Rutherford, *Classical Literature*, 35. Virgil's epic was composed during a key period in Rome's history where Octavian triumphed over Antony in 31 BC. Yet, instead of writing an epic concerned with Octavian and Antony, Virgil chose to set his own time as a future vision in a legendary past. Stylistically, the *Aeneid*, with Homeric influence compresses the 48 Books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into 12 and also reverses the order as the first 6 Books focus on the journey of the hero and the last 6 Books on the war between two nations. Virgil conceived his work to be *the* Roman national epic which would give Rome a new foundation myth besides the one concerned with Romulus and Remus, but there were various ways these two conflicting foundation myths were reconciled such as Ennius' version where Romulus appears as Aeneas' grandson. Livy in *The History of Rome* writes about Aeneas' journey as an exile from Troy to Italy and then the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus. Nevertheless, these two foundation myths functioned as two distinct memory images that were made to overlap and in a way rewrite the Roman consciousness by giving Rome an ancient heritage tying their ancestry back to Troy.

[27] Ibid., 36.

[28] Homer's *Odyssey* was concerned with the hero's struggle to return to a home which he had willingly left whereas Virgil's *Aeneid* is about a male forced to leave his homeland behind in search for a new land where he might sow the seeds of a better and more glorious future.

[29] Where the heroes of the *Iliad* seemingly act upon freewill in shaping their masculinities for personal honour and immortal fame thus choosing their own destinies, the Virgilian hero is not given a choice but must follow his fate wherever it may lead him. In this respect, the type of male he represents is bound by strict rules that disregards the male's inner visions and reconstructs his identity to form a template that all other men are expected to emulate.

rid himself if any sense of progress towards the future is to be achieved and the second that the past simultaneously functions as the root from whence he receives his strength in order to successfully fulfil the burden delivered to him by destiny. So Aeneas is stretched in the present narrative moment where past memories and future expectations shape the hero in a specific image of manhood that inevitably embodies the masculine ideal. Here the greatest burden arises from the role Aeneas is given as a representative of a whole group of people; as "Roman virtues and values [are set] at the centre of the work" so Aeneas "must be a governor and a lawgiver, not an egocentric warrior."[30] Moreover, Aeneas must seek reconciliation with his past in order to ensure the procreation of future Romans. Nevertheless, as with all reconciliatory acts, a transition from "the past as burden" to "the past as solace" is evident within the narrative flow as the further Aeneas distances himself from his homeland the more the past becomes a fountain of strength enabling him to fulfil his destiny. Thus Carthage, the land to which the raging storm brings Aeneas and the Trojan refugees, becomes the place where the past is re-visited as a yoke that pulls heavily on the soul in contrast to the land of the dead which functions as an in-between space where the past is truly confronted and reconciled with in order to shift the gaze towards the future. While Carthage and her queen Dido act as the main initiators in this shift symbolising the feminine womb from whence Aeneas must be reborn and eventually break away from, the underworld works as the soul arbiter in effectuating a reconciliatory break from past memories. These three instances in the narrative shed light on how Aeneas' body and sense of self is moulded through a mythocultural lens surpassing individual and social representations of manhood. Yet before dwelling on these instances, the mental state in which we find Aeneas merits attention as this initial introduction situation sets the tone of masculine identity formation.

From the very outset of the epic narrative the concept of losing masculine identity followed by a loss of self is established through a Homeric similarity linking the body of Aeneas to Odysseus; as Aeneas' ship is tossed among the waves initiated through Juno's rage, Aeneas' resolve

[30] Rutherford, *Classical Literature*, 37.

slackens as he wishes he had died in battle rather than on the raging sea.[31] This sentiment indicates a longing for remembrance on a social and cultural level.

> Aeneas on the instant felt his knees / Go numb and slack, and stretched both hands to heaven, / Groaning out: / "Triply lucky, all you men / To whom death came before your fathers' eyes / Below the wall at Troy! Bravest Danaan, / Diomedes, why could I not go down / When you had wounded me, and lose my life / On Ilium's battlefield? Our Hector lies there, / Torn by Achilles' weapon; there Sarpedon, / Our giant fighter, lies; and there the river / Simoïs washes down so many shields / And helmets, with strong bodies taken under!" (1.131-143)[32]

Thus, the first words that escape his lips are directly linked to past memories creating a sense of nostalgia for the fallen fatherland. Additionally, the manner in which he wishes to die carries symbolic overtones as death on the battlefield would mean a proper burial establishing a memorial landmark for his body whereas death on the sea would gradually erase Aeneas from the hearts and minds of future generations; therefore, it is not without merit that similar sentiments are found in the works attributed to Homer in which contending male bodies sought glory in life and death.

Out of the three instances previously mentioned, the first scene is where "duty-bound" Aeneas is brought *vis-à-vis* his past in the temple of Juno on the land of Carthage. The walls of this temple display scenes from the Trojan War in the form of a pictorial narrative which cruelly forces

[31] The following scene echoes the *Odyssey* where Odysseus under similar circumstances says: "Rag of man that I am, is this the end of me? / I fear the goddess told it all too well— / predicting great adversity at sea / and far from home. Now all things bear her out: / the whole rondure of heaven hooded so / by Zeus in woeful cloud, and the sea raging / under such winds. I am going down, that's sure. / How lucky those Danaans were who perished / on Troy's wide seaboard, serving the Atreidai! / Would God I, too, had died there—met my end / that time the Trojans made so many casts at me / when I stood by Akhilleus after death. / I should have had a soldier's burial / and praise from the Akhaians—not this choking / waiting for me at sea, unmarked and lonely." (*Odyssey* 5.309-323)

[32] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. (Citation indicated in the text by book and line number.)

Aeneas to re-live his past experience of loss while simultaneously bringing to the fore forms of manhood that Aeneas in his current state of mind finds lacking within himself. The temple ekphrasis, therefore, not only vividly captures the past bringing it to the present moment but also constitutes a means of confrontation where Aeneas re-evaluates his sense of maleness.

> He found before his eyes the Trojan battles / In the old war, now known throughout the world— / The great Atridae, Priam, and Achilles, / Fierce in his rage at both sides. Here Aeneas / Halted, and tears came. (1.619-623)

Baffling at how the whole world seems to have witnessed the sorrow of Troy ensuring fame of sorts to the participants "He broke off / To feast his eyes and mind on a mere image" (1.632-633) a mere image that caused Aeneas great heartache and a shedding of tears that signalled the beginning of his grieving process. The emphasis from sight to sound shifts as after having met Dido, Aeneas is compelled to narrate past events in an Odyssean fashion during the feast held in his honour.

> Sorrow too deep to tell, your majesty, / You order me to feel and tell once more: / (…) But if so great a desire / Moves you to hear the tale of our disasters, / Briefly recalled, the final throes of Troy, / However I may shudder at the memory / And shrink again in grief, let me begin. (2.3-17)

Through his own personal experience Aeneas not only relates the story of how Troy fell but also recalls moments when his manhood was lost and regained.[33] Hence, Carthage and Dido fulfil their function as memory evoking entities that force Aeneas to confront his past and even his manhood.

The break from his past to future is accomplished in Book VI, in the underworld, where Aeneas meets the shade of his father Anchises who

[33] "And not alone the Trojans / Pay the price with their heart's blood; at times / Manhood returns to fire even the conquered / And Danaan conquerors fall." (2.487-490); "For the first time that night, inhuman shuddering / Took me, head to foot. I stood unmanned, / And my dear father's image came to mind / As our king, just his age, mortally wounded, / Gasped his life away before my eyes." (2.730-735)

shows him the future of Rome and speaks of the role Aeneas is to play. As in the *Odyssey*, the undergloom in the *Aeneid* also functions as a memory archive, as a repertoire of scattered images of men lost to the land above. But unlike the dismal atmosphere of the Greek text where the shades of the dead were dim-witted and had no sense of memory, the shades in the Roman underworld still contain their sense of self along with their memories. Death in Anchises' case bestows him a wider berth in sight allowing him to see "all his own / Descendants, with their futures and their fates, / Their characters and acts" (6.915-917); hence after relating the future history of Rome to Aeneas, the advice Anchises gives his son shapes Aeneas and his hereditary line of men into being the conquerors of Virgil's time: "Roman, remember by your strength to rule / Earth's peoples—for your arts are to be these: / To pacify, to impose the rule of law, / To spare the conquered, battle down the proud" (6.1151-1154). Thus, Aeneas is moulded into a hero that "gains in maturity and confidence to face the further obstacles and achieve his mission. It is made clear that there must be no compromises with destiny."[34] Duty bound as Aeneas is, fate does not allow him to act upon his passions, binding him to leave Dido. "The development of Aeneas involves self-sacrifice, even a kind of dehumanization. That the hero seems less accessible, less of a 'well-rounded character,' in the second half of the poem (…) Aeneas has made the transition from being an individual to his true role as leader of a people."[35] The obligatory nature of Aeneas' manhood establishes him beyond the boundaries of internal representations of self, carrying him into the mythocultural realm where Aeneas is given shape as a mythic icon.

Ovidian Men

Homer and Virgil gave the western world men whose ideal forms of masculinities were inscribed onto the collective mind of western culture, whereas Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* presents men as "just men" who are caught up in their emotions, passions and the frivolity of life. With this aspect, the *Metamorphoses* stands out as a peculiar narrative as "there is no

[34] Rutherford, *Classical Literature*, 38.
[35] Ibid.

'hero' to the *Metamorphoses*"[36] or rather no singular hero but an abundance of men that are either being transformed or in the act of transforming others. As much as a sense of consistency was prevalent in the earlier narratives in a gradually refined formulation of manhood in tune with cultural expectations, Ovid presents a multitude of male bodies that are in a state of flux. The only consistency we may speak of is their being inconsistent as these male bodies persistently undergo a fluidity of transformations. Moreover, "Ovid declines to allow us either moral or narrative stability: the shifting subject and tone of the *Metamorphoses* are as fluid as the physical forms the poem transmogrifies."[37] Rather than utilise the classical male body as a perfect form, Ovid relishes in humorous grotesquerie where the human form and especially its extremities are morphed into "wings and feathers, branches and leaves, flower and stem. His hapless characters may become spiders, magpies, frogs, ants, bats, snakes or streams."[38] These various transformations beg the question that if self is shaped by form then what becomes of men whose bodies are no longer in the image of men? Do they cease to be men once they lose their present form?

Yet, Ovid not only writes of physical changes but also refers to inner transformations which further complicate the analysis of how the male body is shaped and re-shaped in the Ovidian cosmos. Nevertheless, one of the major transformative themes woven into the fabric of Ovid's narrative is that of love that acts as a dangerous, chaotic force spurring these transformations onwards and shattering any stability of body and self. One such example of self-destruction may be the story of Narcissus where falling in love with oneself leads to an irrecoverable state of transfixion. Narcissus having been described as one that stood "between the state of man and lad"[39] was already in a period of transition, yet upon seeing his own image in a pool of water (3.519), he becomes immersed in his likeness forgetting all else but himself. The reference made to both Bacchus and Apollo when describing Narcissus alludes to a search for the ideal self

[36] Ibid., 40.
[37] Ibid., 41.
[38] Ibid., 41-42.
[39] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.438. Translated by Arthur Golding. (Herewith indicated in the text by book and line number.)

which is found in his semi-androgynous body, as Apollo stands for the perfect form of masculinity whereas Bacchus emphasises femininity. Thus the chaotic and destructive aspect of love begins working her charm when Narcissus realises that what he seeks is himself (3.587) in his in-between state where he is no longer a lad but not yet man either.

Moving from individual transformations to divinity related changes, we come across two examples illustrating the physical demise of men that are narrated in the stories of Pentheus (3.645-921) and Orpheus (11.1-75) whose bodies are both equally and savagely ripped apart as a result of Bacchic frenzy. These men are unmanned by women who were acting solely on their chaotic emotions and unquenchable passions, a logical outcome for those having lost rational thought. As much as the deaths of these two men are similar, the chain of events that brings them to their final destinations could not have differed more. In the case of Pentheus, we see a man who displays disdain to a higher authority as he does not recognise the body of Bacchus as a divinity and tends to scorn both the god and his followers at every chance he finds. Forewarned by Tiresias that if he did not honour Bacchus "like a god, thy carcass shall be tattered / And in a thousand places eke about the woods be scattered" (3.655-656). The events unfold as Tiresias had foretold, and the body of Pentheus winds up being shred and ripped apart by his mother and aunts. On the other hand, we have Orpheus who with his song brings delight to birds and beasts, yet seems to have offended a group of women claiming he has scorned them. Caught up in a Bacchic fury, they tear the limbs off Orpheus whose extremities are strewn like that of Pentheus. In both stories there is a dominating feminine agent influenced by a divine force that unmans the male.

Conversely, the Calydonian boar-hunt scene featured in Book VIII of the *Metamorphoses* presents yet another type of transformation that is neither self-inflicted nor divinely-initiated but executed externally as the men in this story are emasculated socially. The background to the hunt springs forth form the account of how King Oeneus, father to Meleager, neglected to offer a sacrifice to Diana, who exacts her revenge by sending forth a huge boar that ravages Calydon. An assembly of heroes, enflamed to win renown (8.399) are chosen to hunt down the menacing boar. The

descriptions that follow these worthy heroes are akin to the depictions of Homeric and Virgilian heroes as they are introduced as embracing "all activity of manhood," having "strength and force" as well as "cunning skill," being swift, fierce, and brave (8.400-425).[40] Having built up the defining characteristics of these men, Ovid does not hesitate to demolish them as one by one these warriors are displayed as being incapable of hunting the boar. The previous valour of these men are debunked in the heat of action when Ovid presents them as being clumsy and ill-qualified as they frequently miss their target, are chased and wounded by the boar. To the fast flowing narrative, elements of cowardice are also added, further displaying the men as everything but heroes: "And Nestor to have lost his life was like by fortune ere / The siege of Troy, but that he took his rist upon his spear / And, leaping quickly up upon a tree that stood hard by, / Did safely from the place behold his foe whom he did fly" (8.490-493).

Fleeing from the boar and perching on a tree, Nestor embodies the cleavage of masculine identity as he has transformed from a warrior in his prime (8.420) into a man fearing for his life. As each man comes face to face with the wild boar, so they display traits that vastly differ from the previous constructs of ideal manhood where courage in facing one's foe was not only expected from the social milieu but was also inherent within the virile bodies of warrior-heroes. Moreover, it is Atlanta, the only female warrior within the group that is able to wound the wild beast while the men surrounding her are either fleeing or falling: "Still after followed Telamon whom, taking to his feet / No heed at all for eagerness, a maple root did meet / Which trippèd up his heels and flat against the ground him laid. / And while his brother Peleus relievèd him, the maid / Of Tegea took an arrow swift and shot it from her bow. / The arrow, lighting underneath the aver's ear below / And somewhat razing of the skin, did make the blood to show" (8.505-511). From a social stand-point, the men in this hunt scene are emasculated and portrayed as being weak and feminine by becoming the hunted rather than the hunter. So the prior images of men and their

[40] The list of heroes that embark on this quest is quite lengthy but there is a point that needs mentioning. Among these men such as Theseus, Jason, Idas, Ceneus, Lynceus, Acastus, among others there is also Atlanta, a female warrior that is given 18 lines of poetic description detailing her garment, weapons and face as opposed to the men who either receive 1 line or a half that only define their general attributes.

similar masculinities are overwritten in Ovid's mock epic by men who lack the necessary courage—which is ironically inscribed into the very marrow of manhood—as these male bodies lose control of reason and are metamorphosed through acts entailing abnormal passions and fears.

In the constructions of masculinity in the Greco-Roman world, courage (as one of the cardinal virtues) was deemed to be an essentially masculine virtue. Ovid's emphasis on transformative emotions, passions and fears goes against the cardinal virtues that constituted the very basis of reason. Thus, having stripped his men of all reason, eliminating such virtues as wisdom and courage, Ovid re-writes the classical male body from its etymological roots. Hence, the Latin word *vir* (man, husband; hero) and its cognates *virilis* (manly) and *virtus* (manliness; courage, valour; virtue) and the Greek word ἀνήρ [aner] (man, husband) and its cognates ἀνδρειος [andreios] (manly, brave), ἀνδρεία [andreia] (manliness, courage), engrave upon cultural memory the image of man along with the attributes they are expected to embody. In a manner of speaking, the Greco-Roman world defined man and manhood within the very fabric of language, linguistically linking masculinity and all of its contingents. The male body thus formulated is not allowed to act out of bounds but must represent the socially and ideologically constructed meaning of manliness to the best possible extent.

On another note, because Ovid's men display "unmanly" acts based on passions such as love, rage, fear, and pain they are made more accessible to the common strata as their more humane sides, albeit excessively, are displayed. In his *Art of Love*, for instance, Ovid presents Odysseus (Ulysses) in just this kind of a humane framework where the Trojan War hero is stranded willingly (or not) with Calypso. During his long years with her, Calypso would frequently ask Ulysses, who was not really handsome but was an eloquent speaker, to retell the fall of Troy; and

> often would he tell the same tale in other words. They stood upon the shore; there also fair Calypso inquired the cruel fate of the Odrysian chief. He with a light staff (for by chance he carried a staff) draws in the deep sand the tale of which she asks. "Here," says he "is Troy" (he made walls upon the beach), "and here, suppose, is Simois; imagine

> this to be my camp. There was a plain" (and he draws a plain) "which we sprinkled with Dolon's blood, while he watched and yearned for the Haemonian steeds. There were the tents of Sithonian Rhesus; on that night I rode back on the captured horses." More was he portraying, when a sudden wave washed Pergamus away, and the camp of Rhesus with its chief.[41]

This Ovidian passage emphasises the need of the classical male body to recollect past performative actions where the qualities of the male character were deemed to be exemplar. Yet, even though the corporeal forms of men fade and wash away, the image of their manly deeds remain etched in cultural memory only to be retold always the same, yet always different.

[41] Ovid, *Ars amatoria* 2.123-140. (Note that the original Latin is in verse form.)

6 Images of Early Medieval Men

The literary scene of the early Germanic, Celtic and Nordic worlds, akin to their southern brethren, was also dominated by the masculine hero who was preserved in the medium of writing before oral traditions faded away. In these surviving literatures, the hero figure often portrays sufficiently similar traits that enable generalisations to be made in constituting a traditional model of the ideal male.[1] As with previous constructions, the hero generally referred to a man who was expected to possess "supreme physical strength and endurance allied to moral qualities such as fearlessness, determination, and a propensity for plunging into dangerous and daunting enterprises. He displays his abilities above all in fighting enemies of one sort or another."[2] Thus, the heroes Beowulf, Cú Chulainn and Sigurd[3] featured in the pre-Christian northern European epics *Beowulf*, *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and *Völsungasaga* respectively[4] constitute images of such men whose attributes more or less encompass the above referents. Moreover, these instances of male physicality and masculinities provide a further glimpse into the formation of the male image within early medieval culture.

During a time when war was widespread, the ideal image of maleness inherently was wound around the warrior figure mainly charged with

[1] West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, 411.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sigurd the Volsung is known as Siegfried in the Middle High German epic poem the *Nibelungenlied* written about the thirteenth century. The *Nibelungenlied* constitutes a superb example of the courtly epic tradition.

[4] *Beowulf*, following the ancient epic tradition, is in verse; yet Anglo-Saxon poetry is laden with alliterations and assonances to capture the rhyme, caesuras for rhythm, and kennings for rich imagery and poetic diction. The *Völsungasaga* and *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, however, are executed as prose with very little verse within the narratives. Yet, the tales concerning their heroic warriors are on par with renowned men of ancient times.

defending king and country. These early medieval heroic-warriors not only had to defend land and king along with their own honour but were also bound to eliminate threats that were presented in the form of supernatural beings, paving the way for the branching and growth of the quest motif. Thus, these northern European men earned prestige by defeating inhuman creatures such as dragons and other magical or extremely powerful beings through supernatural strength and an unrelenting source of courage. Beowulf's encounters with Grendel, Grendel's mother and a fire-breathing dragon, Sigurd's slaying Fafnir, or even Cú Chulainn's interaction with the Morrígan are such examples that reinforce and re-inscribe the image of masculinity.

These early medieval heroes, as far as literary evidence indicates, do not travel to the *under*world but face preternatural forces seeping through from the *other*world that further shape their sense of self and establish their manhood. The greater the foe, the greater the man becomes upon vanquishing the enemy. So, even though the supernatural elements to these epic narratives seemingly create an immense force which the average male would be incapable of handling by introducing an extreme other whereby the degree of maleness is evaluated, they also unconsciously present a platform from which selfhood and masculinity are measured against. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes, "The monster exposes the *extimité*, the 'extimacy' or 'intimate alterity' of identity: its inescapable self-estrangement, the restless presence at its center of everything it abjects in order to materialize and maintain its borders." Thus, in order to be "fully human is to disavow the strange space that the inhuman, the monstrous, occupies within every speaking subject."[5] So, in a way, the encounter with the monstrous being becomes an encounter with self as a projected image of identity; yet one that is handled through rejection and obliteration as the monster becomes the mirroring back of fragmented self.

[5] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 4.

Masculine Identity in Beowulf

Beowulf, according to Gillian R. Overing, is "an overwhelmingly masculine poem"[6] and Clare A. Lees considers it to be a poem that "creates an almost exclusively male world." [7] Yet, at the same time, says Lees, "it does not claim to be a poem about men or masculinity in general" but rather focuses on "a particular group of men, associated by their aristocratic rank, their kin, and their lords."[8] Within a form of masculinism that establishes male dominance over other men, the man Beowulf, as an outsider to Hrothgar's court, faces the challenge of integrating his body into the established dominant male society. Yet, for this integration to be successful, Beowulf must prove that he belongs to this "particular group of men" which he does first by using his lineage and then by slaying Grendel. Nevertheless, before any type of integration occurs, the identity of the individual must first be established. Hence, upon arriving on the Danish shores, the first person Beowulf and his men meet is the watchman on the wall who plausibly asks who they are and where they hail from, to which Beowulf replies:

> We belong by birth to the Geat people
> and owe allegiance to Lord Hygelac.
> In his day, my father was a famous man,
> a noble warrior-lord named Ecgtheow.
> He outlasted many a long winter
> and went on his way. All over the world
> men wise in counsel continue to remember him. (258-266)[9]

As the passage points out quite bluntly, there is a hierarchical succession that precedes the masculine identity of Beowulf: namely, land, king, and father. Though his people and lord might be known, there is an added emphasis to his father as a nobleman who is still remembered by those that are wise. Thus, the identity of Beowulf and his men are established through both geography and genealogy. They are identified through fatherland and

[6] Overing, *Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf*, 69.
[7] Lees, "Men and *Beowulf*" (129-148), in *Medieval Masculinities*, 140.
[8] Ibid.
[9] All subsequent line numbering refers to Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* and not to the original Anglo-Saxon text, unless otherwise noted.

fatherblood rather than by their individual birth names. Subsequently, land and blood are identified with the father, creating a space wherein the son is allowed to become. The emphasis here on "father" is not an idle one as even Hrothgar is initially defined by the male blood-line as the opening lines refer to the patrilineal family of the Scyldings, "the ruling family of motherless Danes" as Clare A. Lees puts it.

> In fact, *Beowulf* concentrates on what we might call the crucial sites in genealogical or patrilineal succession. The poem opens with a fatherless father whose past is unknown, Scyld, and closes with the death of a childless son, Beowulf. Patrilineal relationships cement strong bonds between a father and a son—the family of Scyld is a matter for praise and memory—and yet they are also fragile ones. The memory of Ecgtheow is similarly conflicted—the father of Beowulf found himself in need of Danish assistance. Succession within the same family leads as often to conflict, as in the case of Hrothgar, as it does to relative stability, as in the case of his grandfather, Beowulf Scyldinga (12-19). Relationships between uncle and nephew, brother and brother, are equally tense: Beowulf is the loyal nephew of Hygelac, who ends up the most famed king of the Geats, but it was the accidental slaying of Hygelac's own brother, Herebeald, by his other brother, Hæthcyn, that brought Hygelac to the throne (2435-40).[10]

Nonetheless, as familial relationships are interwoven with conflict and tension "the most potent bonds between man and man are not necessarily those of father and son but those of lord and noble retainer."[11] Hence, the unifying element of the Danes and Geats becomes the ethics of warrior culture established in the form of a heroic code that sets the precepts for masculine identity within this specific group of men, namely the *comitatus*. The general guidelines of the heroic code identify and define two basic aspects of the male dominant warrior culture: that of the warrior and his liege. The liege, or king, was expected to exhibit political wisdom, gracious

[10] Lees, "Men and *Beowulf*," in *Medieval Masculinities*, 141-142. (The line numbers given in this quotation are from Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd ed., Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1950)
[11] Ibid., 142.

hospitality and generosity whereas his warriors, or thanes, were required to show strength, courage and loyalty. With such a guideline, the image of both warrior and liege become bound to one another as to define one means to define the other. Such a construct inherently suggests that the image of men within this warrior culture was socially binding.

Pre-Christian Germanic culture, it would seem, was founded on a system that was based on a heroic code that governed the lives of warriors, as Tacitus notes in his *Germania*, "They choose their kings for their noble birth, their commanders for their valour. The power even of the king is not absolute or arbitrary. The commanders rely on example rather than on the authority of their rank – on the admiration they win by showing conspicuous energy and courage and by pressing forward in front of their own troops."[12] So courage, as with previous masculine constructions, once again takes precedence with valour, honour, and loyalty closely following. As Tacitus' Roman gaze fell on the Germanic peoples, his keen sense of observation led to the transcription of the following passage:

> On the field of battle it is a disgrace to a chief to be surpassed in courage by his followers, and to the followers not to equal the courage of their chief. And to leave a battle alive after their chief has fallen means lifelong infamy and shame. To defend and protect him, and to let him get the credit for their own acts of heroism, are the most solemn obligations of their allegiance. The chiefs fight for victory, the followers for their chief.[13]

This passage provides an insight on how potent the bond was between lord and thane. Such a bond allows for the existence of the thane as long as he is bound by body and soul to his lord. In a way, the male warrior cannot exist socially or culturally once the lord has fallen. Thus, the code of the *comitatus* is central as it enforces rules of engagement and specifies a code of conduct.

As an outsider, one ponders why Beowulf burns with the desire to aid Hrothgar in ridding Heorot of the menace embodied by Grendel. As a *gæst*

[12] Tacitus *Germania* 7.
[13] Ibid., 14.

(guest) at Heorot, Beowulf is not socially bound to Hrothgar as a thane, yet Beowulf's urge to offer his "wholehearted help and council," to "show the wise Hrothgar a way / to defeat his enemy and find respite," to "calm the terrors in his mind" (278-280) may be viewed as his search to prove his manhood to others as well as attaining fame. Besides what better way is there to accomplish this feat than by slaying the unslayable? Furthermore, whenever the opportunity arises Beowulf does not hold back in recounting his previous exploits as an identifier of selfhood. Through his words before action does Beowulf, in an almost Odyssean fashion, construct his masculinity through his own personal memory. Clare Lees has remarked that:

> In the series of highly ritualized encounters that mark Beowulf's advance from the seashore to Heorot, Beowulf progressively reveals in speech his own past until that past is climactically appropriated by Hrothgar (372-76). In fact, he is always the privileged speaker in the poem and the poem becomes in part *his* narrative. We hear his rhetorical mastery of personal memory in combat with communal memory represented by Unferth's challenge, when he exposes the illusions of the Danes, whose best riposte is discord, and whose best account of Breca is Unferth's (506-28). Beowulf triumphs in words before he defeats Grendel, and succeeds not because his version of the contest is "true" (that truth is unverifiable by those in the present), but because his words carry the authority of one who has rhetorically restructured the past to best suit the present.[14]

The present, however, calls for action as Beowulf finally faces Grendel and his mother. Unlike the classical male bodies that travelled to the underworld as a remembrance of their past, the early medieval body that Beowulf (and even Sigurd) symbolises must travel to the den of the monster located beneath the earth occupying "an ambiguous realm between the natural and the supernatural. Grendel and his mother are not just cannibalistic ogres; they are literally devilish, and the eerie, icy pool in which they make their home is reminiscent of medieval theologians'

[14] Lees, "Men and *Beowulf*," in *Medieval Masculinities*, 145. (The line numbers given in this quotation are from Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3rd ed., Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1950)

descriptions of the mouth of hell."[15] Furthermore, "The ability of the hero to enter a mound, subdue its occupant and return with treasure can be regarded as a form of other-world ordeal akin to the underwater journey of Beowulf to fight Grendel's mother."[16] However, in the early medieval setting, the confrontation with the monster does not refer to recalling and revisiting one's past but becomes the site where the hero himself will be remembered from in the future. Moreover, the monsters in *Beowulf*, as Seamus Heaney writes, formulate "three struggles in which the preternatural force-for-evil of the hero's enemies comes springing at him in demonic shapes; three encounters [with monsters] in three archetypal sites of fear: the barricaded night-house, the infested underwater current and the reptile-haunted rocks of a wilderness"[17] which may all allude to the inner man attempting to overcome any misgivings he may have about his manhood since heroic masculinity is based on performance. But then again, in the case of Beowulf "He is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy."[18] Nevertheless, it is his last foe, the fire-breathing dragon that he fights with in his later years as a king that materialises as the final signifier of manhood.

Besides the social memories Beowulf's performing body creates as a result of his heroic deeds against a variety of foes, the stillness of his dead body along with his funeral pyre create something more as they become the agents that initiate a form of cultural memory. As mentioned earlier, the identity of Beowulf was initially established through geography and genealogy. Therefore, both the physical and social body of Beowulf become tied to the land and with his death the dead body of the hero becomes interlaced, literally woven, into the very bones of the Geatish landscape. Having died without an heir, as a son yet not a father, the funeral pyre and the mound erected on the landscape metaphorically functions as a site that transforms Beowulf's body (the body of the king) into the father of the land. The location of the mound itself is significant as Beowulf with his dying breath tells Wiglaf:

[15] Lindahl, et. al. *Medieval Folklore*, 38.
[16] Williams, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*, 172.
[17] Heaney, "Introduction," in his translation of *Beowulf*, xii.
[18] Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics*, 18.

> Order my troop to construct a barrow
> on a headland on the coast, after my pyre has cooled.
> It will loom on the horizon at Hronesness
> and be a reminder among my people –
> so that in coming times crews under sail
> will call it Beowulf's Barrow, as they steer
> ships across the wide and shrouded waters. (2802-2808)
> (…)
> Then the Geat people began to construct
> a mound on a headland, high and imposing,
> a marker that sailors could see from afar,
> and in ten days they had done the work.
> It was their hero's memorial. (3156-3160)

Erected on a hilltop by the ocean, the mound acts as a mnemonic image for not only the Geats, but also for those sailing by; moreover, as the location of the mound is close to the dragon's lair which was formerly built by an ancient race long forgotten "For the Geats, the dragon's mound embodied the ancient past; for the Anglo-Saxon audience, Beowulf's mound also served this purpose, juxtaposed close to the dragon's mound that embodied the past in the past."[19] Although the resting place of Beowulf becomes a reminder of him as a hero and a king it also serves the purpose of projecting his image to future generations. Furthermore, as Williams writes, "the funeral of Beowulf was a ritual performance embedded within a poetic performance, serving as a mnemonic nexus for a range of associations linking the Anglo-Saxon audience to the heroic past."[20]

From Boys to Men: Cú Chulainn and Sigurd

Previous renditions of the male body represented in epic poetry that focussed on war and its aftermath not only privileged the physical body for its strength but also paid homage to the inner self of the male in relation to the expected virtues of which courage comes to the fore. These mature male bodies were mostly represented at the peak of their manhood

[19] Williams, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*, 201.
[20] Ibid.

embodied with strength, wit and bravery; yet, we know almost nothing or very little about these men when it comes to their infancy.[21] One of the reasons for this lack of information may be due to the absence of a dominant female presence. The image of the child is almost always synonymous with the female body; therefore, representations of the earlier stages of men would require a mother figure that would bear and rear them. Another reason might be to further emphasise and strengthen the image of the male; by narrating the extraordinary feats of childhood, one comes to expect more from him once he has come of age by undergoing a certain rite of passage.

As much as a dominant female presence was almost absent from the *Beowulf* text which followed a patrilineal heritage, the Celtic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*)[22] flourishes with women who govern the narrative flow and initiate action. The prominence given to women in this text may be directly linked with lineage, as in ancient Celtic culture genealogy was traced through the female line rather than the father.

> While most of the descendants of the Indo-Europeans traced their ancestry through their fathers, the Celts traced their lineage through their mothers. A mythological Celtic king was known as Cónchobar mac Nessa, Cónchobar son of Nessa, his mother. Even Christ was referred to as mac Mhuire, the son of Mary. This custom reflected the fact that children could never truly know the identity of their fathers. Since women in Celtic society could choose the person who impregnated them, and often had multiple sexual partners to increase

[21] Beowulf's childhood, for instance, is only summarised with a few lines where we learn that "He had been poorly regarded / for a long time, was taken by the Geats / for less than he was worth: and their lord too / had never much esteemed him in the mead-hall. / They firmly believed that he lacked force, / that the prince was a weakling." (2183-2188)

[22] Herewith referred to as the *Táin*. It should be noted that in the surviving manuscripts of early Irish literature—the oldest which is *Lebor na hUidre* (the Book of the Dun Cow) compiled in the twelfth century and *Leabhar Buidhe Leacáin* (the Yellow Book of Lecan) written in the fourteenth century—contain partial versions of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. Yet the origins of the *Táin* may be traced further back to the eight even sixth centuries as the language and some of the verse passages indicate according to many early Irish scholars. See Thomas Kinsella's Introduction to his translation of the *Táin*; Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 20-22; Nora Chadwick, *The Celts*, 270-271; Karl. S. Bottigheimer, *Ireland and the Irish*, 45-46.

> the chances of procreation, no man could be absolutely certain if any child was indeed his offspring.[23]

The birth of Cú Chulainn, in this respect, is quite significant. According to the ancient tales King Conchobar of Ulster while pursuing a flock of birds with his sister/daughter Dechtire are forced to take shelter for the night. They discover a house and are offered hospitality; yet before they are allowed to settle in, the host informs them that his wife is pregnant and is about to give birth. As Dechtire is helping the unknown woman give birth to a boy, a mare is simultaneously giving birth to two foals. The next day, they find themselves at the Brú na Bóinne, the house has disappeared leaving behind only the horses, the foals, and the infant. Conchobar and his retinue return to Emain Macha where Dechtire raises the unknown boy, but the boy catches an illness and soon dies leaving Dechtire heart-broken. After the child's funeral, Dechtire asks for a drink and mistakenly swallows a small creature in her glass. That night in her dream, a man identifying himself as Lug mac Ethnenn (the god Lugh of the Tuatha Dé Danann) tells her that she will bear his son, that it was he who brought her to the Brug to sleep with her, that the child she had reared was his, and that he had impregnated her once again. He also told her that their son was to be named Sétanta. Dechtire's pregnancy becomes one for rumour among the Ulstermen who think an incestuous relationship has occurred between Conchobar and his sister. Dechtire is hastily married off to Súaltam mac Róich, but she being ashamed of her condition, secretly aborts the child and renews her virginity before sleeping with her husband. She soon becomes pregnant and gives birth to a boy named Sétanta, whom was thrice born.[24] Thus, the symbolic fertilisation surrounding the birth of Cú Chulainn lends him a supernatural element, with the possibility of having a god for a father, and elevates him above all other men of Ulster, yet none of this would have been possible without a fertile mother figure.

[23] Culligan and Cherici, *The Wandering Irish*, 21.
[24] For a detailed account of Cú Chulainn's birth see Jean Markale, *The Epics of Celtic Ireland*, 76-78.

Sigurd, featured in the Scandinavian *Völsungasaga* (*The Saga of the Volsungs*)[25] may not have had a mystery ridden birth such as Cú Chulainn and the story of his birth is narrated rather simply: "It is now said that Hjordis gave birth to a son"[26] but more detail is given concerning what might become of him "when [the king] saw the boy's piercing eyes (…) he said that none would be his like or equal."[27] Moreover, with his father Sigmund dead, Sigurd is raised at the court of King Hjalprek where he is treated with affection. Regin, the son of Hreidmar, becomes Sigurd's foster-father; and as a foster-father, Regin is charged with educating Sigurd. "He taught Sigurd sports, chess, and runes. Among many other things, he also taught Sigurd to speak in several tongues, as was the custom for a king's son."[28]

Here we gain insight to the initial education a boy of high rank would receive on his way in becoming a man. Though the age when his fosterage begins is uncertain, from other literary evidence, we may discern that this education began at a very early age. Beowulf, for instance, says: "At seven, I was fostered out by my father, / left in the charge of my people's lord. / King Hrethel kept me and took care of me, / was open-handed, behaved like a kinsman" (2428-2431); and we learn from Fergus concerning Cú Chulainn that "In his fifth year he went in quest of arms to the boy-troop in Emain Macha. In his seventh year he went to study the arts and crafts of war with Scáthach,[29] and courted Emer. In his eighth year he took up

[25] *The Saga of the Volsungs* shares many similar traits with the *Nibelungenlied*. Though the former is Icelandic and the latter Germanic, the similarities within these narratives indicate comparability of early northern European cultures. They were both written in the thirteenth century by anonymous poets, probably not more than 70 years apart, and both texts have been based on far earlier prose sagas and traditional heroic poetry. See Hatto's "Foreword" in the *Nibelungenlied*, 7; and Byock's "Introduction" in *The Saga of the Volsungs*, 1.

[26] "The Birth of Sigurd" in *The Saga of the Volsungs*, 55.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 56.

[29] Scáthach, and later Aífe, are the two famous supernatural women-warriors from whom Cú Chulainn receives his magical warrior training. These two women are not only rivals but they are also twin sisters who also fight for Cú Chulainn's love. Both offer the friendship of their thighs and Aífe gives birth to Cú Chulainn's son Connla whom Cú Chulainn later kills without the knowledge of their relation. For the high prestigious roles assigned to women in early Celtic Britain see Dillon and Chadwick, *The Celtic Realms*, 153.

arms."[30] From a historical point of view, Stephen Evans notes that fosterage was carried out among allied chiefdoms, or even within the same chiefdom and it involved "sending one's sons to the court of a friendly lord or kinsman, where they would be raised with other boys of similar age and taught the arts of warfare. They would reside at the court from the age of seven or eight until they reached fourteen or fifteen, when they would receive whatever weapons were appropriate to their status and subsequently enter military service."[31] But, more importantly, such a system would forge strong bonds of loyalty providing "the lord of a *comitatus* with a useful bridge to allied chieftains and lords, either because he was fostering their sons or because the boys he had fostered had grown up and become lords in their own right."[32] Another practical advantage of the fostering system was that it "provided the context and setting in which young boys were brought together and trained in the rigors and arts of warfare, and thus was an important source of future warriors for a warband. It is possible, especially for those boys belonging to the same kingdom or tribe, that the groups in which they were fostered provided a basis for some type of cohesive fighting unit when they became adults."[33] So, these boys were trained early on to become a part of the warrior class and those with an exceptional birth were singled out to become more than their comrades.

Nevertheless, passing from boyhood to manhood requires a certain transformative element where the youth, no longer a boy but not yet a man, must prove his readiness for adult responsibilities. Although it is possible to trace elements of this rite of passage motif inherently found in all cultures for all time, it nonetheless, becomes one of the key components in medieval literature as the boy faces some sort of beast and emerges from the bloody battle as a man. This transformation may be considered as a second birth, a rebirth into manhood, so to speak, especially when the body of the warrior is washed over with the blood of the beast, or when a part of the monster is consumed, as in the case of Sigurd/Siegfried. In the German

[30] *The Táin*, 75.
[31] Evans, *The Lords of Battle*, 118.
[32] Ibid., 119-120.
[33] Ibid., 120.

Lied vom Hürnen Seyfrid, Siegfried runs away from home and stays with a smith, whose anvil he smashes. The smith, hoping to get rid of him, sends Siegfried to the lair of a dragon which he slays and is made invulnerable after rubbing his body with the dragon's melted skin.[34] In the *Nibelungenlied*, Siegfried is recounted to have "slew a dragon and bathed in its blood, from which his skin grew horny so that no weapon will bite it."[35] Sigurd, in the *Saga of the Volsungs*, is taunted by his foster-father Regin to slay the dragon named Fafnir. Regin is also a metalworker, a blacksmith, who re-forges Sigurd's sword Gram[36] with which he is able to kill the dragon. Afterwards, Sigurd roasts Fafnir's heart and eats it gaining the power to comprehend the speech of birds.[37]

The account of Cú Chulainn's initiation, narrated through the personal memory of Fergus, is similar to that of Sigurd/Siegfried. According to the tale, Culann the Smith invites Conchobar to a feast to which Cú Chulainn is also invited. Yet, the boy is engaged in play and tells Conchobar that he will follow after his game is done. Now Conchobar arriving at the feast, forgets Cú Chulainn will later follow and informs the host that all have arrived, upon which Culann lets loose the savage hound that guards the cattle and land of Culann. When Cú Chulainn arrives, tossing a ball he was playing with, the hound tears towards him and springs forward. "Cúchulainn tossed the ball aside and the stick with it and tackled the hound with his two hands: he clutched the hound's throat-apple in one hand and grasped its back with the other. He smashed it against the nearest pillar and its limbs leaped from their sockets."[38] The dialogue that takes place between Culann the Smith and Cú Chulainn is as follows:

> "You are welcome, boy, for your mother's heart's sake. But for my own part I did badly to give this feast. My life is a waste, and my

[34] Recounted in Willem P. Gerritsen and Anthony G. van Melle, *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes*, 253.
[35] *Nibelungenlied*, 28.
[36] Gram is originally Sigmund's sword which he pulls out of the body of a tree, placed there by Odin. In battle, Odin breaks the sword which leads to the death of Sigmund, but Sigmund requests that the shards be kept safe till his son Sigurd would be able to re-forge the sword. Regin forges the sword and Sigurd tests it by cleaving Regin's anvil in half.
[37] *The Saga of the Volsungs*, 60-66.
[38] *The Táin*, 83.

> household like a desert, with the loss of my hound! He guarded my life and my honour," he said; "a valued servant, my hound, taken from me. He was shield and shelter for our goods and herds. He guarded all our beasts, at home or out in the fields."
>
> "That doesn't matter," the boy said. "I'll rear you a pup from the same pack. Until that hound grows up to do his work, I will be your hound, and guard yourself and your beasts. And I will guard all Murtheimne Plain. No herd or flock will leave my care unknown to me."
>
> "Cúchulainn shall be your name, the Hound of Culann," Cathbad said.
>
> "I like that for a name!" Cúchulainn said.
>
> 'What wonder that the man who did this at the end of his sixth year should do a great deed at the present time when he is full seventeen?' Conall Cernach said.[39]

Thus, with the killing of the hound of Culann, Cú Chulainn not only undergoes a rite of passage by demonstrating that his strength and courage are more than equal to any man but also as a result of this feat receives his name by which he will be known throughout the Irish landscape. The naming of the male may be considered a ritual in its own right as the birth name Sétanta, referring to the mythical son of Súaltam, is discarded and the name Cú Chulainn, the Hound of Culann, is worn. Since naming is a factor that enables differentiation of one entity from other physical bodies, the name of a person becomes the initial phase of identity construction within the memory of a social stratum. Thus Sétanta, literally born three times, is now metaphorically reborn as Cú Chulainn, the guardian of realms and beasts. Furthermore, Cú Chulainn's initiation, as Markale writes,

> takes place at the home of a blacksmith, a figure from the underground world and a master of the mysterious forces that animate the earth. Culann is one of the aspects of Hades, Hephaestus, Teutas. Moreover, he is described as possessing only his *hammer*, his *anvil*, his *fists*, and his *tongs*. We are reminded of the Germanic Thor and of Sucellos, the god of the mallet so often represented in Gallic statuary. His function as master of Hell is again demonstrated by the dog, in which we can recognise the Greek Cerberus. And when

[39] Ibid., 83-84.

> Cuchulainn kills the dog, he repeats the feat of Hercules—a hero with whom he shares many traits inherited from a primitive Indo-European mythology. He forces the gates of Hell and establishes himself there for a time as guardian, which is perfectly logical, given that he belongs to both worlds.[40]

Given the similarities between the Celtic, Nordic and Germanic texts, what has been said about Cú Chulainn more or less may be applied to Sigurd/Siegfried as he is also associated with a blacksmith figure and slays an otherworldly creature. Through a similar initiation these male bodies previously harboured within the feminine realm as boys now emerge as men only to become objects of desire under a controlling feminine gaze. In the end, following their heroic brothers of old, they too set off on a voyage to meet their deceased ancestors, as Lees so eloquently puts it, "the only good hero, after all, is a dead one."[41]

[40] Markale, *The Epics of Celtic Ireland*, 82.
[41] Lees, "Men and *Beowulf*," in *Medieval Masculinities*, 146.

7 Sons of Faith: Late Medieval Masculinities

In the later medieval period, with the gradual shift from a fate-based culture to a faith-based society, the virtues and values that established the identity of the male body also exhibited a shift and movement as the constructions of the various images of men previously imprinted on the memory of western culture received revised images. In this respect, Jacques Le Goff has noted that "the collective memory formed by the leading classes of society undergoes profound transformations in the Middle Ages. The essential change derives from the spread of Christianity as a religion and as a dominant ideology and from the quasi-monopoly the Church acquires in the intellectual domain."[1] Even though the formulation of masculine identity inherently corresponds to current cultural trends and dominant ideologies, similarities with past constructions inevitably exist. Since new images, in most cases, do not completely obliterate past images due to the tendency of overlapping between past and present, qualities and attributes from the past are inclined to seep forward to the present within literary narratives. Moreover, from a historical point of view, in terms of orality and literacy, "Changes in medieval modes of discourse," as Brian Stock points out, "often took place independently of, or in opposition to, real or perceived social forces; that is to say, texts that people enacted were independent with, but not functionally supportive of, the social material out of which they were constructed."[2] Hence, poetic constructions of manhood may be deemed as purely imaginative representations that do not essentially convey reality. Nevertheless, referring back to Redfield,

[1] Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 68.
[2] Stock, *Listening for the Text*, 35. See also Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 58-68.

some kind of a correlation must be persistent within the poetical narrative so as to enable the text to be comprehensible for the current audience.[3]

This intersection is exactly where the role of memory formation and manipulation takes place: the textual space acting as the architectural mnemonic with the images of men being exactly that, images. Images that are collected, re-collected and re-inscribed within a space from whence new compositions may be fathomed and in turn this created space allows for a reintegration, re-ordering and dissemination of the images archived within cultural memory. The image moves from present to past, becoming memory, and from past to future, transforming into an aspiring, universal ideal.

The classical ideals of manhood had emphasised courage, fame, and fate with the early medieval hero more or less following the same code with slight variations; yet the chivalric code that governed the ideal male under knighthood displayed disparity as faith replaced fate coupled with spiritual strength along with the addition of courtesy. Thus, the variables administered into society through the lens of Christianity cannot be dismissed as religion, and the values and virtues it introduces, becomes an almost inseparable element of identity formation within the era under discussion. Although the influence of Christianity significantly alters the image of men with physical strength and courage becoming hardiness or prowess, they are still signifiers that accentuate traits related with valour and bravery; albeit modified. Then again, the transference from fate to faith stresses the inner man in terms of spirituality which was absent from previous formations. The sense of prowess was in fact closely tied to faith as knighthood was perceived as service to God and knights "could fulfill religious obligations without abandoning the masculine ideal of prowess."[4] Moreover, from the eleventh century on, crusading "provided knights with the opportunity to demonstrate their chivalric prowess while fighting for God."[5] So, religion was indeed a significant part of knighthood.

[3] Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, 79.
[4] Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 42.
[5] Ibid., 43.

The chivalric code thus defines an emerging model of masculinity shaped by the growing influence of the Church, especially in terms of spiritual strength overcoming that of strictly physical power. However, in the late Middle Ages, a problematic situation arises as there was not a single image that embraced all of the chivalric ideals, but many. At this point, a junction presents itself as the image of knighthood experiences a tripartite splintering. "Some scholars suggest," says Ruth Mazo Karras, "that in the later Middle Ages there were distinct models of knighthood, one embodying the virtues of skills in arms, bravery, and loyalty, one piety, chastity, and humility, and one love and courtly accomplishment."[6] Thus, knighthood correlated to at least three distinct images; the warrior, the quester, and the lover. Nevertheless, as Karras emphasises "Although not all knights described in literature or biography exemplify exactly the same values and not all treatises on knighthood have exactly the same emphases, the sets of virtues in fact overlap."[7] This problematic introduced by the overlapping of images may be solved under spatiality within the realm of the literary narrative. As the narrative space harbouring images of men include diverse elements, so the image shifts in order to accord and accommodate the newly added element. To put it more plainly, different settings necessitate and generate different modes of masculinities. Hence, an acute sense of a correlation is constructed as the images become fused within the narrative space.

The three modes of varying, yet overlapping, images of knighthood observable within literary narratives inherently emerge out of a certain necessity in tune with both spatial factors and the presence of other contending male bodies. The warrior aspect of knighthood seen in the *Song of Roland*, the quester found in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the lover/husband depicted in *Sir Orfeo* are all examples of masculinities that are harmoniously woven into the fabric of the poetic narrative in terms of space and neighbouring images. As the fluidity of masculinities respond to their surroundings, Roland asserts his manhood against other men in a

[6] Ibid., 24; See also Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, 82-83; Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, 183; Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization*, 93-95; Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*.
[7] Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 24.

social context, Gawain sets on a quest to prove his maleness not only to others but also to himself and Orfeo transcends boundaries by moving between this world and the otherworld in a mythocultural setting.

Roland the Warrior

The twelfth-century French epic *Song of Roland*, similar to the *Beowulf* text, constructs an exclusively male world specifically focusing on a certain group of men within a close-knit feudal structure. The rigidity of this structure when compared with reality, as Auerbach notes, represents "only a narrow portion of objective life circumscribed by distance in time, simplification of perspective, and class limitations."[8] Yet, Cohen and Wheeler have suggested that "In literature as in life, masculinity is revealed and released through differing symbols and actions."

> In *La Chanson de Roland*, for example, Charlemagne expresses his physical prowess when he assuages his grief for Roland by wreaking vengeance on cultural/religious "others," but Charlemagne himself often lacks control of events or decisions. His masculinity is most often symbolized by his silent stroking of his long beard, a code that poignantly renders masculinity as the quiet (when not passive) endurance of life's complex pain. But his is not the only manifestation of masculinity privileged in *Le Chanson*. The masculine performance of *fiers* (fear-inspiring as well as powerful) Roland is summarized in his refusal to sound Olifant. Roland's extremity—admittedly dangerous, violent, and verging on monstrosity—marks one endpoint of masculine display.[9]

Roland's "masculine display" is actually in tune with the violent reality of the Crusades that made this *chanson de geste* possible, even if it is laced with an idealised form of knighthood. Moreover, the text itself holds images of flawed masculine characters such as that found in Ganelon,

[8] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 121.
[9] Cohen and Wheeler, "Becoming and Unbecoming," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, edited by Cohen and Wheeler, xvi.

Roland's step-father, who treacherously betrays his liege Charlemagne and initiates the action that results in Roland's death.

The feudal system, similar to the *comitatus*, advocates fealty and homage between lord and vassal. Charlemagne being the leader of all the Franks requires his vassals to be committed to him "in honour and in all [their] goods,"[10] "in love and faith" (6.86). "For his lord a vassal must suffer hardships," (79.1010), and they must not fail him (30.397; 82.1048). In return, the lord must protect them (140.1864) and avenge them (14.213). Thus, under the chivalric code, the type of masculinity regarded to be ideal is one that promotes prowess in battle, loyalty to feudal chief and wisdom. It is the element of wisdom, and prudence derived from wisdom that Roland lacks leading to his inevitable demise.

Roland is defined as "arrogant" (15.228) by Ganelon, with a temperament that "is most hostile and fierce" (18.256) by his companion Oliver. Nevertheless, Roland's acute commitment to feudal principles is clearly stated in laisse 79 just before the climactic battle scene between Charlemagne's rearguard and the Saracen army:

> For his lord a vassal must suffer hardships
> And endure great heat and great cold;
> And he must lose both hair and hide.
> Now let each man take care to strike great blows,
> So that no one can sing a shameful song about us.
> The pagans are wrong and the Christians are right.
> No dishonourable tale will ever be told about me. (79.1010-1016)

Even though Roland fights for his liege as a true vassal should, his own words hint at a concern for his own honour that seems to overwhelm his bond to Charlemagne. Thus, the internal representation of Roland's manhood seems to be in conflict with the external values posited by the feudal structure which require Roland to abstain from personal glory. A similar instance may be found at the beginning of the *chanson* in three consecutive laisses where Ganelon names Roland to lead the rearguard.

[10] *Song of Roland*, 3.39, translated by Glyn Burgess, herewith cited within the text with laisse and line number.

Laisses 59 through 61, slowly reveal Roland's assertive pride, his fuming hatred for Ganelon and a feebler sense of service to Charlemagne. Having been appointed to the rearguard, Roland is left without a choice and must accept the appointment as duty deems fit. Rejecting such a dangerous task would only label him with cowardice and that would go against everything the chivalric code stood for.

Moreover, by favouring self over liege, Roland is also transgressing religious boundaries since Charlemagne is deemed to be the representative of God on earth. In laisses 80 through 82, Roland's companion Oliver sees the approaching Saracen army and immediately urges Roland to blow his horn (83.1051) as "Charles will hear it and the army will turn back" (83.1051). To which Roland replies "That would be an act of folly; / Throughout the fair land of France I should lose my good name" (83.1053-1054). The same message and a similar reply are repeated in laisses 84 and 85. The arrogance Roland displays and the foolhardy assurance he has in his prowess are both qualities that enforce internal representations of manhood onto the external sphere. How he will be viewed and weighed by other men gains importance. Yet Oliver attempting to lay to rest Roland's fears says he sees no blame in sounding the horn as the army they are up against is vast compared to their small Frankish force (86.1082-1087). The two distinct viewpoints, one embodied in Roland and the other in Oliver, are explained in the next laisse: "Roland is brave and Oliver is wise; / Both are marvellous vassals" (87.1093-1095). Although Roland's valour and Oliver's wisdom are emphasised, the ideal would be the combination of both traits. Hence, Roland's recklessness in not sounding Oliphant and causing the annihilation of the rearguard is condemned as "the Church rejects the heroic ideal that seeks exclusively personal honour and sets in its place a hero who fights for God and uses his head."[11] So Roland's act of hubris leads to his tragic downfall.

[11] Gerritsen and van Melle, *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes*, 235.

Gawain the Quester

Leaving behind a landscape of pure masculinity, and moving towards one that embraces femininity, the two fourteenth-century romances *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Orfeo* present examples of knights that embody many of the virtues previously mentioned. The distinct variation of these men from Roland is the lack of a fierce, warrior aspect previously emphasised in epic narratives; yet as the structure of the text becomes modified, so must the images of men or vice versa. The presence of the female body, with the emphasis on love, obviously necessitates a shift from a male dominant society to a culture that at least acknowledges the existence of femininity. Though this shift has been seen as being one of genre and not of gender,[12] it is possible to argue the opposite, that the emerging female body within literary narratives required a new platform which eventually was realised in romances. Ironically, it is this feminine presence in literary narratives that prevents medieval masculinity into becoming a repetitive cycle of similar stories based solely on martial efforts. With the inclusion of the female, whether as agent or object, the men are given space to express different aspects of identity formation such as courtesy and even sexuality with emotions woven with both physical and spiritual *eros*. Eventually "she" becomes the goal to which the path leads.

Sir Gawain, interestingly, binds strands of the epic tradition within romance. The first stanza plays on the cultural memory of the audience by invoking scenes from the Trojan War: "When the siege and the assault had ceased at / Troy, and the fortress fell in flame to firebrands / and ashes."[13] From the ruins of Troy, the path followed by Aeneas and his descendants is described all the way to the founding of Britain. "And when fair Britain was founded by this famous lord, / bold men were bred there who in battle rejoiced, / and many a time that betid they troubles aroused" (1.2). The initial setting that brings in the epic tradition tying the threads with "bold

[12] Kinney, "The (Dis)Embodied Hero and the Signs of Manhood in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in Lees *Medieval Masculinities*, 49.

[13] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, (1.1), translated by J. R. R. Tolkien. Further citations from the poem are noted parenthetically by fitt and stanza numbering as edited by Tolkien.

men" who rejoiced in battle invokes a historical past and as we enter Arthur's domain the shift to romance is complete.

The time is Christmas, a time for "merriment unmatched and mirth without care" (1.3); yet the New Year's feast is abruptly interrupted as the Green Knight appears as:

> the mightiest on middle-earth in measure of height,
> from his gorge to his girdle so great and so square,
> and his loins and his limbs so strong and so huge,
> that half a troll upon earth I trow that he was,
> but the largest man alive at least I declare him;
> and yet the seemliest for his size that could sit on a horse,
> for though in back and in breast his body was grim,
> both his paunch and his waist were properly slight,
> and all his features followed his fashion so gay in mode. (1.7)

This initial construction of manhood has been called "emphatically essentialist,"[14] as the Gawain-poet defines the Green Knight as having a seemly well-proportionate body. So as much as he is troll-like, he is also a man who rests his gaze on Arthur's knights and sees only "beardless children" who are deemed feeble in might (1.13)[15] and invites them to a beheading game to prove their manhood through physical strength. Gawain tactfully winds up accepting the challenge and also becomes the defender of Arthurian manhood. Since the challenge is to deliver a blow and later receive a blow in return, Gawain beheads the Green Knight with one strike of the axe. In this instance, the Green Knight acts as a "catalyst to the formation of an adult identity"[16] by challenging the manhood of the Arthurian court through the beheading game. Decapitating the giant, functions "as a rite of passage, inextricably linking the defeat of the monster to a political, sexual, social coming of age."[17] Yet, Robert Mills

[14] Kinney, "The (Dis)Embodied Hero and the Signs of Manhood in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in Lees *Medieval Masculinities*, 48.
[15] Here it should be noted that unlike Grendel, the Green Knight has a voice. Even though he is identified as being a giant, "etayn" in Middle English, he also has features that constitute his being a man besides his "manly" physical appearance.
[16] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 144.
[17] Ibid., 66.

wonders, what if this topos were to be inverted? What if the monster were to decapitate the hero instead? Since the "head, as a symbol, commonly connotes authority, rationality, vision and speech (…) [the removal of the head] signalled abdication from worldly power—in other words, castration."[18] So, the beheading game in *Sir Gawain* becomes a game that literally and metaphorically unmans the opponent.

Besides beheading, the other trope that tests Arthurian manhood becomes that of temptation introduced through the presence of female bodies. "The prominent position of women in the story suggests that the relations among gender, sexuality, chivalry, and courtly behavior are being scrutinized, plumbed for their potential ambiguity: how are kissing games like beheading games?"[19] Yet, as Cohen points out, "the beheading game *is* a kissing game" [20] The beheading game that brought Gawain to the abode of Bertilak is no different than the kissing game the lady of the house initiates at her husband's behest. Lady Bertilak acts as the agent that tempts to strip Gawain of his "Christian chivalric identity."[21]

Before he had begun his quest, Gawain's ceremonious preparations for the journey were described elaborately and all of these descriptions were wound around what he wore, from garment to armour to equipment—the pentangle on his shield being one of the most prominent depictions.[22] The intimate detail of Gawain's outer garb functions as his public identity from which he is gradually stripped once he reaches his destination. The temptation scenes that take place in the bedroom portray an aggressive female figure that tests the manly ideals Gawain stands for and the hunting scenes interlaced within the text mirror the bedroom scenes. It is in the bedroom where Gawain is hunted and caught between his own troth and the oath he gave to his host to exchange winnings over the next three days. David Lampe, based on manuscript illuminations and medieval

[18] Mills, "Whatever you do is a Delight to me!" 16, in *Exemplaria* 13.1.
[19] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 146.
[20] Ibid, 147.
[21] Ibid, 147.
[22] The pentangle, also called the Endless Knot, is a symbol for troth and the five points, interconnected by five lines, signify Gawain being "devoid of every vice and with virtues adorned" (2.27). The pentangle also represents Gawain's character as free-giving, friendly, chaste, chivalric, and pious (2.28).

conventions, has pointed out that Gawain would most probably be sleeping in the nude[23] and according to Robert Mills' analysis:

> Un-manning (or even "feminization") is also achieved through rituals of humiliating exposure. Male nakedness, in the context of courtly literature, represents a rite of passage from one state of subjectivity to another. The masculine nude denotes exile from a world of laws and authority, a site of rupture and disorder. The abandonment of clothing corresponds to the loss of social marks of identity, and, in romance, may signal the disappearance of chivalrous values.[24]

Therefore, the bedroom scenes, concurrent with the hunting scenes, not only act as a type of rite of passage but also work as a re-construction of Gawain's masculine identity. Yet, the ultimate testing of Gawain occurs when he finally faces the Green Knight. By accepting the green girdle from Lady Bertilak on the third day of temptation, Gawain gives in not to sex but to his instinct for survival. Cohen notes that Gawain believes "the beheading game tests something essential (he takes what one *has* to be what one *is*), rather than constructed (masculinity as a set of culturally determined and potentially transmutable behaviors, rather than an invariable, "natural" given)."[25] Moreover, "Romance assumes that gender is not simply genetic, that masculinity is adoptable, performable, transmutable. Gawain thinks that he is guarding his difference, but his choice is made at the risk of losing his differentiating behavior."[26] Yet, as Cohen has demonstrated, the third day is when Gawain regains feminine garments, where he is "clad in a blue cloak that came to the ground; / his surcoat well beseemed him with its soft lining, / and its hood of like hue that hung on his shoulder: / all fringed with white fur very finely were both" (3.77). Thus dressed in the garments of another gender, standing among the women, "It would seem that no orthodox sequel is possible to

[23] Lampe, "Sex Roles and the Role of Sex in Medieval English Literature," 415, in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, edited by Bullough and Brundage.
[24] Mills, "Whatever you do is a Delight to me!" 11-12, in *Exemplaria* 13.1.
[25] Cohen, *Of Giants*, 148.
[26] Ibid., 148-149.

this dangerous episode besides the formal adoption of straight masculinity, publicly and for all time."[27]

The beheading game, nevertheless, takes place not in the public sphere but in a remote area where there is only Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. As the axe is lowered thrice on Gawain, one for each day of temptation, he must learn not to flinch, not to resist "the proper adoption of the Christian chivalric code that passes for an adult male identity."[28] The graze he receives on the neck is considered to be a symbolic wound that is essential to the rite of passage; this wound "signifies his mastery of his proper gender, as well as mastery over its abjected other."[29] Through the shedding of symbolic blood Gawain is initiated into manhood by the Green Knight. Or so it would seem. Since it was initially Morgana's plan to test Camelot's manhood, Arthur's specifically, she was the agent behind the whole New Year's game. With this information revealed, Bertilak himself becomes unmanned as he is reduced to being only a servant to Morgana. Thus, the two female figures both old (Morgana) and young (Lady Bertilak) become the power of agency that diminishes, tests, and bestows masculine identity to the male bodies within the narrative.

All things considered, in line with the chivalric code, Gawain selflessly took on the Green Knight's challenge; but later his obligation to himself—as one who has given his word—takes precedence as he chooses to seek out the challenger to prove his manliness both to self and to the Arthurian court. Throughout the narrative, external and internal representations of self collide and it is at the end of the story where the deep ravine between these two representations is seen most clearly. Returning to Camelot thinking himself less of a man, Gawain finds a court that is still in its youth and as he relates his ordeal he is met with laughter and merriment. The object that marks his initiation into manhood, the green girdle, is taken as an image that reminds the court of Gawain's bravery but at the same time it acts as a memento for Gawain reminding him of cowardice. Thus, through the same image internal and external constructions of varying forms of

[27] Ibid., 149.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

masculinity are made possible. Moreover, it is the quester in the end who has matured rather than the stable bodies sitting at court.

Orfeo the Lover

The roots of *Sir Orfeo* spread downwards back in time to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Hearkening back to tales of old, the first lines of the poem direct the audience to a past that was "read and written," "as learned men do us remind," about harpers and the marvels brought to us through lays (1-4).[30] The pastness of the lay moves from a mythic time to an almost recent past and presentness is only found in the direct speech of the characters. With these loose mythic ties along with the elements found in tales of faerie, *Sir Orfeo* creates a unique mythocultural connection where a Greco-Roman tale and the Celtic faerie stories are fused, generating a timeless representation of masculinity.

The type of knighthood displayed in *Sir Orfeo* differs from previous constructions as Sir Orfeo, in tune with an aspect of the chivalric code, becomes the ideal romanticised knight that serves his lady rather than a divine being. For Sir Orfeo, loving his wife *is* loving the divine. Even though it would seem he was betraying the chain of being by being anchored to love temporal (love for a mortal) rather than devoted to love eternal (love of God), Lady Heurodis becomes Orfeo's Beatrice as she represents life itself. Moreover, Sir Orfeo is more than a knight for he is depicted as "a king of old, / in England lordship high did hold; / valour he had and hardihood, / a courteous king whose gifts were good" (25-28). Gift-giving, hardiness and valour are all expected cultural aspects of medieval masculinity and the element of courtesy is seen frequently within the romance genre.

What is more, the lineage of Orfeo is traceable to ancient times as "His father from King Pluto came, / his mother from Juno" (29-30). By linking Orfeo's line to Roman divinities, the narrative also depicts Orfeo as one that contains certain properties that would enable him to transgress

[30] All quotations from *Sir Orfeo* refer to line numbers and are taken from the text translated by J. R. R. Tolkien and edited by Christopher Tolkien in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl* and *Sir Orfeo*.

boundaries, moving between realms. The Orpheus link may be initially established through the mention of Pluto but it is the presence of the harp that solidifies the connection. Rather than don a sword, Orfeo is depicted as being fond "of harping's sweet delight" (34); "himself he loved to touch the harp / and pluck the strings with fingers sharp. / He played so well, beneath the sun / a better harper was there none" (37-40).

As much as Orfeo's descriptive properties are related with chivalric characteristics, lineage and his proficiency with the harp rather than his physical appearance, Lady Heurodis is depicted as being "of the ladies then the one most fair / who ever flesh and blood did wear; / in her did grace and goodness dwell, but none of loveliness can tell" (53-56). Thus, the lover remains disembodied whereas the loved one is given a tangible physical presence. With the focus more on abilities and the soul rather than body, the male figure inherits a certain softness and tenderness that invites the feminine element instead of alienating her as he had done before. From another perspective, the non-physicality of the male body becomes almost an empty template which is written on through the feminine presence/absence as the narrative enfolds. Even though the outlining elements that formulate the core remain, the male body of the lover functions as a fluid entity which is constantly being physically overwritten through its relationship with its feminine counterpart.

The Orpheus-Eurydice myth may be prevalent, yet it is also possible to trace a slight remnant of the Pluto-Proserpina myth as well. Heurodis is depicted with her maidens in the bloom of May to be strolling about the countryside "to see the flowers there spread and spring / and hear the birds on branches sing" (67-68) when they decide to sit "beneath a fair young grafted tree" (70) and under the shade of this tree the queen falls asleep and begins dreaming. Once she awakens as if from a nightmare, "she writhed with limb, her hands she wrung, / she tore her face till blood there sprung, / her raiment rich in pieces rent; / thus sudden out of mind she went" (79-82). In her dream she is approached by two noble knights who bid her to come and meet their lord and king to whom she declines and is then approached by the king himself along with his entourage who take Heurodis against her will to the palace of the king in the land of faerie, to a dwelling that is fair and wondrous. Yet, unlike Proserpina, Heurodis is

brought back to the grafted tree with a warning/promise that they will come back for her the following day to take her away to their land for evermore (131-174).

It is against the threat of losing Heurodis that initiates a profound change in Orfeo; previously donned with a harp, he now arms himself with weapons as he imagines he will defeat this particular foe by displaying properties relevant with the image of the warrior. He could not have been more mistaken. Orfeo, amidst his "full ten hundred knights" (183) still manages to have the queen "sudden snatched away; / by magic was she from them caught, / and none knew whither she was brought" (192-194). Thus having lost his love and life, Orfeo sheds the layers of his constructed identity as he no longer deems himself to be either king or warrior. Leaving his kingdom in the hands of his steward he declares: "Into the wilderness I will flee, / and there will live for evermore / with the wild beasts in forests hoar" (212-214). Heurodis acts more as object rather than agent in this narrative as the female body becomes, in a sense, the ultimate boon to which the two masculine figures—the Faerie King and Sir Orfeo—seek to acquire. It is possible to consider Heurodis as the body through which manhood is imprinted. Thus having lost her, Orfeo relinquishes all forms of constructed masculinity tied to his social identity through status by physically removing himself from the body politic and moving into the wilderness beyond. Moreover, by physically removing the clothing that identifies him within the social milieu, Orfeo is also symbolically castrating himself; as he was socially emasculated so must the garments he wears be shed.

> Now all his kingdom he forsook.
> Only a beggar's cloak he took;
> he had no kirtle and no hood,
> no shirt, nor other raiment good.
> His harp yet bore he even so,
> and barefoot from the gate did go. (227-232)

For ten long years (264) Orfeo wandered as a hermit in the wilderness beyond which is highly reminiscent of a type of pilgrimage though there is no destination. Having shunned society and stripped himself of all manly

attributes he lives in solitude until one day he sees "the king of Faërie with his rout / came hunting in the woods about" (283-284). Soon after he would see the faerie ladies "riding a-hawking by river-shore" (308) and among them was his wife:

> Intent he gazed, and so did she,
> but no word spake; no word said he.
> For hardship that she saw him bear,
> who had been royal, and high, and fair,
> then from her eyes the tears there fell.
> The other ladies marked it well,
> and away they made her swiftly ride;
> no longer might she near him bide. (324-330)
> …
> Right into a rock the ladies rode,
> and in behind he fearless strode. (347-348)

By crossing the threshold, Orfeo reaches the abode where he must prove his worthiness in order to regain what he had lost. The otherworld to which he has transported himself may seem to resemble a kind of paradise yet the following lines create a fracture as they depict scenes one may encounter once they reach Pluto's realm:

> Then he began to gaze about,
> and saw within the walls a rout
> of folk that were thither drawn below,
> and mourned as dead, but were not so.
> For some there stood who had no head,
> and some no arms, nor feet; some bled
> and through their bodies wounds were set,
> and some were strangled as they ate,
> and some lay raving, chained and bound,
> and some in water had been drowned;
> and some were withered in the fire,
> and some on horse, in war's attire,
> and wives there lay in their childbed,
> and mad were some, and some were dead. (387-400)

Passing these mutilated, pain bearing bodies, Orfeo reaches the throne room where the faerie king and queen create a sharp contrast to the previous scene. Having wilfully walked into the belly of the beast Orfeo proposes to exhibit his minstrel's skill, similar to Orpheus' quest for his fair Eurydice. Soon after his semi-divine performance the king says "Come, ask of me whate'er it be, / and rich reward I will thee pay" (450-451) to which he replies "I beg of thee / that this thing thou wouldst give to me, / that very lady fair to see / who sleeps beneath the grafted tree" (453-456). Refusing to let Heurodis go, Orfeo gently reminds the king of the vow he has given proclaiming that it would be a foul thing for one of his stature to lie by not keeping the promise he made. Reluctantly the king tells him to "now take her hand in thine, and go" (470). Keeping one's word or not breaking one's vow is a recurrent theme in the formulation of masculinity. But it is the mythocultural setting of this poem that equates manhood with transcending borders and constructing maleness in tune with the feminine. Hence, after regaining the object of his love, they return to their own kingdom where the initial constructions of gender and identity are once again restored.

All in all, the above examples of manhood acquired from literary texts varying from antiquity to the late Middle Ages have shown how male bodies could act as images of projected self, of societal roles that construct masculinity within cultural memory and/or reflect current societal manifestations. The body thus acts as an active image and the architectural mnemonic becomes equated with poetic narratives that operate as the background, the loci onto where these active images are placed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyse how various images of men have been remembered and transmitted within poetical imagination from the classical period to the medieval era. This study has shown the ways in which the male body, as an image, has been shaped and reshaped, adapted and perceived throughout some of the major poetic works of western literary history. Yet, as we have seen, there is no singular image that defines the word "men." These men have either been deemed heroic or damned for cowardice; defined as steadfast or disloyal; classified as idealised, betrayed, proven unworthy, or understood as simply being "just" a man. So when one speaks of the word "man" the image conjured within the mind never suggests simply being a man but almost always incorporates some form of comparison or deduction. In other words, the male body is perceived through other determinants such as, physicality, virility, lineage, profession, social position, and so forth. He never really is "just" a man, even when considered to be so; for when we say he is just a man, we are usually deducing what he lacks from the expected idealised image of what a "man" should be. Even in this instance a comparison is being made. But by whom? And, in comparison to what? This is where the perceiver of the male body gains agency. It is through past experiences, present assumptions, and future expectations of the perceiver wherein the image of the male is defined. In this respect, the memory of the perceiver takes precedence, whether it be oneself or others.

Yet, when speaking of memory, that great power of profound and infinite multiplicity, it has been surmised that the basic building block in any shape or form hinges specifically on the image. The ancient Greeks were concerned with the formation of the image whilst the Romans systematically offered opinions as to how images could effectively activate

re-collection. The medievals, however, perceived the memory image through the inner gaze and emphasised that the memory image carried with it its intended meaning, and emotions. Perceiving and comprehending the image united Mnemosyne and Metis as the complementary concepts of memory and wisdom ensured the core of human knowledge and understanding. Mnemosyne's offspring, the nine muses, constituted collective memory, establishing the cultural foundation of a society. Thus, the poet, according to the ancients, as one "speaking" through images and relating matters pertaining to society, was considered to be one who preserved the memory of a culture. Poetry, in this sense, became the natural medium where cultural memory was stored and transmitted to future generations. Dubbing the poet as both "preserver" and "maker" of culture, images produced within poetical imagination were inscribed on and transmitted through literary memory.

Although this linear progression of the memory image was traced from its philosophical, rhetorical, and ethical origins to its poetical roots, a homogeneous model was needed to comprehend how the male image was formed, retained, and perceived within memory. Here, it was not possible to consider the image of man under a single form of memory, for the bodily image accumulates differing meanings through fluctuating layers of memory identified as internal, external and mythocultural memory. Under these three interrelated forms, however, the image of man as a constructed entity has been determined to be definable primarily through the gaze, through the perception of the image. Thus, internal memory defined the body and its referents through the inner gaze, external memory through the outer gaze, and mythocultural memory through an omnipotent gaze that hearkened back to ancient myths and legends. The theory of memory with its various strands handling the philosophical formation, rhetorical retention, and prudential recollection of the memory image proved to be essential in comprehending the bodily image of man and his fluid masculinities.

The memory of western European culture has long aided and abetted in the erection and composition of definitions concerning men and their masculinities. One of the most prominent of these designations etched into the hive-like mind of western culture was that man was created in the

image of God, and as a reverberation of this initial template, sons too were begotten in the image of their own fathers. The bodily image thus perceived within the grand narrative flowed into cultural perception where the bodies of men were compared and contrasted with that of their forefathers. It is, of course, equally arguable that the cultural perception of man was reflected in poetical expression as the pagan gods were imagined to be in human form. Nevertheless, on a linguistic level, in the Greco-Roman world, the word "man" itself carried with it the definitions constituting what man was or should be. The Latin word *vir*, for example meant "man and/or husband" but it also meant "hero." As for its cognates, *virilis* stood for "manly" and *virtus* meant "manliness; courage, valour; virtue." Likewise, the Greek word ἀνήρ [aner] also meant "man, husband" and its cognates ἀνδρειος [andreios] meant "manly, brave;" and ἀνδρεία [andreia] was "manliness, courage."

In a sense, the Greco-Roman world engraved the definition of man upon the cultural memory of Western Europe within the very fabric of language by linguistically linking men to their masculinities. Thus, the classical period bred a race of god-like men to which the western world has ever since looked upon with admiration and awe. These heroic men such as Achilles, Hector, Odysseus, Aeneas and so forth have in a way laid out a template to which manhood and true maleness would be forever measured against. Briefly turning our backs to the warm Aegean sun and gazing upon the much harsher and colder Northern climate, we will again encounter a strand of men much similar to that of his kindred kind. Among the Beowulf's and Siegfried's of the north a further emphasis of what maleness was all about had also been laid bare as we have strength spurting from sinews, muscles besting evil creatures on the one hand and a family name, lineage, or personal honour to uphold on the other. Yet even though these men seem to be sculpted David's they are not gods but only god-like. To differentiate them from the divinities, they were inherently flawed. Ironically, the northern and southern gods were not perfect in themselves either; yet it was the men that resembled them who were punished for their imperfections. The imperfections, or hamartia, crafted into their characters generally took the shape of hubris which gradually brought about their inevitable downfall, cascading in a downwards spiral.

Moving forward in time, we may consider these heroic men of old to be precursors to the archetypal male notoriously known as the knight-in-shining-armour. Instead of defining maleness through heroic deeds, tactical prowess and the strength of the arm, these men were to be scrutinized according to their level of love: love of a lady, love of king, love of God. Though these romantic men may be viewed as a wilted down form of previous men, as they have a much softer demeanour possibly tempered by femininity, they "become" through serving the lady rather than the Maker. As the bud of "love temporal" implanted within them reaches full bloom, their manly strength seems to wither away. One of the greatest and infamous examples of such great earthly devotion lies in the very breast of Lancelot who forsook the love of his king and buried himself in the bosom of Guinevere. The romantic male became one full of conflicts with warring emotions, emotions that wreaked havoc and waged war with his ultimate self. Another type of male is the Christian knight that has devoted body and soul to "love eternal". Yet even they have their imperfections as the weight they carry on their shoulders increases, so they tend to err and act rashly without actually thinking it through. Such an example may be found in the *Chanson de Roland* where Roland's conflict of sounding or not sounding the Oliphant creates a ravine where loyalty to king and loyalty to self contradict one another. Likewise, his hamartia is also hubris. These men are an example of the ever-shifting definition of what manhood was, and in some ways still is.

These representations of socially and ideologically constructed men and their masculinities found an abode in poetical expressions. The prominent literary works of the classical and early medieval periods emphasised the warrior-hero governed by fate where strength, lineage and personal honour were deemed significant in the perception of the male image. And it was a culmination of these properties that would enable the hero to attain ever-lasting fame, which was generally the motivating force behind the actions of these idealised men, such as the Homeric and Virgilian heroes as well as the pre-Christian European heroes. These men were expected to possess extreme physical strength and endurance whilst embodying moral qualities such as fearlessness and determination. Their abilities were pompously displayed while fighting enemies of one sort or

another. The men of this period belonged to a more or less masculine world where men perceived themselves and were perceived by others in relation to both internal and external forms of memory. The poetical imagination of the later medieval era, on the other hand, with its movement from a fate-based to a faith-based culture separated Venus from Mars and defined maleness not according to how much the male loved war but how well he loved his lady, his king, his God. If this male body was to be inserted into combat, then he would do so not for personal gain but for his liege and Lord. The emergence of knighthood as revision of the earlier warrior-hero, harboured close ties with faith and religion. Chivalry defines an emerging model of masculinity shaped by the growing influence of the Church, especially in terms of spiritual strength overcoming that of strictly physical power. Being male in the ages prior to Christianity seems to have been much simpler and the rich imagery of early medieval literature suggests that manhood was praised by heroic deeds, yet with the spreading of Christianity the male body which was previously empowered through courage, honour, and valour were now replaced, therefore metaphorically castrated, by humility, piety, and humbleness, in a way supplanted by the greatness of the body of Christ. The images of these men and their masculinities, however, seem to defy solid categorisations as the more they are scrutinized the more they become fluid and slippery. Yet these images of men still offer the possibility of ascribing some form of masculinities not only through their external representations by others but also through their internal representations of self within the stories they tell.

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Memory & Men

From Antiquity to the Middle Ages

The present study analyses the memory image or rather the narrative construction of masculinity within canonical literary texts ranging from the classical to the late medieval period. By considering the attitude and treatment of men and their various masculinities within poetical imagination, this study also endeavours to embrace the concept of cultural memory, namely literary memory as it is, in of itself, a part of cultural heritage. Through a background of extensive discussions which have separately been made regarding both masculinity and memory in classical and medieval narratives, this analysis attempts to unite these two distinctive areas of study by specifically exploring the ways in which the male body has been shaped and reshaped within the realm of cultural memory. This undertaking draws on and hopes to contribute to the current literature in memory, gender, classical, and medieval studies by analysing the perception of the male body and the definitions that (pre)conceived forms of masculinities have come to inherit within the poetical imagination of western culture.

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