

The granddaughter-illustrator:
using Edith Stein's philosophy of empathy
as a methodological framework for
postmemorial visual practice

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requirements of UAL at Falmouth University for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I, Louise Bell, declare that the enclosed submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, consisting of a written thesis, meets the regulations stated in the UAL handbook for the mode of submission selected and approved by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee of Falmouth University.

I declare that this submission is my own work and has not been submitted for any other academic award. The use of all materials from sources other than my own work has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Abstract

This thesis presents illustration as a practice capable of enacting and articulating twentieth century philosopher Edith Stein's phenomenological paradigm of empathy. I refer to Stein's published doctoral thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917) as a theoretical framework to compliment and substantiate my illustration research practice, which I position within Marianne Hirsch's term of 'postmemory'.

Postmemory work is characterised by the desire to fill in gaps (in memory, in archives) and the impossibility of this completion. Silence, absence, and emptiness are always already present and often central to postmemory. The creative practices used within this PhD are tools in an attempt to reveal a past place through a familial connection. However, this estimation will always be both authorial and perforated as the trauma of the Blitz and the insurmountable distance of time form a rupture that cannot be bridged. As an illustrator-researcher, I employ illustration as a connective practice to produce affiliation with people and places of the past. The methodology used is site-responsive, multidisciplinary and qualitative.

This research explores a different approach to writing about the past through the use of illustration to open space for other, affective ways of knowing. I present illustration as an arts practice consisting of walking, drawing, recording, artefact making and writing. Not only will this thesis contribute to the relatively young field of critical illustration writing, but it positions illustration as an empathic arts practice through its ability to incite emotional or embodied understanding by way of its production. This study furthers research initiated by Hirsch and situates Plymouth as a Blitzed city suitable for postmemory research to be extended by those attempting to examine their own inherited place-based histories.

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Introduction

My maternal grandfather lived in Plymouth for the first eighteen years of his life but when war was declared in 1939, he was conscripted to the RAF as an engineer. One story of that time is that on his first visit home, he walked alone around the city to witness the damage inflicted by the bombing; afterwards, he could or would not discuss what he had seen. One document that records the impact of the Blitz on the city is the Plymouth Bomb Book held at The Box; this book of dated maps illustrates each of the fifty-nine air raids with red dots to signify where damage ensued. The perforation of red dots quietly and systematically articulates the events that generated the damage my grandfather witnessed but could not speak.

My grandfather's inability or refusal to articulate his experience of witnessing the damage wrought by the Blitz to his home city is a profound absence of testimony. By withholding story, he took on a role of a silent masculine countered by an articulate feminine lineage who attempted to understand this lack of communication, through communication. In an interview about her postmemory-infused book 'In Memory of Memory', contemporary Russian poet and writer Maria Stepanova states:

The family is usually divided by those who are keeping silent and those who are telling stories. And I don't know why but I think that the storytellers are usually women...we are talking, we are exchanging, and maybe it is easier for us to exist in the present tense, we don't hesitate before talking right now.¹

The articulate feminine attempts to make meaning of and from the silent masculine. She translates the withholding of narrative into a story itself and then transmits it to another woman in the family, typically a daughter, thereby creating mythic inheritance. The women hold and pass on the story of the original, silent withholding. My grandfather's lack of articulation of what he had witnessed was discovered or encountered by his mother, who then recounted this moment to his wife (my grandmother), who told it to my mother, who in turn told it to me. Stepanova similarly muses on this sense of female communicative responsibility:

There were stories [in the family] that, it seemed clear, I was supposed to carry them on. There are the Russian dolls, Matryoshka, where one is put into another, then another, then another. So there was my great-grandpa, then my grandmother (an only child, girl), my mother (an only child, girl), and then me (an only child, girl). And of course, we all have fathers but it was not an issue somehow, the story was going in a straight line, so I was supposed to be carrying it forward.²

A predisposition for storytelling through a matrilineal route could be compared to a biological connection that familial intergenerational women have with one another. All the eggs a woman will ever carry form in her ovaries while she is a four-month-old foetus in the womb of her mother. This means our cellular life as an egg begins in the womb of our grandmother. Each of us spent five months in our grandmother's womb and she in turn formed within the womb of her grandmother. The female communication of male silence also follows Marianne Hirsch's postmemory archetype of a "female witness or agent of transmission".³ She writes that:

¹ Stepanova, M. "Memory Is an Ability to Collect Things." *YouTube*, 14 Mar. 2023, youtu.be/e7G_Mju7aJw.

² *ibid.*

³ Hirsch, M, and Smith, V. "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2002, p.2, doi:10.1086/signs.2002.28.issue-1.

Through the care-giving role traditionally attributed to daughters, the pressures of inter-subjective relationships marked by trauma emerge in especially sharp focus. In looking at postmemory through the lens of the daughter, I bring feminist negotiations between commonalities and differences, and feminist theorisations of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and of political solidarity, to bear on the theorisation of memory and trauma. Daughters become paradigmatic insofar as they enable us to define the range of identificatory practices that motivate the art of familial and affiliative postgeneration. [...] Identifications can cross lines of difference, and the daughter can function as a familial position or identificatory space open to extra-familial, even male, subjects.⁴

Hirsch's examination of the daughter as a model for postmemory is extended with the third-generation, the grandchildren, who are not merely passive recipients of absent memory but active investigators, compilers, and assessors of it. This inheritance leads to engagement that demonstrates an almost anthropological collaboration between granddaughter and grandfather in an exchange of withholding and holding, not-speaking and asking, enfolding and unfolding.

My knowledge of my grandfather's relationship with the city before the war is, at most, sparse, consisting of passed down recollections and a few small photographs. His departure at the start of the war and the subsequent disfiguration of the city in the Blitz meant that he could never fully return. An intergenerational gap of eighty years spans between my grandfather's departure and his granddaughter's, my, presence in the city. Estimations of walks he may have taken in 1939 are followed by my own recorded walks through contemporary Plymouth. My walks respond to and counter an absence of documented walks undertaken by my grandfather both before and after the bombardment of his home city in World War Two. These re-enactments of possibilities are an undertaking of unevidenced past journeys mapped through archival research, imaginative investment and creative practice within an empathic framework. The walks and illustration practice

⁴ Hirsch, M. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. Columbia University Press, 2012. p.87

produced are an attempt to understand his experience of his city before the war and that unspeakable walk after. Such an undertaking requires the researcher to employ empathy, creativity and other ways of knowing.

In this doctoral study I claim that the process of illustration can be suitably used to creatively articulate phenomenologist Edith Stein's philosophical process of empathy. I also claim that postmemory arts practice inherently adheres to Stein's conception of empathy. While there is extensive critical discussion of empathy in connection to performing arts, there is a lack of academic examination on the relationship between empathy and illustration. In this thesis, I attempt to address this gap through conducting a critical examination of existing scholarship, visual practice, and reflective analysis of my own illustration-led research.

Illustration is often used to exemplify or clarify the content of the written text. However, due to traumatic unspeakability, certain topics and events may require other forms of telling outside of written language. Art theorist Jill Bennett suggests that visual arts have the capacity to communicate insights of experience intersubjectively, "...art is a vehicle for the interpersonal transmission of experience."⁵ Illustration's inherent communicative capabilities means that, as an act, it can affectively generate meaning or understanding for a practitioner so that it is possible to perform Stein's process of empathy as an attempt to come-to-know the experience of the other.

It is important to clarify, within this thesis, why I use the term *empathic*, rather than *empathetic*. Firstly, and most importantly, is that Stein uses *empathic* throughout her doctoral dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy* as translated by her grandniece Waltraut Stein in the three editions 1964, 1980 and 1989. *Empathic*, or *empathisch* in German, is an older term than *empathetic*, [*emfühlsam*] and was more prevalent at the time of Stein's writing. Additionally, writers examining empathy such as art theorist Jill Bennett and

⁵ Bennett, J. (2005). *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford (Calif.): Stanford University Press. p.7

historian Dominick LaCapra use the term empathic over empathetic. As empathy is discussed within an increasingly broad number of academic disciplines, my adoption of the term empathic in discussion of illustration adheres my research to Stein's proposition.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is a practice-led interpretation of Stein's theoretical framework of empathy. I claim that her articulation of the three stages that form the process of empathy mirror the different facets involved in an illustration investigation of a city. The analysis of Stein's empathy through the act of illustration is an original contribution to knowledge and has the potential to lend itself to subsequent researchers.

My use of illustration, as a visual application of Stein's philosophy of empathy, emanates from the undertaking, and response to three exploratory walks across Plymouth, which all started from the same location. The house that was my grandfather's first home survived the bombing and is, as such, a remaining material connection between myself in the contemporary city and his presence in the past.

Stein writes that we can experience an empathic encounter with those that are dead "through the medium of their works".⁶ She writes that "we meet the spirit of the past in various forms but always bound to a physical body. This is written or printed word or the word hewed into stone—the spatial form becomes stone or metal."⁷ I have no "medium of works" such as a diary to refer to in the engagement of an empathic experience. The "physical body" via which I attempt to "meet" or indirectly accompany him is the city itself.

⁶ Stein, E. (1989). *On the problem of empathy*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications (3rd edition). P.117

⁷ *ibid.*

Walking research

I walked to sites that my grandfather may have walked to but that I have no evidence of. His death in 2008 and a lack of documentation that places him at these locations prevents me from fully *knowing* through verifiable means. The selection of sites are semi-informed guesses based on his age, location, economic background, and interests. History is composed of the detritus of lives, often material documents, objects, and buildings as they are, archivally, that which remains. However, in the case of this research, I am faced with a lack of physical evidence of my grandfather's movement through the city and so I am required to address the research through different methods. Destination points are situated between what is likely and what is authorial bias. There are a wealth of sites that I did not explore because they simply do not meet the criteria of my interest or are too close to a previous site (and so would generate a similar route to walk to). Another important factor involved in the selection of destinations is whether they have disappeared or significantly altered in the intervening eighty years. As such, the destinations act as metaphor for my grandfather's absence from the city.

Using two OS street maps from 1938, I navigated the contemporary city using pre-Blitz cartography. While walking I allowed variables such as chance and curiosity to direct both my direction of movement and moments of pause. The pace of walking invites the walker to 'turn' from a path. The Situationists' *dérive* opens out structures implemented upon the walker from urban planners as well as creating a wider range of choices available to examine the city. By utilising these personal choices to influence my routes I emphasise the subjective nature of my inquiry and avoid potential confusion, through perspective-taking, between the subject's experience and my own. After each walk, I re-enacted my journey through Google Street View as a means of tracking my wanderings and further recording them. This was also an interesting cartographic counterpart to the outdated street-maps that initiated my navigation.

Enactment suggests something independently generated, activated, or brought to life. Re-enactment, whereas, is a reignition of an active moment; it combines archival study with performative, ethnographic and creative methodologies.⁸ The walks undertaken within this PhD are a means of geographically situating myself within the location of a particular previous pedestrian of the city but also a way of acting out past journeys. However, despite commencing from the same building, I have no record or confirmation of the validity of these routes, consequently they re-enact possibilities. Knowing the location of where he lived, a building that still stands, and that he would have walked most places are fragments of knowledge set within unknowns. By responding to a combination of lack of memory and scant knowledge, postmemory work is formed.

Feminist comparative literature scholar Marianne Hirsch writes that postmemory prompts “the impulse to return as a fractured encounter between generations, between cultures, and between mutually imbricated histories occurring in a layered present. [...] from a layered present to a complicated past, return is desired as much as it is impossible.”⁹ This impulse for an impossible encounter is epitomised in these city walks. A popular tourist pastime in cities is to attend history walks with a guide; either a person, book, or app and thereby follow in the footsteps of a particular historical event, group or person. In these cases the route is informed by verifiable evidence and documentation. The walks undertaken for this PhD however, were made without such information. The embodied experience of physically moving through a city at the same pace as the past subject facilitates kinship between the investigator and the investigated beyond a familial connection. The walks were also conducted as a means of acquiring information; images to inform illustration practice. It also offers a phenomenological understanding of the current cityscape which holds remnants of the past place the previous pedestrian would have been

⁸ Johnson K. (2015) *Performing Pasts for Present Purposes: Reenactment as Embodied, Performative History*. In: Dean D., Meerzon Y., Prince K. (eds) *History, Memory, Performance*. Studies in International Performance. Palgrave Macmillan, London. p.37

⁹ Hirsch, M. (2012). *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.206

familiar with. Walking was employed as re-enactment to gain insights, through perspective-taking, that would be unavailable through purely empirical research.

Even though the walks re-enact possible journeys taken before the war, they ultimately respond to the unspeakability of a walk conducted after the war. After peace was declared my grandfather came home to visit family. He walked around the city and witnessed the devastation and never discussed what he had seen. It is this silence, an absence of testimony, that compels my investigation.

The practice of walking has two purposes. Firstly, as with the second stage of Stein's empathy, following footsteps or re-enactment is a form of acting out that aligns with postmemory practices. Secondly, through walking the investigator is able to find fragments; a method of discovering overlooked details of place which can be found through a receptive state of attention akin to drawing or 'slow looking',¹⁰ as defined by Shari Tishman which will be examined in greater depth later. Breakage, damage, disruption and fragments of the old city are recorded and catalogued. Photography is used to track routes across the city and to document details of the urban environment that are fragments of the pre-Blitz city; details of impermanence such as graffiti, litter, blossom; or elements that communicate something towards the character of the current city. Through photography I also counter the lack of my grandfather's presence within the environment with my own documented presence.

Each of the three chapters in this study includes a selection of photographs documented during the investigative walks. These images are presented sequentially as a performative way of guiding the reader along the walks. These images are not analysed or contextualised in a deliberative strategy to allow the images to utilise their own communicative capabilities. While walking, I focused on the experience of being 'in place' with the camera as the only device I used to document these journeys. If I had sketched, taken written notes, or recorded sound, I would have similarly utilised them. While I did, at one early

¹⁰ Tishman, S. (2017). *Slow looking: the art and practice of learning through observation*. New York: Routledge.

point, attempt to disseminate in writing the first investigative walk, I quickly realised that such an endeavour was redundant as the photographs are articulate in and of themselves. They communicate the subjects of my attention during each of the investigative walks with a visual eloquence that cannot, and need not, be added to by descriptive text.

The walk images are given space alone on a page to encourage the reader's attention to the specific details of the city documented. This is an attempt to replicate the mode of invested attention employed during the investigative walks. Lastly, I aligned single quotations with each image per page; these pairings (made at the end of the study) merge the initial practice-led research with theoretical research that I was engaged in at the early point of the PhD. Rather than labelling the photographs with text that is in any way prescriptive or descriptive, I chose to select text that collaborates with the images elliptically. Reading through a huge list of notes and quotes I had compiled throughout the PhD, I intuitively selected texts that expressed something of what was happening in my reading of the image, my experience of being in the documented location, or had a concept that had notably influenced the overall study. As each stage of the practice-led research was informed by subjective and affective experimentation and understandings, the combination of text and image here follows this methodology in their relationality.

Archival research

As with finding fragments of, and in, the city through walking, I also incorporated archival research to locate further visual details. I examined photographs and amateur films held at South West Film and Television Archive (SWFTA), as well as artefacts within the Plymouth City Collections. These images and objects prompted creative practice, in image making and writing, as a further way of disseminating my position within, and relation to the city. They also performed the characteristically postmemory desire to fill gaps as they are positioned in the place of the absent documents and artefacts that evidence my grandfather's presence within the city, and yet all the while there is full acknowledgement that this gap can never be truly filled.

The engagement with archival documents and objects (such as with photographs, film, ceramics) demonstrates an empathic creative practice that ran parallel with, and was as significant as, my walking practice. While the term empathy is associated with a myriad of meanings, they are loosely connected to their relationship with an 'other'. Typically we think of the other as a person however, previously this has been applied to objects. In philosophical and psychological aesthetics of nineteenth-century Germany, empathy [*Einfühlung*] was defined as a kinesthetic process of 'feeling into' aesthetic productions. This process could be observed with any class of items, including landscapes, furniture, sculptures, or architecture and especially with objects of traditional aesthetic contemplation such as works of visual art. Empathy was used "to describe and analyse in depth the act of viewing [...] a kind of physical connection between viewer and art in which the viewer's own body would move into and inhabit the various features of the artwork."¹¹ My critical analysis of the aesthetic empathic encountering that I experienced is demonstrated with my writing about the Blitz-damaged ceramics in 'The damage that decorates: empathic attention of objects' in chapter one, section three.

The mix of media utilised in the illustration practice made in response to the walks follows Roderick Mills' comment that "illustration is no longer driven by process, or defined by a single medium"¹² but encompasses experimentation with varying materials, equipment and techniques. To generate work that consecutively matches itself in form does not seem appropriate in explicating the differing destinations and characteristics of each walk. Instead, an expanded and versatile practice of illustration provides a greater ability to work through theoretical questions or dilemmas as well as finding ways, through practice, to engage in an empathic encounter.

As with designing a document, by bringing selected pieces of illustration practice together and arranging them within a space, patterns and tropes emerge and perhaps indicate visual

¹¹ Foster, S. (2010). *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*. Taylor & Francis. p.44

¹² Mills, R. (2017) *Beyond image: Situated illustration, a pedagogic practice* In: Confia 2017 International conference on illustration and animation, Guimarães, Portugal, 14-16 June 2017.

representations of theoretical themes. In this manner, research arises through illustration practice; it discerns and communicates ideas that, until that point, were only intuitively known. This is useful in clarifying ongoing research directions to be followed or avoided.

Illustrative writing

Illustrators Rachel Gannon and Mireille Fauchon discuss how, through writing, illustrators can utilise language to expand the boundaries of illustrative representation. They write that “[w]hen illustrators write they do so with illustrative intent. The strategies and behaviours that underpin illustration as a discipline are applied to writing as they would to any other communicative form. [...] While the material outcome is not in the most direct sense visual, the treatments of content, structure and delivery perform as they would in an illustrative image.”¹³ They continue that the illustrator uses creative devices in structure, description and wordplay to evoke “...vivid scenarios, which will be uniquely envisioned by each and every reader”¹⁴ in a manner correlating with the construction of images. As written text is a visual medium, it is logical that the illustrator should use it in a similar manner to image making. The illustrator’s expertise in communication through the employment of formal visual disciplines and semiotic mechanisms is translated in writing in order to not merely document content but to potentially produce a sense of feeling.

My creative critical analysis of a collection of Blitz-damaged ceramics promotes an emphasis on the feelings these objects provoke.¹⁵ My writing communicates an empathic encounter between myself and the objects. I liken this to Shari Tishman’s description of ‘slow looking’¹⁶ and to Marianne Hirsch’s adoption of Eve Sedgwick’s ‘reparative reading’,¹⁷ with the objects serving as relics, indexically illustrating the violence of the Blitz.

¹³ Gannon, R., Fauchon, M. 2021. *Illustration Research Methods*. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic. p.58

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bell, L. (2019). *The Damage that Decorates*. *Journal of Illustration*, Volume 6, Number 1, 1 August 2019, pp. 99-117

¹⁶ Tishman. (2017)

¹⁷ Sedgwick, E. K. (2003). *Touching Feeling*. United Kingdom: Duke University Press. pp. 128-9, 146-51. As cited in Hirsch, M. (2012) p.75

First-person perspective and hyphenation

Traditional pedagogical positioning on academic writing is to avoid using first-person perspective in order to address the subject more clearly and objectively. The proper rhetorical stance for an academic writer, according to this view, was dispassionate, impersonal, and (supposedly) unbiased. However, as this research is qualitative, and examines subjective and affective findings, it is reasonable to use a first-person perspective. This decision also follows Stein's own writing which takes a first-person perspective as the content of her argument necessitates it; empathic acts are experienced in first person. Additionally, my consideration of how an illustrator's act of making practice parallels Stein's empathy also requires me to adopt this positioning as I predominantly discuss the affective and subjective qualities that occur within my own experience of making practice.

Hyphenation is used regularly in this thesis primarily in reference to terms employed by other researchers, i.e., Hirsch's description of first-, second-, and third-generation interpersonal dynamics. It is also used to create compound modifiers; hyphens connect relevant words into a single idea or term. In this regard, the hyphen acts as a performing agent to demonstrate the interconnectedness of a particular term. For instance 'come-to-know' shows that this process of understanding is characterised as an activity; it is neither knowing or not-knowing but the empathic process that takes place between. As such, the hyphen is a punctuation mark that signifies an encounter.

In the article *Working the Hyphens*, psychology scholar Michelle Fine examines how the hyphen is used in discussions of Self-Other in the politics of everyday life and how qualitative researchers use it.

Self and Other are knottily entangled. [...] Despite denials, qualitative researchers are always implicated at the hyphen. When we opt, as has been the tradition, simply to write *about* those who have been Othered, we deny the hyphen. [...]

When we opt, instead, to engage in social struggles *with* those who have been exploited and subjugated, we work the hyphen, revealing far more about ourselves,

and far more about the structures of Othering. Eroding the fixedness of categories, we and they enter and play with the blurred boundaries that *proliferate*.¹⁸

Fine puts forward that within critical qualitative and ethnographic research, researchers ought to display reflexivity as identity directly and indirectly influences the research process. In the past, qualitative research has been deeply implicated in colonial, racial, and nationalist projects where the relationship between researcher and the researched has often echoed the hierarchy between oppressors and oppressed. Reflexivity is viewed as a means of interfering with the colonial and neocolonial gazes.¹⁹

Conscious self-awareness and examination of my own positionality is vital to an investigation that concerns Stein's empathy as she explicitly states that the Self, which she refers to as the "I", cannot merge or become one with an other as this is appropriation or colonisation of experience. I can never fully and directly know what an other feels because I can never leave my living body [*Leib*] but I can feel-into and unfold their experience in relation to my own in order to suppose some idea as to what they may be feeling.

The hyphen also has a function in relation to postmemory. The empathee in this study is my grandfather and so I must acknowledge the influence this familial link has to bear on my research. As a granddaughter-illustrator I recognise the ways in which the practice I have made is influenced by my third-generation position.

This PhD is led by illustration practice but, as discussed earlier, my use of the term illustration is not solely limited to image making but also includes walking, object making and illustrative writing. Rather than illustration as outcomes, it is the activity of making illustration practice that I position as an articulation of Stein's process of empathy.

¹⁸ Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publications, Inc. p.72

¹⁹ De Souza, R. (2019) *Working the Hyphen From Below: The "Thick Decryption of Subtext" and the Micro-Politics of Knowledge Production*, in *Frontiers in Communication* Vol. 4.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2019.00068>

Contribution to Knowledge

Empathy has routinely been discussed in relation to the arts from theatre practice;²⁰ music;²¹ dance;²² literature;²³ photography;²⁴ contemporary art;²⁵ and recently within heritage practice.²⁶ However empathy, and more specifically Stein's phenomenological theory of empathy, has not been examined in relation to illustration practice; this study fills this gap as an original contribution to knowledge while also adding to the relatively young field of critical illustration writing.

Building from Marianne Hirsch's research of postmemory, this thesis is a critical engagement of the concept of third-generation retrospective witnessing through the lens of a granddaughter-illustrator. I examine this way of looking at the past through my practice-led research alongside contemporary illustrators who have similarly taken on this specific familial role within their illustration practice. I position postmemory as characteristic of Stein's empathy process and I explore the positioning of these two writer's theories through the examination of my own and others' visual practice.

The illustration practice in this doctoral study is methodologically open to include practices that are traditionally perceived as the preserve of other disciplines. It is developed through the combination of several methods including archival research; walking; photography; image and object making; and writing. This personal praxis follows

²⁰ Gunkle, G. (1963). Empathy: Implications for Theatre Research. *Educational Theatre Journal*, 15(1), 15–23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3204321>

²¹ Clarke, E. & DeNora, T. & Vuoskoski, J. (2015). *Music, empathy and cultural understanding*. *Physics of life reviews*. 15. 10.1016/j.plrev.2015.09.001.

²² Foster, S. (2010). *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*. Taylor & Francis.

And Reynolds, D. (2012) *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*. United Kingdom: Intellect.

²³ Hammond, M. M., & Kim, S. J. (Eds.). (2014). *Rethinking empathy through literature* (p. 1). New York: Routledge.

²⁴ Chare, N. (2013). *On the Problem of Empathy: Attending to Gaps in the Scrolls of Auschwitz*. In: Chare, N., Williams, D. (eds) *Representing Auschwitz. The Holocaust and Its Contexts*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137297693_3

²⁵ Bennett, J. (2005). *Empathic vision: affect, trauma, and contemporary art*. USA: Stanford University Press.

²⁶ Taylor, R. E. (2018). *Heritage as Process: Constructing the Historical Child's Voice Through Art Practice*. Doctoral thesis, Sheffield Hallam University. <https://doi.org/10.7190/shu-thesis-00212>

Henk Borgdorff's discussion of artistic research as "not only the result of the research, but also its methodological vehicle, when the research unfolds *in and through* the acts of creating and performing."²⁷ The production of illustration practice is a 'methodological vehicle' to enact the three stages of Stein's process of empathy; it is the act of illustration that I equate as an act of empathy. While illustration outcomes are communicative in that they are often telling their audience a specific message, I position the act of illustration as communicative in that, like empathy, it is a way of asking an other's experience.

I propose illustration as an empathic arts practice to be employed as an ethical other way of knowing a past person's relationship to a city. It is through the production of practice that I attempt to unfold and understand this postmemorial relationship to a specific location. Stein's process of empathy is utilised to construct a methodology for illustration practice and it is in this manner that a visual interpretation of a phenomenological act has been developed. This could prove useful in the engagement of an audience that may be unfamiliar with illustration as a discipline in order to help communicate and enable understanding of Stein's concept of empathy.

This thesis is led by the following aims:

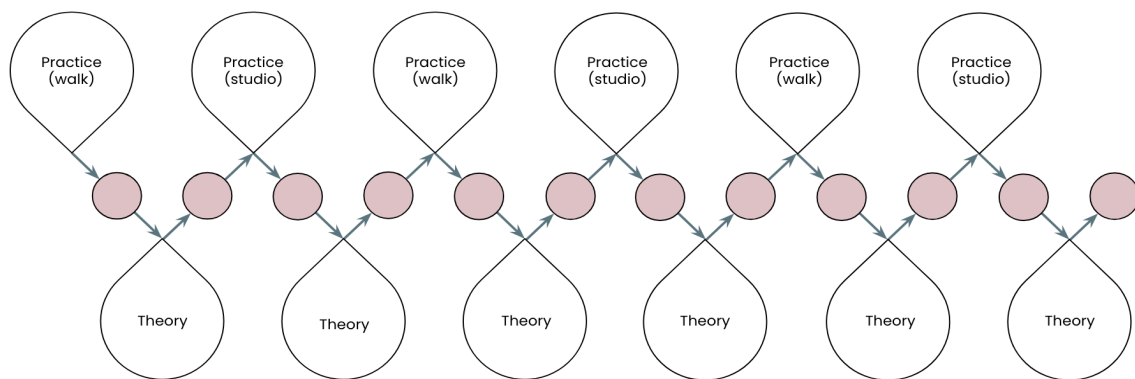
- To use illustration practice for the visual articulation of a phenomenological act.
- To incorporate and test Stein's theoretical methodology within illustration research.
- To use illustration practice to gain postmemorial insights from a familial connection within place.

²⁷ Borgdorff, H. (2010) *The production of knowledge in artistic research*. The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts. p.46

Chronology and development of research

The methodology employed in this research was developed from the existing framework of Stein's empathy process in order to undertake a rigorous self-reflective critical analysis of the operations at work during the production of illustration practice. By referring back to Stein's discussion of each stage while researching empathy through the practice of illustration, I was able to unfold a more nuanced understanding of how empathy operates than I would have comprehended solely through reading her text. I believe this is due to the inherent communicative abilities of illustration; through making practice I was producing tangible examples of her theory which assisted in my understanding of it. This methodology also clarified the ways in which empathy can function in a postmemorial context.

This study is practice-led in that elements of the multiform practice of illustration direct the research. However, this is not an exclusive, linear direction of insights as throughout the PhD different methods of research (practical and theoretical) oscillated to inform, or lead, one another thereby generating a looping transit of research. Each instance of research, whether in the production of practice or through theoretical engagement, generated a point of analysis and insight which directed the next stage of research (as demonstrated by the pink circles in the diagram below).



I evaluated the illustration practice produced in this study at specific points of the PhD. In August 2018, I undertook a week-long artist's residency in Penryn, Cornwall (see Appendix 1.) During this time, I made practice in response to my first investigative walk to Millbay and as a way of comparing my experience of walking contemporary Plymouth with the pre-Blitz cityscape. My examination and interpretation of the physical and temporal layering that I encountered on the way to, and at, that particular destination point prompted contextual research of Lynsey Ly's discussion of palimpsest landscapes and Doreen Massey's conception of *throwntogetherness*. This contextual research, in turn, directed my practice in the attempt to communicate such layers in the making of the Cityscope.

Additionally, it was during the residency that I began to experiment with my image of the conductor. I printed the drawing onto acetate as I wanted to display this character embedded within the space; by removing the figure from a paper page I could apply, or layer, it to other images. However, the adjustable spotlight fittings in the residency space meant that if the print was suspended from the wall, a shadow conductor was cast behind. This proved to be an interesting and relevant outcome when viewed within the context of Stein's empathy which strives to be an act of accompaniment.

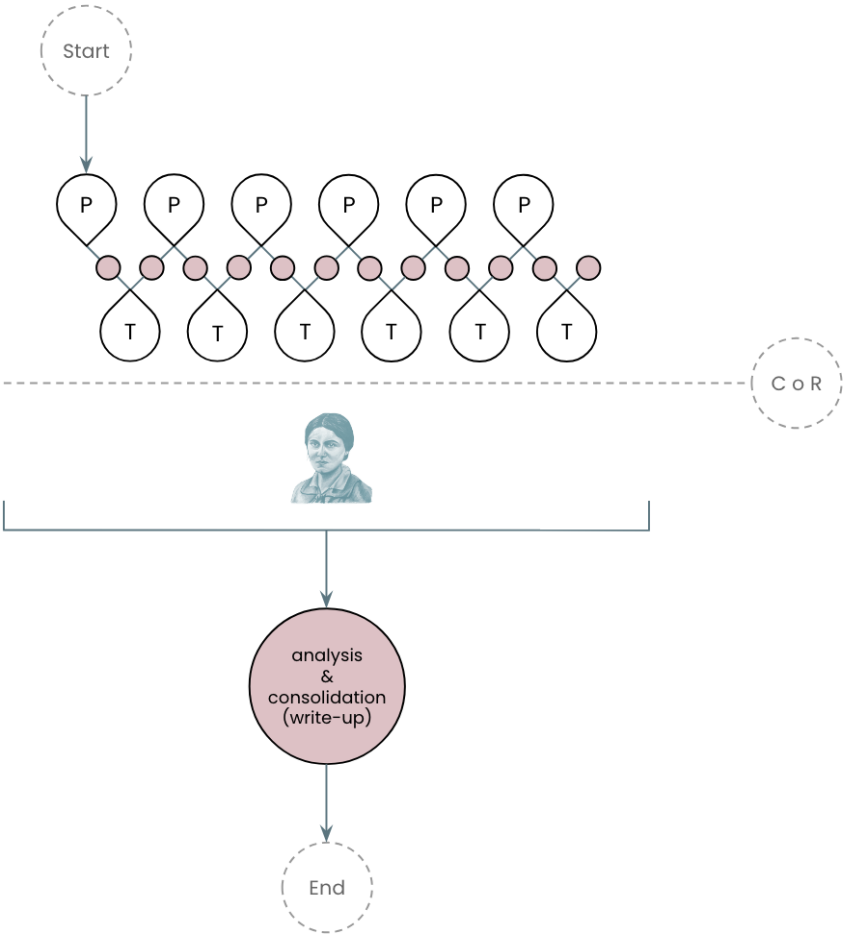
Early in the PhD I met with a Plymouth City Collections curator to view a group of ceramics that had been damaged by one of the city's Blitz raids. I examined, photographed and discussed the history of the objects with Lottie. From this meeting and through close study of my documenting photographs I delivered a paper at the 2018 Illustration Research conference 'Decriminalising Ornament: The Pleasures of Pattern' at Anglia Ruskin University. I discussed the ways the damage of the ceramics were a form of testimonial decoration that illustrates the event that changed them and that, as objects, their indexicality communicates their connection to and representation of the city's bombardment. I was then invited to develop this into an article for the Journal of Illustration issue 6.1, published August 2019 where I expanded this discussion (see Appendix 3.) Writing this article helped me to evaluate the direction of my research by recognising

the emerging importance of both empathy and postmemory in my investigation. It also provided an opportunity to enact the first stage of Stein's empathy process, 'the emergence of experience', through a receptive form of attention. This initial form of encountering encompasses visual analysis that is employed by visual artists as well as Tishman's description of slow looking. I argue that this particular form of attention is empathic in that it is invested with time and intention and continued to utilise it on my investigative walks through the city; while examining my photographs taken on the walk; when looking at archival images and films; when analysing other practitioner's work; and in reflective analysis of my own practice.

Evaluation of the work made in this PhD also manifested in the solo exhibition at Devonport Guildhall in March 2019. Viewing the practice as a collection of three walks in three spaces (see Appendix 2.) assisted my analysis of the practice in relation to contextual research. Insights were made in the display of illustration practice made after each of the three investigative walks such as the prevalence of circles that held connotations of the Plymouth Bomb Book and a visual articulation of unknowns, absences, and vulnerable knowledge.

The confirmation of route meeting in November 2019 proved to be a pivotal moment in the development of this study as it was at this point that the importance of empathy gained prominence. Initially, I had planned to undertake a further two or three walks with corresponding studio practice; however, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns halted the continuation of these city-based investigations. As I had already exhibited all the illustration practice made, a shift to analytical reflection of it seemed a logical next stage. Stopping, or being forced to stop, the production of practice afforded more time to deeply engage with Stein's theory of empathy which I had found only after the confirmation meeting. Additionally, having three walks neatly corresponded with the three-stage structure of Stein's empathy process. My dissemination of Stein's empathy developed into a practical methodology to analyse not only the illustration practice I had

produced, but the ways in which I had undertaken the practice-led research. Therefore, the writing in the substantive chapters of this study is a speculative application of Stein's theory to my prior practice-led research activity (as demonstrated by the diagram below).



Document structure

Following this introduction is a contextual review which outlines illustration, empathy, and postmemory. I examine illustration as a discipline, a process, and how it is defined within this thesis. There is an overview of empathy, how it has been defined in the past, how it is defined in contemporary scholarship, a short biography of Edith Stein and how she defined empathy, and how empathy is defined within this study. Lastly, there is discussion of Marianne Hirsch's term postmemory and how it is applied to my practice-led research. The contextual review is then extended and woven through the following three chapters in greater complexity to better reflect the interchangeable movement between research through theory and research through practice employed within the study.

The structure of the document is arranged in adherence to Stein's three stages of empathy and the three consecutive investigative walks. As such, this thesis comprises three corresponding chapters situated between the initial contextual review and the thesis conclusion. In this regard, I use the logic of the document to underscore my comparison of illustration practice with Stein's paradigm of empathy.

Each chapter is divided into three sections:

1. The first section of each chapter describes an investigative walk and an examination of the walk's destination. Photographs taken en route are presented sequentially with applicable quotes from writers who influenced this study.
2. The second section of each chapter analyses theoretical and contextual sources.
3. The third section is a reflective critical analysis of illustration practice and explores how its construction enacts empathy.

In Chapter One, 'receptive attention in empathic encounters', I discuss the initial investigative walk and the destination point of Millbay train station, now Plymouth Pavilions. Starting from what was my grandfather's house in Peverell, I follow Plymouth's last tram route and then continue to the original railway terminus for the city.

In the second section of Chapter One I examine the first stage of Stein's empathy, 'the emergence of experience', where the empathiser is confronted by and becomes aware of another's experience without knowledge of its content. This stage typically involves an activation of sensorial attention that is fundamental and formative at this first stage of an empathic encounter. I outline why I interpret this to be a *receptive* stage and how walking can be used as a method of investigation to facilitate it. I examine the ways in which walking can incur embodiment, embeddedness, perspective shifting, and how pace affects what is experienced. Finally, I address how walking with receptive attention can initiate empathic encounters within a city.

In the third section of Chapter One, I critically analyse illustration practice made in response to my first walk and reflect on the ways in which making this practice corresponds and contributes to the processing of Stein's first stage of her theory. I demonstrate receptive attention through an examination of Blitz-damaged ceramics; this writing not only evidences my empathic encounter but also presents the objects as indexical signifiers of the traumatic experience of the Blitz. I discuss palimpsestic layers of the city that I found photographed while walking; the cartographic layering of maps, and an illustration object made with layers of perspex discs. I analyse what this visual trope possibly communicates in regards to my experience of the walk and Stein's stage one of empathy.

In Chapter Two, the 'granddaughter-illustrator as a performing agent of postmemory', I begin by providing historical context for the destination of my second walk, Tinside diving platform, which was built in the mid 1930s and demolished in 2010.

In the second section of Chapter Two, I examine Stein's second stage of empathy, 'fulfilling explication'. It is at this stage that the empathiser follows and feels-into the experience via imagination, perspective taking, memory, and embodied action in order to gain some approximate understanding of the other's felt, lived experience. I label this the *feeling-into* stage as the empathiser attempts, in a sensorial or emotional way, to understand what they are feeling. I analyse this second stage of empathy alongside Marianne Hirsch's term postmemory. I believe this to be a relevant comparison as postmemory is fed by performative practices in the attempt to gain understanding. I explore the characteristics of postmemory, the dynamics of a third-generation perspective, and how these correlate to feeling-into an encounter.

In the third section of this chapter, I expand my examination of empathy and postmemory through visual analysis of selected images from two graphic memoirs by German-American illustrators Line Hoven and Nora Krug. Both Hoven and Krug use their practice as a methodological means to attempt to understand their family's involvement in, and behaviour after the Second World War. Despite the differences my illustration practice has to these graphic memoirs, I maintain that as granddaughter-illustrators, each of us perform postmemory through an empathic explication that takes place in the production creative practice. Each creates visual practice with or in response to family and archival photographs. I demonstrate this by exploring how drawing can be used as a means of slowing time to unfold a feeling of recognition experienced in the examination of a photograph of a tram conductor. Lastly, I analyse an illustration object made to follow or track the lost movement of a diver on the absent diving platform.

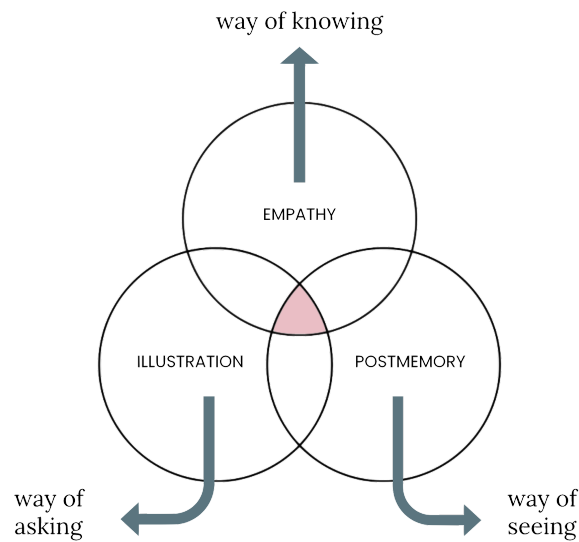
In Chapter Three, 'vulnerable knowledge: making meaning from empathic encounters', I provide historical context for the destination of my last investigative walk; the site of Honicknowle's carnival week. The carnival started in 1933, paused for nine years after the outbreak of war in 1939, and eventually ended in the 1950s. The 1939 carnival which occurred a few days before war was declared, was recorded in colour and black and white

by a local amateur filmmaker. Digitised by the BFI, it was this film that prompted my third walk in the desire to find urban traces and material fragments of the place depicted.

In section two of Chapter Three, I examine Stein's third stage of empathy, 'the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience'. I analyse and interpret the translation of Stein's term with her description of what happens at this concluding stage of the empathy process. It is at this point that the empathiser intellectually interprets that which was initially intuitively known in stage one as well as that which was felt in stage two. I deem this to be the *recognising* stage as the empathiser recognises the experience of the other through what they have come-to-know all the while acknowledging that such knowledge is vulnerable in that it is constructed with unknowns. I develop my analysis of vulnerable knowledge by examining vulnerability in light of concepts raised by feminist theorists Judith Butler and Marianne Hirsch.

In the third section of Chapter Three, I focus on how the recognising stage of empathy is evidenced in the illustration practice made for the Honicknowle walk. This includes a poster of two small girls dancing the 'boomps-a-daisy' who were featured in the colour footage; a concertina illustrated street of buildings collected from the film and from my walk; and drawn illustrations of small, vibrant details that were found in the film and from photographs taken on the walk. These drawings, or 'jewels', are colourfully mounted to signify carnival stalls.

Contextual Review



In this contextual review I outline the three prominent areas of research that feature in this study: illustration, empathy, and postmemory. Illustration is troublesome to define due to the usage of the term in reference to the discipline, the creative outcome, and as a creative act. Pulling from contemporary writers on the subject, I attempt to disentangle this term in order to situate and clarify my practice. Similarly, empathy can contrast in meaning depending on the context in which it is considered. I do not claim to discuss all of illustration, nor do I write about empathy in a generalised way; instead I examine the small corners of their respective discourses that I believe, along with postmemory, to be overlapping. This study is situated at the convergence of these three discourses, as illustrated in the diagram above.

I provide a short biographical overview of Edith Stein as I believe this is helpful in enabling understanding of her philosophical work. I follow this by examining how empathy was understood at the time of her writing, how she defined it, and the ways in which it is considered in contemporary discourses. This leads me to outline how I define empathy within the context of this thesis. Lastly, I will introduce the concept of postmemory and begin to indicate how this connects to both illustration and empathy. This contextual review is extended with critical depth in section two of the following three chapters.

Illustration: difficulties in defining

There is often confusion when discussing illustration outside the sector as the word denotes a visual outcome, an activity, and the discipline itself. Comparison here could be made with Psychologist Rita Meneses' description of attempting to find appropriate meanings in the 'big-drawer' of empathy.²⁸ For sake of clarity I shall address each of these meanings in turn in order to situate a discussion of my illustration practice as *process* rather than *outcome* and why I position it as a practice suitable to consider as a creative articulation of Stein's empathy.

As a discipline

From the outset, to discuss illustration within an academic context, it is necessary to define it, or at least, provide one definition. However, as a discipline that has been described as chimera-like,²⁹ it is important to recognise the difficult task of generating an all-encompassing definition that covers a wide range of differing practices that fall within contemporary understandings of illustration. Design and visual culture academic Rick Poynor writes that "illustration is no more a unitary activity than art is. There are many kinds of illustration for many kinds of contexts and many kinds of illustrators."³⁰ In *History of Illustration*, Susan Doyle continues in this vein that "the 'what' (subject) and 'how' (medium) of an image are not the defining factors; rather, the 'why' (purpose) determines whether a work of art is illustration or not."³¹ If illustration cannot be neatly described as a 'unitary activity' then it is reasonable to discuss it as a discipline that spans multifarious activities undertaken for the purpose of communication. Accordingly, it is worth discussing how illustration has the capacity to operate as a means of communication and the particular kind of illustration that is presented and examined within this study.

²⁸ Meneses, R. (2011). *Experiences of Empathy*. PhD thesis. University of Birmingham. p.4

²⁹ Gannon, R., Fauchon, M. 2021. *Illustration Research Methods*. United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic. p.14

³⁰ Poynor, R. (2010, May 26). *The Missing Critical History of Illustration*. PRINT Magazine. <https://www.printmag.com/featured/the-forgotten-history-of-illustration/>

³¹ Doyle, S., Grove, J., & Sherman, W. (2018). *History of illustration*. Fairchild Books, An Imprint Of Bloomsbury Publishing.

Typically, illustration is discussed in relation to its etymological root. British illustrator and writer Rob Mason traces illustration to the Latin *illustrare* meaning to decorate, adorn, ornament, embellish, accompany.³² By extension, in examining the Latin verb *lūstrō*, several definitions are presented.

1. to light up, illuminate, make bright
2. to review, survey, observe, examine
3. to go around, encircle
4. to wander over, traverse
5. [figuratively in religion] to make bright, purify by a propitiatory offering or sacrifice
6. to review, consider³³

'*Illustrare*' or 'illumination' present illustration's active ability to shine light upon subjects, both as adornment and to provide clarity.³⁴ Like Mason, Doyle also traces the etymological root to state that it is illustration's job to illuminate and thereby enable understanding; it is "visual communication through pictorial means [...] inherently in the service of an idea and seeks to communicate something particular, usually to a particular audience."³⁵

The illustrator as a practitioner can operate within many diverging contexts. This may be within a commercial sector, editorial, scientific, heritage, educational, collaborative, independent and authorial. Their practice is capable of reflecting these differing contexts by manifesting through distinct processes and producing markedly different outcomes.

³² Mason, R. (2000). *A Digital Dolly?: A Subjective Survey of British Illustration in the 1990s*. Norwich: Norwich School of Art and Design. p.6

³³ Latinlexicon.org. (2019). *Definition - Numen - The Latin Lexicon - An Online Latin Dictionary - A Dictionary of the Latin Language*. [online] Available at: <https://latinlexicon.org/definition.php?p1=1009470> [Accessed 29 Oct. 2019].

³⁴ Morgan, C., 2014. *A Taxonomy of Deception*. Doctoral Thesis. Royal College of Art. London. p.18

³⁵ Doyle, S., Grove, J., & Sherman, W. (2018). *History of illustration*. Fairchild Books, An Imprint Of Bloomsbury Publishing.

And yet, these outcomes are illustration as they are made with an explicit intention to communicate an idea or message through interpretation and description.

As an outcome

Illustration as an outcome is not limited to decorative embellishments of written text despite its frequent and primary description as such. While there are many examples of illustration that adhere to this characterisation, predominantly within the commercial market, this description fails to include practitioners who work outside of these margins.

If we discuss illustration as a means to elucidate or adorn a text, it implies that the image could be described as secondary, submissive,³⁶ or subservient³⁷ to the text. However, this demeans illustration's ability to communicate effectively, as well as the complexity an image can carry. Illustrators Stephanie Black and Catrin Morgan counter this suggestion. Black refers to Barthes' description of the polysemic nature of images; that each is capable of initiating a multitude of possible signified meanings that are open to be selected and connected both by the author and the reader when encountered in combination with other semiotic elements.³⁸ Morgan, in a similar vein, discusses the writers W.G. Sebald and Javier Marias' use of photography within their fiction to imbue further ambiguity to the text. Here the purpose of illustration is to obscure rather than clarify and therefore it communicates with equal agency as the text in a dynamic partnership.³⁹

³⁶ Morgan, *ibid.*

³⁷ Klimowski, A. (2011) *On Illustration*. London: Oberon. p.41, as cited in Black, S., 2014. *Illumination through illustration: Positioning illustration as practice-led research*. Doctoral thesis. University of West England. Bristol. p.81

³⁸ Black. p.81.

³⁹ Morgan, p.19.

As an activity

Mason's definitions of illustration suggest that illustration is gestural, with an ability to point to a subject, directing or guiding the viewer's looking. Therefore, it is noted that the activeness or agency inherent within illustration adheres it to being discussed as a process as much as an outcome. This has been discussed by Black,⁴⁰ and more recently Gannon and Fauchon⁴¹ who position illustration as an effective methodological research process worthy of greater critical discourse. This thesis continues the epistemological argument that illustration can be used as a research method but I extend that, as a creative practice, it can be used to perform and evidence empathic encounters specifically in a postmemory context by those born after, i.e., a granddaughter-illustrator.

Illustration is an active process that comprises looking and mark-making; though predominantly descriptive, it also enables the illustrator to investigate the object's positioning and embeddedness within its environment. There is a *slowness* or *deepness* to this looking as it is invested with intentional attention. Such investment opens out space for unassuming and interesting things or moments to emerge that would have otherwise been overlooked. By pausing, and remaining, the illustrator also forms deeper understandings of the subject. Not only do these details feed into decisions of what is included and what is omitted, but the illustrator can also examine the subject's relationality through composition and context.

Illustration also has a propensity to travel disciplines to find the most suitable vehicle for its message. Illustrators, particularly those working outside or at the edges of commercial work, utilise various media to communicate efficiently and effectively. Black states that illustration research is still relatively young and so it is conducive for the creative arts researcher to have a "methodological open-mindedness"⁴² by borrowing from other disciplines. By drawing from a range of established research models, illustration positions

⁴⁰ Black. 2014. p.4

⁴¹ Gannon, R., Fauchon, M. 2021.

⁴² Black. p.10

itself as a suitable method of communicating varied or diverse outcomes developed through its practice.

How illustration practice is defined within this thesis

The Royal College of Arts has previously (2018) defined illustration into two strands: *Narrative* and *Situated*. Situated illustration includes site and context-responsive practice and often an artistic engagement with archives. The illustrator considers and incorporates sites during the research and creation of work. Connective strands that entwine place and the illustrator's practice are revealed and included adding complexity to context. This further embeds the work within site with consideration to the effect it has locally, spatially and psychologically.⁴³

My own practice resembles this description, located in the in-between of disciplines, it moves between illustration and fine art, photography, cultural geography and literary theory. I undertake a range of methods such as walking, photography, drawing, artefact making and writing that work together to form a hybrid methodology. The illustration practice made in this study is multiform in that "it is not defined by material boundaries."⁴⁴ Boundaries between the traditional conception of illustration practice and other modes of making are not rigid; a devised walk through a city, a sculptural model of diver's movement, a passage of writing initiated by a damaged coffee cup, each of these are part of my praxis of illustration because I, an illustrator, deem them to be. The intention or purpose of each of these iterations of practice determines them as illustration in that they evidence an undertaking of an empathic creative process. Additionally, this way of making illustration is

⁴³ RCA Website. (2018). *Visual Communication*. [online] Available at: https://www.rca.ac.uk/schools/school-of-communication/visual_communication/illustration-pathway/ [no longer accessible].

⁴⁴ Gannon, Fauchon. (2021) p.16

necessary as a means of responding to and conveying the complexity of the subject matter with difference and absence included.

My practice in this study also demonstrates another strategy; illustration is a creative interpretation and description of Stein's phenomenological process. In this way, I am visualising my subjective experience of coming-to-know my grandfather's relationship to Plymouth and his first experience of walking through his home after the Blitz. However, it is important to state that my practice is not made up of explanatory visual outcomes created to adorn and clarify Stein's text. Instead, the focus of this study is the ways in which my act of illustration performs an empathic process. Consequently, the illustration outcomes are the remains of my empathic encounter and not the impetus for investigation.

Illustration is most often discussed as an outcome in that it illuminates to enable understanding. In this regard, illustration is a way of telling in that it contains an inherent intention to communicate. As illustration can "make visual what words can only generally indicate, illustration originates meaning, just as writing does."⁴⁵ Illustration as an act, whereas, does not yet 'have' a message to tell, instead it is an investigative process of asking questions in order to come-to-know. This gestural quality, both as a pointing-to and as an ethical offer, is also present with empathy. According to Stein, empathy is not the knowledge of how another feels as such an assertion is appropriative; instead empathy is an attempt at coming-to-know another's experience. Empathy is an offer of accompaniment and, like the act of illustration, it involves a process of asking.

⁴⁵ Doyle, S., Grove, J., & Sherman, W. (2018). *History of illustration*. Fairchild Books, An Imprint Of Bloomsbury Publishing.



Edith Stein

As this thesis examines the practice of illustration with the philosopher Edith Stein's philosophical process of empathy it is prudent to provide a biographical context in order to gain deeper understanding of her theoretical work. While her phenomenological writing on empathy features in an early period of her career, her life itself is extraordinary and bears stating.⁴⁶

Born in Breslau, Prussia (now Wrocław, Poland) in 1891, Edith Stein was the youngest of eleven children in an orthodox Jewish family and by the age of two her father Siegfried had died.⁴⁷ Her mother Auguste took over the running of the family business and remained determined to ensure that her children receive a thorough education.⁴⁸ In 1904, Stein temporarily paused her studies when she renounced her faith and became an atheist but after reconciling with her new ideas, she decided to work towards teaching philosophy.⁴⁹ Having graduated first in her class in 1911, Stein entered the University of Breslau to study psychology where she was introduced to Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations* which would have a profound influence on her. She transferred to Göttingen in 1913 and joined

⁴⁶ For a biography of Stein, see Oben, F. M. (1988). *Edith Stein: Scholar, Feminist, Saint*. United States: Alba House. or, MacIntyre, A. C. (2006). *Edith Stein : a philosophical prologue, 1913-1922*. United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

⁴⁷ Oben, p.5

⁴⁸ Szanto, T. and Moran, D. "Edith Stein", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/stein/>>.

⁴⁹ Prabook, World Biographical Encyclopedia, Inc. *Edith Stein*. <https://prabook.com/web/edith.stein/3736846>

the Göttingen Philosophical Society, where she met Adolf Reinach, Roman Ingarden, Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Hans Lipps.⁵⁰

Stein approached Husserl at Göttingen with the idea of using empathy as the focus of her doctoral dissertation on phenomenology as she deemed it to be a gap in his work. However, when World War I broke out in July 1914, her studies were paused for a year while she worked as a volunteer Red Cross nurse in a Czech hospital. In the summer of 1916, she finished her dissertation at the University of Freiburg with the encouragement of her friend and fellow phenomenologist Reinach. Her doctorate was awarded *summa cum laude* and part of her dissertation was published as *On the Problem of Empathy* the following year.⁵¹

Stein was given the opportunity to work as Husserl's assistant just before she finished her dissertation. Husserl's research documents, such as *Ideas II*, were transcribed and edited by Stein with significant changes, and Heidegger eventually published them in 1928 (with little credit for Stein's work). According to Stein's correspondence with Ingarden, she struggled to persuade Husserl to accept her amendments, the frustration of which ultimately led her to resign in 1918.⁵²

Stein's interest in Catholicism grew in 1917 after Reinach's death. Reinach's widow asked Stein to organise her husband's academic manuscripts and it was his writing that led Stein to read the New Testament.⁵³ Although Stein passed her doctoral examination with distinction, the University of Göttingen rejected her habilitation thesis in 1919 due to the institution's refusal to take on female professors. After being unable to locate a mentor, Stein returned to Breslau to provide one-to-one philosophical tutorials. While staying at the house of her friend Conrad-Martius, Stein read St. Theresa of Avila's autobiography and

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Stein, E. (1989). *On the problem of empathy*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications (3rd edition). p.119

⁵² Szanto and Moran

⁵³ Prabook

to the dismay of her religious mother and many Jewish acquaintances, she converted to Catholicism in 1922.⁵⁴

After her conversion, Stein tried to connect, through her academic writing, Husserlian phenomenology with Thomism Catholic philosophy while teaching at a Dominican nuns' school in Speyer and then a Catholic Church-affiliated Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster from 1923-1933.⁵⁵ Stein's teaching position was ended due to increasing antisemitic legislation from the Nazi government. Afterwards she moved to Cologne and was ordained as a Carmelite nun and took the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.⁵⁶ In 1938, Stein was transferred to a Carmelite convent at Echt, Holland for her safety; however, it was there, alongside her sister Rosa who had also converted, that Stein was arrested by the Gestapo on 2 August 1942. Arriving at Auschwitz concentration camp on August 7, Stein died with Rosa in the gas chambers on 9 August 1942. According to testimony from death camp survivors, she helped other suffering people with remarkable compassion. Pope John Paul II beatified Edith Stein on May 1, 1987, in Cologne, and canonised her in 1998. *Life in a Jewish Family*, her incomplete autobiography, was released posthumously in 1985.⁵⁷

Psychologist Rita Meneses makes clear that as Stein's phenomenological writing on empathy was made before her conversion it is not a mystical artefact. The concept of God was a central concern to her readership and peers however, this does not turn her early writings into theology because, in the work under discussion, the idea of God is never utilised to explain the fundamentals of either the phenomenon of empathy or of humans.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Szanto and Moran

⁵⁵ Oben, p.20

⁵⁶ Szanto and Moran

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ Meneses, R. (2011). *Experiences of Empathy*. PhD thesis. University of Birmingham. P. 117

Empathy: early terminology

As a term in English, empathy is relatively young. It first appeared in 1909 as a translation of the German aesthetic term *emfühlung*, meaning literally ‘in feeling’ or ‘feeling into’.⁵⁹ It referred to a key concept in German aesthetics of a viewer’s projection of sensual and emotional feelings and movement into paintings, objects of art, and nature.⁶⁰ German philosopher Theodor Lipps notably discussed this early meaning of empathy as an activity of projection onto the object of perception, so that the observer ‘feels into’ the observed.⁶¹ Within this framework, empathy directs the observer to loosen the familiar boundaries of the self in order to better understand objects, artworks and locations as well as the observer’s own behaviours and traits.

The Greek to English translation of *empathēia* reads as physical affection and passion. Its etymology is a compound of *én* (in) and a derived form of *pathos* (affection). The German term *Emfühlung* repeats the Greek compound: *Ein* is a prefix meaning “in” and a movement of immersion, or introduction from the outside to the inside [*hinein*]⁶²—although it can also allude to one, unity, unification, or fusion of two in one—and *Fühlung*, from *föhlen*, to feel, means feeling. *Emfühlung*, or feeling-into, was used in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as a conceptual departure point for an embodied and subjective means of viewing art.

Psychologists would examine this aesthetic activity as a bodily engagement by way of the observer’s breath, pose and movement and by the early twentieth century, Lipps’s writing on *emfühlung* became connected with the concept of *verstehen*, understanding, particularly within phenomenological circles.⁶² Stein’s, and then Husserl’s (with the assistance of Stein),

⁵⁹ Titchener, E.B. 1909. *Lectures on the Experimental Psychology of the Thought-Processes*. New York: Macmillan. p.21

⁶⁰ Lanzoni, S. 2018. *Empathy: A History*. United Kingdom: Yale University Press, (Preface section, para. 2)

⁶¹ Dean, C. J. 2004. *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p.6

⁶² Coplan, A., Goldie, P. et al. 2011. *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*. United Kingdom: OUP Oxford. p.xiii

writing on empathy are influenced by, and expansions of, Lipps' account but they are also critical ripostes to his ideas of empathic 'oneness'.⁶³

Stein's definition of empathy

Edith Stein's doctoral thesis, later published as *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917) addressed a gap present within her mentor Husserl's work.⁶⁴ The aim of her examination was to discern the properties of the empathy process and of empathic awareness, that of the thoughts and feelings of others.⁶⁵ Stein presents empathy as an active phenomenological process of coming-to-know another person's feeling-based experience.

To discuss Stein's definition of empathy, it is important to present the epistemological presuppositions that are based in the early phases of Husserl's phenomenology of which Stein was intimately familiar with as his student then assistant. In her doctoral thesis on Stein's theory of empathy, Rita Wengorovius Ferro Meneses lays these out with useful clarity;

The first of these is that people are embodied, minded and embedded in the world. Secondly, the world is objectively 'out there' to be perceived, in the sense that it is not merely a subjective representation inside the mind. Thirdly, people relate to the world by means of an intentional act of consciousness. This intentional act is what brings the world and its objects into consciousness, as phenomena. Consciousness is always intentional - it connects in consciousness a self to an object, worldly or other - and it is always relational - in the sense that it places a self and an object in relation to one another, by means of an intentional act. Fourthly, phenomena (objects as appearing in consciousness) bear in themselves essential qualities of the given object. Finally, through phenomenology, it is possible to inspect these phenomena and identify an object's essential qualities.⁶⁶

⁶³ Meneses, R., 2011. *Experiences of 'empathy'*. Ph.D. University of Birmingham. p.122

⁶⁴ MacIntyre, A. C. 2007. *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922*. United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. P.103 and Stein, E. and Stein, W., 1989. *On The Problem of Empathy*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications. p. x

⁶⁵ MacIntyre. p.77

⁶⁶ Meneses, 2011, p.118

For Stein, empathy is an intentional act of consciousness that is foundational to any intersubjective experience; it is a way of knowing another person's present lived experience without confusion with one's own experience. In phenomenology, empathy refers to the experience of one's own body as another. This requires that we focus on the subjectivity of the other as well as our intersubjective engagement with them. It describes the experience of something from another's viewpoint, without confusion between self and other.

Stein defines empathy as a form of intentionality directed at foreign [*fremdes*] experience [*Erleben*]. In phenomenology, intentionality is the manner of which consciousness is aware of something, i.e., in its directedness towards an object. Stein's "foreign experiences"⁶⁷ are the "intentional object"⁶⁸ of this awareness, it is the unknown experience of the other that is the focus of the empathic inquiry. Stein specifically asks us to disregard any other traditional connotation the term might have⁶⁹ so that she can undertake a new, focused examination and later continues her distancing from her contemporary thinkers on the subject by writing that "[w]e need not go into [Scheler's] polemic against empathy, since it is not directed against what we call empathy."⁷⁰

Stein's study of empathy is conducted through phenomenological analysis from which she examines how forms of feeling (sensual and emotional) are connected to the production of knowledge regarding objects, people, events and places. For Stein, empathy is a way of feeling oneself into another's present, lived experience [*sich einfühlen*]. Stein proposes that the experiences [*erlebnisse*] that form an empathic encounter are characterised by various forms of feeling felt by both the empathiser and the empathee (the person who is empathised with). The empathiser experiences perceptual and imaginative feelings as a way of knowing the empathee's bodily expressed feelings.⁷¹ Firstly, the experience of the other, the empathee, emerges to the empathiser who then follows the experience through in

⁶⁷ Stein, E. and Stein, W., 1989. *On The Problem of Empathy*. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications. p.23

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.8

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.6

⁷⁰ Ibid. p.27

⁷¹ Svenaeus, F., 2017. Edith Stein's phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 17(4), p.742.

order to, lastly, gain some understanding of the meaning or content [*gehalt*] of the experience had by the empathetee.

Now to empathy itself. Here, too [as in memory, expectation, or imagination, my addition], we are dealing with an act that is original in the sense of being a present experience but non-original as regards its content. ... When it suddenly appears before me it faces me as an object (for instance, the sadness I read in the other's face). But when I inquire into its implied tendencies (when I try to bring the other's mood to clear givenness to myself), the experience is no longer an object for me, but has pulled me into it. I am now no longer turned towards the experience, but instead I am turned towards the object of the experience. I am at the subject of the original experience, at the subject's place, and only after having fulfilled a clarification of the experience does it appear to me as an object again.

Consequently, we have in all considered cases when experiences [of other persons, my addition] are appearing to us three stages or modalities of accomplishment, even though in each concrete case not all of the three stages are accomplished, but we often are satisfied with stage one or stage two: 1. the emergence of the experience, 2. the fulfilling explication, and 3. the comprehensive objectification of the explicated experience.⁷²

Stein presents empathy as a process consisting of three *Vollzugsstufen*, which translates as stages of implementation or execution. In his 2017 article examining Stein's phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy, Frederik Svenaeus writes that to understand Stein's process of empathy we need to examine how the three stages operate and how they affectively carry meaning on two interrelated levels—sensual and emotional empathy—which Stein describes as *Schichte*, meaning layers of various depth.⁷³

Empathy occurs, according to Stein, on two interrelated levels; sensual and emotional. When we empathise we enact a process that attempts to gain a vivid sensory impression of the subject's experience; we imagine what we may feel in the subject's place. And yet, we remain aware or recognise that our imagined experience is partial and coloured by our own subjectivities. This alignment or accompaniment of experience is not to be confused with a feeling of *oneness* or mutual experience nor sympathy, where the empathiser experiences

⁷² Stein, pp.18-19

⁷³ Svenaeus, p.743

pity for the subject. Empathy requires that we focus on the subjectivity of the other as well as our intersubjective engagement with them. It describes the experience of something from another's viewpoint, without confusion between self and other.

Each of the three stages that Stein describes contain particular qualities but each also share one of empathy's inherent attributes: all are experiences. The stages generate empirical knowledge [*Erfahrungen*] that bring the empathee's direct or lived experience [*Erleben*] into the empathiser's awareness. Stein describes these as “modalities of accomplishment”⁷⁴ from which we can ascertain that these stages are measures, or ways of acquiring knowledge. Therefore, these three stages contribute to empathy as a complex, or composite process in the attempt to understand another's experience. Stein does state that the empathiser may not move through each of these three stages consecutively and that they, for instance, may engage with the first and third stages, or experience the first and second stage only. However, it is unlikely that Stein would have considered stage three alone as ‘accomplished’ empathy as recognition cannot exist without initial awareness.

Stein's empathy is not a simple matter of identification with others' emotions, but the capacity to apprehend, or *feel-into*, an environment through a perspective that isn't our own. What is important is the feeling or affective moment that leads to thought; impressions, encounters and expressions that force us to look, interpret and think. Such feeling-based knowledge is an essential aspect of conceiving objects; it creates an enriched awareness of an external environment and also an indirect sense of some of what it might be like to experience that environment from a standpoint that is not our own. However, the paradox of perspective-taking in empathy is that to situate ourselves in another's position suggests that we already know something of that position. That knowledge is always incomplete and often simplistic. Empathy is not the knowledge of another's experience as the empathiser and the subject are always inherently separate.

Moreover, even if some of what we think we know is accurate, it is always only one element of many. It also has the potential to disregard the uniqueness of the other person's

⁷⁴ Stein, p.10

experience if we assume to know it, and there is potential for appropriation or colonisation of experience. Theologian and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams states that “the ‘knowing’ of another’s experience can dangerously boil down to removing the uniqueness and complexity of another’s experience by equating (and thereby assimilating) with one’s own.”⁷⁵

Williams proposes that Stein’s empathy is an offer of accompaniment and commitment and that the making of this offer changes you. When you have a growing awareness of how much you don’t know about someone else, you begin to understand how much you don’t know about yourself. You learn “a more demanding kind of attention. You learn patience and a new skill and habit of perspective.”⁷⁶ Rather than purely a neurological capacity, Williams positions Stein’s empathy as a process of learning to grasp the alterity of the other and “the fluidity and ambiguity of [their] communication, and thus something of the nature of their interiority.”⁷⁷ Williams proposes that acknowledgement and examination of what we know and we don’t know is an essential ethical consideration within intersubjective encounters.

By responding ‘I do not know how you feel’ you allow the other person time, space and freedom to share and educate you about their experience. You do not have the right to colonise another’s experience as just a variant of your own nor borrow or appropriate to add complexity to your own experience. This is the ethical edge of knowing.⁷⁸

And yet, without the capacity to imagine experience from another person’s point of view, society and community fracture into individualism. Rather than transforming a lack of knowledge of another’s experience into an absolute understanding, empathy is far more ethical in its vulnerability and openness as “ethics is always involved in language and culture [so that] we need to find both words and silence for understanding to arise.”⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Williams, R. (2020). *StED Talk - Bishop Rowan Williams - Ethics and Empathy*. St Edward's Institute for Christian Thought. [video] YouTube, <https://youtu.be/Acxh-U4CymU>.

⁷⁶ Williams, R. [Mahindra Humanities Center] (2014) *The Other as Myself: Empathy and Power*, Tanner Lectures: The Paradoxes of Empathy, [video], YouTube, <https://youtu.be/R8e1SRngtNo>

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Williams (2020)

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

Empathy is an active process borne of acknowledged unknowns, a means of partial understanding through an offer of accompaniment. Such an offer opens an inter-subjective affective space that is wholly necessary for creating connections with studied perception and description as means of making sense.

Contemporary definitions of empathy

Meneses writes that empathy is an ‘umbrella term’ with multiple, distinctive, and sometimes contrasting, meanings. It is connected to many, varied theoretical disciplines with wide ranging authors and contexts such as those found within psychology, theology, aesthetics, sociology, education, as well as in biology and zoology and are all centrally entangled to a central concept that is difficult to definitely categorise. In psychology, social understandings are typically formed through intellectual or intuitive operations such as perspective-taking or contagion.

According to Meneses, empathy is a term that is “in an extensive body of publications, to designate all sorts of experiences. Empathy is a big drawer that stores all sorts of objects, and as such, a cause of controversies and conceptual chaos.”⁸⁰ The divergence of meaning is not purely superficial but that there is an “underlying connective link to current meanings of empathy [of] the assumption that empathy is a way of knowing, or understanding, that which another person is experiencing.”⁸¹ Following social psychologist C. Daniel Batson,⁸² Meneses divides empathy as either empathy-as-responding or empathy-as-knowing. This broadly amounts to a difference between response and knowing and is used as a strategy to deal with the diversity of empathy’s common meanings. However, the most common empathy division is in terms of affective and cognitive, i.e., intuitive and intellectual.

⁸⁰ Meneses, 2011. p.4

⁸¹ Ibid. p.5

⁸² Batson, C. D. 2009. *These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena*, In Decety J. Editor & Ickes, W. Editor (Eds) *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, 1, 3-15, Cambridge: MIT press.

How empathy is defined within this thesis

In the context of this thesis, I will discuss the three stages of Stein's empathy process in connection to my practice of illustration. My grandfather's experience of walking his home city is notably divided by his absence and the Blitz. The walks he conducted in 1939 before his conscription and Plymouth's bombardment contrasted with the walk he experienced on his first visit after the war where he witnessed the damage the city had incurred. The traumatic moment of witnessing is the 'foreign experience' that I attempt to come-to-know with empathy through the practice of illustration. As a granddaughter-illustrator, the making of visual practice is a form of encountering the past that additionally sits within the context of Marianne Hirsch's term of postmemory.

I translate Stein's 'emergence of the experience' as an awareness that arises through looking, hearing, reading, touching. For simplicity I will refer to this stage as *receptivity*; this term refers to all such means of initial elements of an empathic encounter. The second stage 'fulfilling explication' can be defined as an undertaking of a detailed examination or analysis which, according to Stein, can include reflexes of imagination and even memory. I will term stage as *feeling-into* in accordance with Stein's explanation that this is the stage in which the empathiser *feels into* or is pulled into' the object of focus, that of the other's foreign experience. Lastly, 'the comprehensive objectification of the explicated experience' will be referred to as the *recognising* stage. At this point in the process of empathy, the empathiser is not only aware, to some degree, of the other's experience and its content but also, importantly, that that experience belongs to the other and is not their own. The empathiser sees the sadness in the empathee's face, the empathiser imagines what it is causing this thereby feeling into this emotional experience, and finally the empathiser recognises what and why the empathee is experiencing without confusing it as their own experience.

In this study, I use coming-to-know, or way of knowing to describe illustration and empathy's ability to facilitate knowledge production. Stein defines empathy as a way of

knowing another's experience rather than a response to it.⁸³ For Stein, empathy does not follow knowledge, as in response or reaction, but is an intersubjective process of coming-to-know another's lived experience. The object of attention focused on the empathic encounter is the experience of the other. The distinction between coming-to-know, or way of knowing, and knowledge is important both in understanding Stein's phenomenological explication of empathy and in contextually grounding this thesis. Consequently, I feel it is prudent to adhere to 'knowing' as opposed to knowledge in my discussion of illustration practice, or process-based act, rather than a resulting outcome.

Although specificity of meaning is liable to shift in the translation of one language to another, German and English are linguistic cousins with shared commonalities of inheritance. To 'know' derives from the Old English verb *cnāwen* meaning to know, perceive, and recognise. This, in turn, is derived from the Proto-Germanic verb *knēaną* meaning to know, recognise, and understand. From this, it can be reasoned that both perception and recognition are indispensable in the formation of knowledge and understanding. This is appropriate in that Stein writes that "empathy is a kind of act of perceiving *sui generis*".⁸⁴

Knowledge is acquired as a result of learning mechanisms that are often fed by observation, interpretation and communication. Knowledge is gained, held, stored, built upon and sometimes refuted. It is linguistically framed as passive where actions are employed to move and situate it as though it were a material object within an archive or repository. Whereas *knowing* describes both the state of possessing knowledge and also the present state of producing or processing knowledge. Stein writes that knowledge [*Wissen*] "is created in this encounter. It is nothing more. Knowledge reaches its object but does not 'have' it. It stands before its object but does not see it. Knowledge is blind, empty, and restless, always pointing back to some kind of experienced, seen act. And the experience to which knowledge of foreign experience points is called empathy."⁸⁵

⁸³ Meneses. 2011. p.120

⁸⁴ Stein, p.11

⁸⁵ Stein, p.19

Knowledge also carries a weight of certainty whereas knowing, the process of gaining knowledge, inherently contains doubt alongside insight. This inclusion of doubt is pertinent when discussing empathy as the subject (the empathiser) can never have full knowledge of the object's (the empathee) subjective experience. Stein writes that we all have a zero-point of orientation within the world, this being our individual and unique perspective and that empathy is the attempt to experience another's zero-point of orientation. All the while, we must acknowledge that this viewpoint can never be fully revealed as empathic knowing is always a second-person experience and not a personal, authentic experience. Doubt and not-knowing are always already contained within any empathic knowledge.

Stein's discussion of empathy is not only applicable to contemporary scholarship but her academic work has also been previously overlooked in comparison to her male contemporaries such as Husserl and Heidegger. The length of time it took for her early philosophical work to be translated into English by her grand-niece Waltraut Stein compared to her later theological writings after becoming a Carmelite nun is perhaps testament to levels of sexism and antisemitism prevalent within academic circles at the time.⁸⁶ However, Stein's writings have justifiably been given greater attention in recent years; see Meier (1998), Meneses and Larkin (2012), Williams (2014), Kukar (2016), Wilhelmsson (2016), Svenaeus (2017), Calcagno (2018) to name but a few. This surge in examination of her early philosophical work a century after it was conducted shows the applicability of her writing for contemporary academics. Nonetheless, Stein's insights have yet to be applied to visual arts let alone to the critically young field of illustration.

⁸⁶ Szanto, T. and Moran, D. "Edith Stein", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/stein/>> And Stein, E., Gelber, L. and Leuven, R., 1986. *Life in a Jewish family*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications. p.418

Postmemory

Feminist comparative literature scholar Marianne Hirsch originally defined the term 'postmemory' to mean a memory relationship between Holocaust survivors and the "generation after".⁸⁷ While connected to a site or event of trauma, it has since expanded to include later descendants and distant contemporary witnesses of other tragedies and atrocities. Multiple writers, such as Hirsch, concerned with analysing Holocaust and post-Holocaust representation refer to an act of looking from later generations back to the experience of the previous generation, as a form of witnessing. Prefixes such as *distant* (Liss); *belated* (Levine); *vicarious* (Zeitlin); *artifactual* (Liss); *retrospective* (Hirsch); and, notably, *secondary* (LaCapra; Kaplan; Hoffman; Heckner; Hirsch) are used to distinguish this particular form of bearing witness to that of survivors. Secondary witnessing is not limited to the second generation, those born after trauma, but is a phenomenon that can be experienced through further familial, collateral and adoptive relationships via a "dynamic mode of transmission...mediated by representations".⁸⁸ Such representations whether they are visual, literary or performative, facilitate postmemory in those who engage with them in the attempt to understand the experience of the other who directly witnessed the traumatic moment.

Postmemory is constructed with fragments and gaps of knowledge that are often passed down through described remembrances, documents, photographs, and behaviours. Those who inherit this mediated form of knowledge often feel compelled to examine and explore them and it is this interaction "by imaginative investment, projection, and creation"⁸⁹ that generates postmemory. It is therefore not simply something that people possess but rather a process that is enacted by "mediated structures"⁹⁰ that are generally aesthetic works. Such creative practice is compelled by a desire to fill empty or absent memory through

⁸⁷ Hirsch, M. (2012). *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.5

⁸⁸ Heckner, E. (2008). *Whose Trauma is it? Identification and Secondary Witnessing in the age of Postmemory in Visualizing the Holocaust: documents, aesthetics, memory*. Rochester, NY: Camen House p.67

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Hirsch, *ibid.* p.23

performative practices, however, those very silences and absences lie central, and always already present to postmemory.⁹¹ Consequently, postmemory work inherently contains and acknowledges absences in a manner similar to the recognition stage of empathy as it acknowledges its own gaps and discrepancies within any grasped knowledge.

As an indirect connection to the past postmemory is, according to Hirsch, a “structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge” and a “consequence of traumatic recall”.⁹² In his article *Memory Shot Through With Holes*, French writer Henri Raczymow describes his books being driven by *mémoire trouée*, “empty memory...which propels [his] writing forward.”⁹³

[It] formed a kind of parenthesis. I opened the parenthesis on a Poland that I knew led directly to Auschwitz or Treblinka, and I closed it on a portrayal of the Parisian Jewish quarter of Belleville in the 1950s. In the center of the parenthesis stood a blank. [...] A parenthesis was formed before and after, the prewar and the postwar; it was a frame in whose center lay silence.⁹⁴

The absence of that which is unrecorded, unspeakable or unknown instigates his creative practice and yet the outcomes “do not attempt to fill in an empty memory.”⁹⁵ The work is not a substitution for memory but rather an addition; a palimpsestic layering of memory and lack of memory that both manifests after and acknowledges the event.

Gary Spicer is a contemporary creative practitioner whose work is propelled by similar concerns as Raczymow. He investigates an intersection of personal and Holocaust narratives through situated and memory-based drawing and writing.⁹⁶ These encounters include the unknown as it is impossible to directly experience the Holocaust and so there can only ever be a confrontation with its legacy and its historical archives. Spicer writes

⁹¹ Hirsch, *ibid.*

⁹² Hirsch, *ibid.* p.6

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.104

⁹⁴ Raczymow, H. and Astro, A. “Memory Shot Through With Holes.” *Yale French Studies*, no. 85, 1994, p102. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2930067.

⁹⁵ Hirsch, *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Spicer, G. (2023). *Personal website*. garyspicer.net/About

that such creative encounters can be interpreted as a way of “being with what was there [in Poland], what is still there, what is missing and what has been replaced.”⁹⁷ Vestiges and absences of the past continuously coalesce with the present in a state of entanglement, it is through his creative encounters that Spicer is able to discern such complexities of landscape and memory.

The illustration practice undertaken in this PhD is a methodological and visual articulation of the “relentless obsessive searches...[that] conjure images that cannot be found, marks that are invisible.”⁹⁸ The distance of over eighty years and a lack of personal documentation prevents me from knowing my grandfather’s experience of walking the city both before conscription in 1939 and on his return visit after VE day. His walks, before and after the Blitz, act as a parenthesis to an event whose damage he found to be unspeakable.

Like many of his generation, my grandfather experienced numerous griefs and unspoken moments as a result of the war, and witnessing his home city after the bombing would have been wounding in itself. Literary theorist Cathy Caruth defines trauma as “a wound not inflicted upon the body, but upon the mind”.⁹⁹ This wound is not fully comprehended at the moment of experience and subsequently returns to the person repeatedly through dreams and repetitive actions. It is within the act of remembering that trauma resides and so it is this movement between the known and the unknown that affects, or disrupts, memory. Repetition is symptomatic of acting out traumatic memory but critical engagement with these repetitions can translate into a productive mode of working through. Hirsch writes:

The notion of postmemory derives from the recognition of the belated nature of traumatic memory itself. If indeed one of the signs of trauma is its delayed recognition, if trauma is recognizable only through its after-effects, then it is not surprising that it is transmitted across generations. Perhaps it is only in subsequent generations that trauma can be witnessed and worked through, by those who were

⁹⁷ Spicer, G. (2017) *Necessitating my alliance: A meditation on the Płaszów concentration camp*. JAWS: Journal of Arts Writing by Students, Volume 3, Issue 1-2. Intellect publishing.

⁹⁸ Hirsch, *ibid.* p.247

⁹⁹ Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. p.3

not there to live it but who received its effects, belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation. Cathy Caruth suggests that trauma is an encounter with another, an act of telling and listening, a listening to another's wound, recognizable in its intersubjective relation. Trauma may also be a way of seeing through another's eyes, of remembering another's memories through the experience of their effects.¹⁰⁰

This 'encounter with another' mirrors Stein's description of empathy as an intersubjective engagement as a way of knowing another's lived experience. Postmemory as a 'way of seeing' is an appropriate means of encounter in order to ascertain a particular empathic 'way of knowing' that which is difficult to communicate. The holed nature of postmemory therefore generates a form of knowledge that is perforated in that it is always inherently incomplete. This reflects Stein's discussion of any empathic understandings formed as always containing unknowns; as the empathiser and the subject are always separate there can never be full, complete knowledge.

A familial connection to my grandfather brings concern for his traumatic experience of witnessing. However, I am also aware that this figure of my grandfather, as a young man, is predominantly fictitious and that I am both authoring and projecting my own perspective onto this figure. And yet, without empathy creative outputs would simply perform as technical exercises. As communication is an intrinsic facility of illustration it is a suitable practice for creating connection. In this attempt, I not only replicate Stein's paradigm of empathy but also create work that can be defined as postmemorial. Therefore, I propose that postmemory arts practice is empathic as it is made with a desire to connect to the past.

Silence or unspeakability is a protective measure conducted by those who have witnessed trauma; the experience is too painful or incomprehensible to articulate. This silence inherited by subsequent generations can be both a consequence of the original experience

¹⁰⁰ Hirsch, M. (2001). *Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory* in *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Volume 14, Number 1. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. p.12

and a compulsion to address and understand it. Repression, obscurity and unknowability converge and thereby prompt a desire to, in some manner, resolve. Illustration's inherent communicative capabilities can be used as a practice to help relieve the burden of such silent, unspeakable generational inheritance. Consequently, illustration practice, as a way of asking, combined with postmemory as a way of looking at the past can be brought together in the ethical attempt to come-to-know another's traumatic experience.

Within this thesis, postmemory is enacted with the figure of the granddaughter-illustrator in the attempt to come-to-know the past through the production of practice. The act of illustration is used as a means of experiencing an empathic encounter and working through the emotional and psychological complexities of a previous familial generation. The creative practice visually tracks the intergenerational interaction which can be described as an act, process, gesture, or even accompaniment. But also, as an outcome, illustration practice can be a testimony produced through third-generation, or tertiary witnessing. Illustration, as a dynamic mode of transmission, is an ethical way of knowing another's past experience without appropriating as the insurmountable gap of not-knowing is always inherently present.

Through conducting illustration-led research, I have attempted to immerse myself within the city of an absent person's youth in order to attempt to gain some understanding of his experience, all the while recognising that such a task can never be fully achieved. In this regard, illustration as empathy is utilised to create an alternative way of knowing when writing about a Blitzed city. That which is unknown, or unknowable, is allowed to exert as much prominence as attainable knowledge.

I

Receptive attention in empathic
encounters

Chapters one, two, and three are divided into three sections. The first details the starting point, the destination and a visual documentation of the route taken. And so, the first section presents an investigative walk as a form of practice-led research. As I cannot ask my grandfather his experience of walking his home city before the Blitz nor of his first walk across it in his first visit after the war, I am faced with an absence of knowledge that can never be adequately answered through traditional research methods. A means of addressing this is through self-reflective phenomenological inquiry conducted by walking the same city. In this manner, I am faced with the equivalences and the discontinuities between the contemporary city and the past city which I experience through the physicality of moving on foot. Although each walk is a way of acting-out an imagined walk undertaken by a previous pedestrian it is also a form of collecting information that can be later developed or worked-through illustration practice.

Stein's first stage of empathy, which she describes as 'the emergence of experience', occurs when a person encounters another's experience for the first time and becomes aware of it without understanding its details. Sensorial attention, a key and formative component of this purposeful, affect-based mode of knowing, is often evoked at this stage. In the second section of this chapter, I examine Stein's description of the mechanics of this stage in relation to Shari Tishman's pedagogical method of observation, slow looking. I put forward that Tishman's slow looking is a tangible way of experiencing the stages of Stein's empathic process as both utilise a heightened sensorial attention to initially see the object of examination, i.e., the experience of the other. In extension I argue that the practice of illustration can actively perform Stein's empathy process and that it begins with an equivalent studied focus. In this second section of the chapter, I describe how this receptive form of attention can be used when walking a city to initiate empathic encounters.

In the third section of this chapter, I reflect on creative practice made in response to both the archival research and the physical experience of the investigative walk. This practice takes place through critical analysis of images and objects produced that attempt to

work-through subconscious or intuitive understandings formed from the walk. It is also an attempt to communicate this process of trying to find knowledge in the face of absence, silence and unknowability. Additionally, I experiment with visual practice in how to express this first stage of empathy, that of a receptive form of attention.

In the third section I also explore this form of attention through illustrative writing. Originally made for a *Journal of Illustration* article, I examine a collection of damaged ceramics held in Plymouth City Collections. This form of writing sits within my multi-modal praxis of illustration as already argued by Gannon and Fauchon:

The strategies and behaviours that underpin illustration as a discipline are applied to writing as they would any other form...While the material outcome is not in the most direct sense visual, the treatment of content, structure and delivery perform as they would in an illustrative image...[It] does not merely describe or translate information, it performs it with affect.¹⁰¹

The writing in ‘The damage that decorates’ performs the first stage of an empathic encounter in its articulation of an intentional and studied way of looking at these objects that is parallel to my detailed drawings of instances of damage and decay found in the cityscape.

It is important to clarify that the outcomes of my practice-led research, such as illustrative-writing and image making, are not empathic. I put forward that what is empathic is the actual process of making; it is the act of illustration that is comparable to Stein’s three stages of empathy. The outcomes are instead both devices to generate, and the remains of, this phenomenological operation. In this regard, illustration articulates Stein’s theory and interprets it as practice-led research.

¹⁰¹ Gannon and Fauchon. p.58

Section one: Investigative walk to Millbay

As the starting point for each of the walks is someone's home, I felt that it would be unethical to photographically show, or give a location to, what was my grandfather's house. Instead, I have used descriptive writing to introduce this starting point to the reader and to emphasise the subjective nature of this inquiry. This writing is formatted in a different font and colour [Roboto] from the rest of the text as a means of differentiating it.

I continue by describing the destination of the route, why I selected it, and its historical narrative within the city. This first walk had a specific route that I attempted to follow and the archival research undertaken for the walk had a significant influence on the illustration practice produced. However, I maintain that it is not theory-led practice but has equal footing with the phenomenological experience of the walk, which in itself is a form of practice-led research.

Finally, my description is presented by a selection of sequential photographs taken while walking the route. I use these images as personal archival documents of my emplacement within Plymouth and to counter the absence of knowledge about my grandfather's experience of walking the city. Anything other, such as drawing or writing, would be a retrospective description as they did not occur on-site. The photographs also communicate a particular form of attention that is engaged during what Stein terms 'the emergence of experience'.

Facing south-east, halfway along an avenue, it is an unassuming semi-detached with beige-grey pebbledash, decorative ledges and doorway arch. The steps, edges of the front wall and the pillar next to the bins are all painted liquorice black. The house is one of three on the street with these black details; however, the other two retain the lighter lines of the façade between the archway tiles. Here the black has swallowed the arch. Elsewhere on the street these features are predominately white against pastel walls although a few have the odd flash of vermillion, pine or ultramarine.

The door and windows are the white, uniform, energy efficient UPVC membranes that now frame most homes. The glass of the door is rippled to allow light to pass the

threshold but to obscure any view through it. There is a square yellow sticker above the door handle asserting "NO cold callers".

At the four large windows, any view into the property is again prevented. Gauze curtains hang behind the panes shrouding the rooms within. An oval, yellowing alarm guards the building from unwanted intrusion. It seems that the only invitation of the external world into the house is marked by the television aerial and dish. With these tools, anything outside the house is reduced to controlled light for observation inside the house.

Each of the walks commence from the same site; the house that my grandfather lived in for his first eighteen years survived the destruction of the Blitz and so is a material connection to his youth in Plymouth. The familial link to me that was once within the house has long since vacated and so to enter is redundant. The house is an empty container and commencement site.

In order to grasp an idea of the pre-Blitz city by walking the current cityscape, I navigated with two Ordnance Survey maps that were accurate to Plymouth in 1939. Some fragments of the past city remained in accordance with their position on the map; however, at times, several past paths were blocked by younger walls. In walking the present city by following routes of the past, instances of resonance and dissonance occur. When buildings and roads matched with what is cartographically described I began to gain some understanding of the pre-Blitz city. However, this understanding would then be undermined by instances of difference that would highlight the impossibility of such understanding. It would force me to compare and account for the variances between the two cities and the two walkers.

I chose to walk from the house in Peverell to the site of Plymouth Millbay railway station. This was the city's first train station and it closed to the public less than one hundred years later after sustaining damage in a bombing raid. As the closer stations at Mutley and North Road were closed for track alterations in a major rebuilding scheme that had begun 1938, Millbay was the station that I imagined my grandfather used as a means to travel out of the city when conscripted to the RAF the following year.

Opened on the 5th May 1849, Plymouth station became known as Plymouth Millbay after other stations at Mutley and North Road opened in 1876-7.¹⁰² Opposite the station and the South Devon Railway headquarters was the Duke of Cornwall Hotel which opened in 1865 to accommodate the increasing number of passengers for the trains and ships. The Victorian Gothic-style hotel hosted numerous notable guests including Ernest Shackleton the night before the fateful Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition in 1914;¹⁰³ Charlie Chaplin en route from London to New York via Millbay docks; and Sir John Betjeman.¹⁰⁴ Unlike the station and the nearby church St James the Less, the Duke of Cornwall hotel survived the Plymouth Blitz and still stands.

The station was closed to passengers on 23rd April 1941 due to bomb damage and was solely used for goods traffic until 30th June 1971.¹⁰⁵ The site is now the Plymouth Pavilions leisure complex built in 1991 but two granite gate posts with traces of damage from the Plymouth Blitz remain outside the missing station's entrance, facing the hotel.

The walk I took to Millbay followed the last route of the Plymouth Corporation tram system. At its height in 1925, the system had a maximum of 135 cars but by 1930 it became necessary to replace the deep-red fleet with buses. However, following the outbreak of war in 1939 the remaining route, Theatre to Peverell, was kept running as it was powered by electricity generated by British coal rather than imported fuel. It continued to run on weekdays however, following city centre bomb damage in April 1941 the service only operated between Drake's Circus and Peverell. The final tram operated in September 1945 once the war in Europe had ended and so became the last street tramway in the West of

¹⁰² Oakley, M. (2007). *Devon Railway Stations*. Wimbourne: The Dovecote Press.

¹⁰³ Williams, A. (2014) *Celebrating centenary of Shackleton's epic expedition*, University of Plymouth press office, <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/news/shackleton-100-plymouth-centenary-of-endurance>

¹⁰⁴ Rossiter, K. (2013). *Memories of Millbay port's star studded history*, Plymouth Herald, <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/Memories-Millbay-port-s-star-studded-history/story-20232758-detail/story.html>

¹⁰⁵ Moseley, B. (2018). *Plymouth Station (Millbay)*, Old Plymouth, [https://www.oldplymouth.uk/Railways-Plymouth%20Station%20\(Millbay\).htm](https://www.oldplymouth.uk/Railways-Plymouth%20Station%20(Millbay).htm)

England.¹⁰⁶ Tram rails remained around the city for years afterwards and most are still buried beneath the tarmac on many of the main roads. Occasionally, in prolonged hot weather, they emerge. Both the train and the tram changed the speed of the city with pedestrians becoming passengers. However, the damage inflicted upon the city during and after the fifty-nine Luftwaffe bomb raids, caused residents to return to their journeys on foot.

¹⁰⁶ The Western Power Electricity Historical Society, *Plymouth Corporation Tramways*, <https://wpehs.org.uk/plymouth-corporation-tramways>



“Re-membering, an effort to make sense of the trauma of the present, requires a recognition of loss. The reassembled fragments of the past inevitably reveal cracks and missing pieces; and such gaps and absences are central to understandings of the past. One must comprehend how traumatic loss in the past defines one’s present.”

Yoshikuni Igarshari



“...a tableau, a ruination, a precise moment of decay, an image explodes out of the past.”

Esther Leslie



“The fact that something was in front of a camera matters; what that something was does not... What matters is displaced.”

Margaret Olin



“Things wabi-sabi are expressions of time frozen. They are made of materials that are visibly vulnerable to the effects of weathering and human treatment. They record the sun, wind, rain, heat and cold in a language of discolouration, rust, tarnish, stain, warping, shrinking, shrivelling, and cracking. Their nicks, chips, bruises, scars, dents, peeling and other forms of attrition are a testament to histories of use and misuse.”

Leonard Koren



“We should seek out inconsistencies and gaps and see if we can make creative use of them.”

Hilary Mantel



“Since the past can now be constructed out of virtually anything, and no one knows what tomorrow’s past will hold, our anxious uncertainty turns everything into ‘trace’, a potential piece of evidence, a taint of history with which we contaminate the innocence of everything we touch.”

Pierre Nora



“Could it be that red is the one colour that is continuously asking for a body?”

John Berger



“Knowledge, so the emblematic ruin insists, is a matter of piecing together a sundered past.”

Brian Dillon



“Collage at once cuts and repairs, fragments and makes whole again these cuts and wounds are never fully ‘healed’, into a smooth continuous surface, neither physically nor conceptually.”

Patrizia Di Bello



“...the impulse to return as a fractured encounter between generations, between cultures, and between mutually imbricated histories occurring in a layered present. From a layered present to a complicated past, return is desired as much as it is impossible.”

Marianne Hirsch

Section two: Contextual examination of Stein's first stage of empathy and its application to a walker in a city

In this section I discuss what I define as empathic attention in terms of this study. I begin with examining the nature of the first stage of Stein's empathy process which I describe as receptivity, manifesting via multiple sensorial forms and the practical methods in which it can be used. I continue by evaluating how walking can be used as a method of investigation in the context of this PhD. I look at the ways in which walking is an empathic means of embodiment, embeddedness, perspective-shifting, and how the pace affects what is experienced. Finally, I address how walking with receptive attention can initiate empathic encounters within a city. In this I refer to artist-researcher Emily Orley's examination of encountering which features ideas of place by anthropologist Keith Basso and cultural geographer Doreen Massey and positions such receptive interactions with place as an ethical way of knowing.

Receptivity: stage one of empathy, the emergence of experience

The first stage of Edith Stein's empathy process is 'the emergence of experience', which I have termed *receptivity* to encompass the initial sensory awareness of the other in an encounter. It is at this point that the empathiser faces, and begins to become aware of, the empathee's experience. Stein writes that "[w]hen it arises before me all at once it faces me as an object (such as the sadness I "read in another's face")."¹⁰⁷ From this statement, several deductions can be made: firstly 'it' is the *experience* of the other, or rather, another person's relationship with the world. This experience, and not the other themselves, is perceived 'as an object'. Unlike with ordinary perceptive acts where we see physical objects, empathic perceptions of another's experience are given in conscious awareness. Meneses and Larkin write that "when we perceive an expressive gesture, the gesture *and* its meaning are given

¹⁰⁷ Stein, p.10

to us immediately and together”.¹⁰⁸ Stein writes that when she sees a person blushing, she understands that they are experiencing shame. She perceives the other person’s blush and their embarrassment concurrently and this, the other person’s experience, is the object of focus.

The ‘object’ of empathy has two meanings. Firstly, the object is the meaning or content of another’s interior conscious experience; i.e., the shame felt by Stein’s companion. Secondly, the experience of the other is initially viewed (in stage one) “as an object” in comparison to the empathiser’s present felt experience. Stein writes “the objectification of the empathised experience, in contrast with my own experience, is a part of the interpretation of foreign experience.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, objectification is a necessary means in the attempt to understand the other’s felt experience; Stein sees the other person’s blush and interprets that their flushed face indicates shame. In his analysis of Stein’s discussion of sensual and emotional empathy, philosopher Frederik Svenaeus describes the content or *Gehalt* of an experience as being made up of:

two components, the “way of being given” (“*Gegebenheitsweise*”) and the “what is being given” (“*Gegenstand*”), where the latter is also called the object of the experience (Stein 2008: 15–16; Stein 2010: 18–19, 86– 87). “*Gehalt*” can be translated as “content” or “meaning content”, as I have done above, but it is consequently important to remember that to the content, in the sense of a “what is being given”, there always belongs a “how it is being given”.¹¹⁰

Stein's spatial metaphor of “the emergence of experience” arising “*as an object*” exemplifies this concurrent combination of meaning and interpretation. The other person’s shame or embarrassment is *what* is being given and the blush is *the way* in which it is being given. And yet, Stein does not see the shame itself but only the indexical sign of their blush.

Stein begins her description of empathy by comparing it to other acts; the first being outer perception. She gives an example of empathy’s initial stage to illustrate the awareness it

¹⁰⁸ Meneses, R. W., Larkin, M. (2012) *Edith Stein and the Contemporary Psychological Study of Empathy*, Journal of Phenomenological Psychology. p.167

¹⁰⁹ Stein, p.122

¹¹⁰ Svenaeus, F. 2018. *Edith Stein’s phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy*. *Phenom Cogn Sci* 17, 741–760. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9544-9>

evokes, and how 'what is given' can be *seen*. "A friend tells me that he has lost his brother and I become aware of his pain. What kind of awareness is this? [...] Perhaps his face is pale and disturbed, his voice toneless and strained."¹¹¹ The friend's countenance indicates his pain but, as Stein continues, she has "no outer perception of the pain [...] The pain is not a thing and is not given to me as a thing, even when I am aware of it "in" the pained countenance. I perceive this pained countenance outwardly and the pain is given "at one" with it."¹¹² Stein perceives the pain of her friend through seeing, or hearing, the effects of the pain on that person. These effects are accessible in the here-and-now and elicit a particular 'kind of awareness' from the empathiser. Such awareness, or receptivity, encompasses what is perceived (be that seen, heard, touched, etc.) and what is hidden. The friend tells Stein that they have lost their brother; this statement is vague and muddled with multiple meanings, however, their pale pallor or strained voice indicates that which cannot be directly seen; their pain.

Stein defines outer perception as "a term for acts in which spatio-temporal concrete being and occurring *come to me in embodied givenness*."¹¹³ This being has the quality of being there itself right now; it turns this or that side to me and the side turned to me is embodied in a specific sense. It is primordially there in comparison with sides co-perceived but averted."¹¹⁴ It is the inclusion of the averted sides with the given sides to see the object *as a whole* that Stein parallels with empathic acts. If I perceive a ceramic bottle; I see the side that faces me and its surroundings, or context. I cannot see inside or under the glaze (the interior), nor can I see the side that does not face me (the averted), and yet I am still consciously aware of their presence and so I see the bottle in its wholeness. Stein cannot see the other's inner emotional life, the pain or the shame that they are experiencing—this is an averted side—but she can see the effects of the emotion or sensation as they are presented to her directly and presently. Stein's receptivity combines her examination of the effects, and her intuition of their meaning through interpretation: this is how she displays an empathic form of

¹¹¹ Stein, p.6

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ my use of italics.

¹¹⁴ Stein, p.6

attention. And so, that which is the object of empathic investigation offers the empathiser sides that they can come to know in conjunction with sides that they can never *fully* know. Empathy, therefore, is a way of knowing that is inherently comprised of both tangible knowns and unknowns.

It is worth noting that it is not Stein who manifests her awareness of the other through analytical or cognitive processes such as perspective-taking or simulation, but instead it appears suddenly—"it arises before me"—in what she describes as immediate, direct *givenness*. Therefore, in general, and particularly at this stage, empathy is not a way of knowing predicated on acquisition, but on reception. In 1998, the year of Stein's canonisation, Lynn A. Meier writes in her article '*Edith Stein: Empathy as Means*' that;

Empathy, then, is an in-breaking of the other into our own consciousness. It is not an act of our will, rather it would seem to *happen* to us. We are *passive*; the experience is given. Certainly this implies that we are on some level open, receptive. In a peculiar way, moreover, we are reciprocally vulnerable to each other. Our boundaries are breached in a participatory experience which leaves intact our sense of being an individual.¹¹⁵

Meier's description of the 'reciprocally vulnerable' nature of an empathic encounter is highly apt as it alludes to the intersubjective aspect of Stein's empathy process. Despite it not being 'an act of will', the empathiser and the empathee must be mutually available to one another within the empathic encounter and this implies an investment of attention. Stein can only become aware of, or see, the blush on her companion's face because she is directly facing them and they are occupying her attention. Conversely, they see her watching and therefore are aware that she is witnessing their shame. The empathiser not only attempts to learn about the other's experience but also gains a greater, in-depth understanding of their own subjectivities and values.

Empathy's initial stage is comparable to perception in that it is immediate, direct and unmediated. But Stein clarifies that whereas "perception has its object before it in embodied givenness; empathy does not. But both have their object itself there and meet it

¹¹⁵ Meier, L. A. (1998). *Edith Stein: Empathy as Means*. Spiritual Life, p.132

directly where it is anchored in the continuity of being.”¹¹⁶ The ceramic bottle is before me, directly, and in the here-and-now whereas the object of Stein’s attention—her friend’s pain or shame—cannot be directly perceived, it is averted. Additionally, the content of the empathic encounter is primordial for the empathiser but not for the empathee. Stein perceives the other person’s embarrassment in their blush occurring in the present but, for the other, the experience is a result of something that has already happened; the shame that causes the blush. The empathic encounters that are attempted and explored within this thesis present this temporal distinction markedly. For instance, I examined a group of Blitz-damaged ceramics from Plymouth City Collections and my awareness of their experience, the event that marked them, ‘arose before me all at once’ in the present moment of perception, but of course the actual moment of the event that shaped them occurred more than seventy years previously.

I present *receptivity* as an active initiation of an empathic encounter; an affective openness of attention employed in order to become more aware of another’s embodied and embedded experience. This can be a studied, or close, form of observation, careful listening, or any other manner of sensory engagement performed in a deliberate, attentive manner. In the context of this PhD, I would position this initial stage with encountering detail on a walk; examining a collection of damaged ceramics; and visually analysing and drawing from an archival photograph. But, before explicating this proposition through my practice-led research I would like to compare the first stage of empathy with a particular model of ‘Slow Looking’; explore how walking is an activity that facilitates empathic attention; and examine how receptivity can lead to empathic encounters in a city.

¹¹⁶ Stein, p.19

Slow Looking

In ‘*Slow Looking: The Art and Practice of Learning Through Observation*’, Research Associate and Education lecturer Shari Tishman proposes ‘slow looking’ as an interdisciplinary pedagogical tool that is deployed, predominantly through the observation of art, to teach critical thinking. Tishman states that while discussed in vision-centric vernacular, learning through extended observation can occur through each of the senses. She writes, whatever “sensory form that it takes, slow looking is a way of gaining knowledge about the world. It helps us discern complexities that can’t be grasped quickly, [...] it is a learnable practice.”¹¹⁷ In this regard, slow looking is a way of knowing that can be affectively employed to carefully examine our embodied and embeddedness within the world and with other structures external from ourselves. I present that Tishman’s practical methodology of slow looking acts out, or forms a generative space for, Stein’s process of empathy; in particular the first stage ‘the emergence of experience’.

Tishman writes that slow looking runs counter to the hyper-productive speed of modern life and instead offers a mindful manner of examination that is centred on the object that faces the person looking at it in the here-and-now. It is an antidote to rapid distraction and cultivates a disposition to be present with what is immediately before us, the object of focus, rather than anything else in that moment. It also develops critical thinking skills alongside a motivation and sensitivity to the opportunities for the use of such skills.¹¹⁸

As with Stein’s description of the first stage of empathy, Tishman proposes that through pausing and investing time in an observation beyond a glance, we can discern and appreciate complexity. Tishman describes three types of complexity that often make themselves known through slow looking; the first is the ‘*complexity of parts and interactions*’ that “work together to form a discernible system”¹¹⁹ that can be uncovered

¹¹⁷ Tishman, S. (2017). *Slow looking: the art and practice of learning through observation*. New York: Routledge.

¹¹⁸ Tishman, S. (2019). *Teaching Critical Thinking through Art*, 1.6: *Focal Point: Why develop thinking dispositions?* <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQayrSJwAgI&t=58s>> [accessed 13 April 2022]

¹¹⁹ Tishman, p.128

through observation and inventorying. This type of complexity brings forth each part of the object of examination, the interactions between each part, the purposes of the components and complete object, as well as the contextual systems that surround.

A second type of complexity that Tishman posits that slow looking can reveal is the '*complexity of perspective*'. This is concerned with how things look from different physical or conceptual vantage points. Multiple perspectives tie, or embed, us to the objects within the world. Often these connections are invisible, sometimes they are imaginary, but they are also what connect us to each other. Through coming-to-know perspectives outside our own, we recognise both a familiarity and unfamiliarity with the object of examination.

The third type of complexity is that of the '*complexity of engagement*'. This relates to the participant's self-reflection of the act of looking itself. By becoming aware of the assumptions we bring when looking at an object of observation, we can see the unconscious biases that colour our readings. This imparts an important awareness of the frameworks that shape each of our ways of looking at the world.

Tishman divides slow looking into four themes that have distinctive qualities and are conceptually separate but that, at times, overlap: seeing with fresh eyes; exploring perspective; noticing detail; and philosophical well-being. I used the first three of these themes of observation for each of the walks. While walking, I utilised an open form of attention that was receptive to details such as physical discordances or interventions with the cityscape. This could be jarring juxtapositions of pre-Blitz and present architecture; plants that grow between or in spite of built structures; human interactions with the environment such as a can inserted into a crevice of a wall or the visible palimpsestic layers of a billboard. Ordinarily, some if not all of these details would be overlooked or seen without deliberation. However, by taking time and allowing myself to walk without being limited to the quickest possible route, I could, as much as possible, let my attention settle into a mode of inspection. In doing this, details of the city could 'arise before me' and I was able to examine them with deliberate thoughtfulness. Such receptivity elicited

consideration of different perspectives from my own present experience. Questions of who else was in the specific area of the city I was in at that moment; who would be in that spot pre-Blitz; what non-human entities occupy or traverse this space; and how these perspectives compare to my own.

There are benefits of looking quickly as instinctual, visual reasoning is needed to move efficiently and with ease through the world. It would be laborious and hugely time-consuming to have to spend long periods of time looking and relooking at things in order to fully process or understand them. However, some things require an investment in observation that amounts to more than a glance in order to comprehend them. Slow looking can be an ally of critical thinking, supporting rather than forestalling revisionist views about existing structures, e.g., such as classic works of art. It generates meaningful dialogue with the object of examination in a way that cursory looking can't provide. Being physically and psychologically present with an art object or even its photographic representation for a reasonable stretch of time allows us to encounter it in a phenomenological manner.

Stein's 'foreign experience' and Tishman's object of observation both present themselves, in some sensory manner, to the person seeking to understand it. But for this to happen, the empathiser must be receptively open to encounter them. Each is, as Meier described, "reciprocally vulnerable...in a participatory experience".¹²⁰ Slow looking prioritises an ability to see and examine details, to defer interpretation, make mindful judgements, to see between different perspectives, be aware of subjectivity, and to purposefully use a variety of observation strategies in order to move past first impressions. The prerequisites necessary for undertaking slow looking are what aligns it, as a practical mode, with Stein's phenomenological process of empathy; they follow her equation of an intersubjective and intentional act, particularly the initial stage. The strategies for slow looking also highlight how empathy is markedly different to sympathy, the latter being hierarchical and formed as

¹²⁰ Meier, p.132

a result or response to knowledge. Whereas the former is a non-hierarchical active process or way of knowing. This displays, I believe, how empathy as a process is an ethical form of encountering an object or experience of trauma.

Walking as investigation: an embodied and embedded way of knowing a city

In this PhD, I use walking as a means of gaining knowledge of a city that is both embodied and embedded. In this respect it is an investigative activity, but it is also one that I share with the familial link that connects me to the city. My maternal grandfather lived in Plymouth until the age of eighteen and would have regularly walked its streets. At the beginning of this doctoral research, I believed that the focus of examination was that of the traces and absences of the past city residing within the current. However, it is at the conclusion that I recognise that this is a metaphorical means of attempting to understand a person in time who is fundamentally unknowable to me. There is another connection beyond genealogy and geography that is pertinent and requires acknowledgement. During the war, my grandfather, as so many did, experienced grief of several friends' untimely deaths. I think the unspeakability of such loss was exemplified by the unspeakable walk he took across his home city on his first visit after the Blitz. At a similar age, my grandfather's death occurred between the sudden deaths of two close friends of my own within the space of seven months. It is in this context of grief that I experience empathic resonance most strongly.

Walking within a city generates intimate knowledge of the environment and a feeling of tangible connection to it. To move at one's own pace, and to expose the body without the solid protection of a building or vehicle, is to make ourselves vulnerable to the world thereby creating complex encounters with the landscape. Unlike within a vehicle, the distance between my living body and other objects within the world are in closer proximity.

I am also able to move myself, at will, around such objects that appear to me in direct givenness in order to perceive them from multiple vantage points. I may see a road sign from a vehicle fleetingly and yet ascertain from it the necessary information needed in that instance, i.e., whether to proceed in that direction or not. Whereas, as a walker, I can stop and elongate a glance to a more thorough and complex interaction. I can move closer to it and observe any degradation to the lettering, the manner in which paint peels, or is bleached, or is obscured by lichen or graffiti. I can move position and perhaps see what is on the other side of the sign if it is free standing. I can face the direction to which it points and the directions that it does not and thereby observe the surroundings in which it is placed. I can look at how it is affixed: be it sturdy, newly repaired, flimsy, weathered. I can see how the environment interacts with it as an object: there may be plants and vegetation growing next to, around, upon it; there may be evidence of animals passing such as tracks, urine, feathers; or there may be evidence of human passage such as litter, mark-making, or memorial tributes. In this manner, walking erodes the barriers between the self and the world outside the body, and these gaps point to a transitional site of exchange. Walking is a means of making myself 'reciprocally vulnerable'.

Walking is an embodied practice where the body's interaction with the environment constitutes and contributes to cognition. The circumstances, positioning, or mood of my living body influences the kinds of thinking that may arise, the body affects the mind. Experiences of the body, i.e., sensations, have the capacity to influence thoughts; temperature and weather, discomfort or injury, safety or potential threat each impact how I experience a location, I feel within it, and what I think of it. In phenomenology, embodied cognition is what makes our own and others' minds as observable as any other feature in the world: the abstract (thought, feeling, state) is manifested physically which can then be perceived.¹²¹ For instance, Stein reads the other person's experience of shame as it manifests as a blush. This is not restricted to facial expressions as the whole body is inhabited

¹²¹ Shapiro, L. and Spaulding, S. (2021) "Embodied Cognition", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/embodied-cognition/>.

emotionally: e.g., hands can be tensed; a way of walking can be confident or nervous. Alternatively, a walker can examine the ways in which the material details of a cityscape embody the city itself. By looking at the dissonances and equivalences between the current and pre-Blitz city the walker also comes-to-know the affect of the bombing in terms of material trauma.

Walking has long been theorised as a qualitative research method used within the social sciences such as geography¹²² and anthropology¹²³ and has also been used and modelled by those undertaking research in and through the arts.¹²⁴ By walking, the researcher is immersed in the social and physical aspects of their selected surroundings as well as the ambiguous spaces in between. The walker-researcher is physically present, their living body placed within the location, and they are also, concurrently, able to observe their inner mental landscape.

Simon Woolham is a visual artist whose work is concerned with occupied spaces and the narratives that unfold within them. His project, *The Wythy Walks*, collaboratively explores the South Manchester suburb Wythenshawe with fellow walkers, “the public, old friends, family and acquaintances; people who grew up there. [They are] a contemplative act around a community and its spaces: a complex relationship not only between the co-walker and myself as their companion, but also as an interpreter or translator of their narrative.”¹²⁵ Woolham’s objective is to facilitate dialogue between walking and narrative that engages the past alongside the present. “Starting from the house where the person was born, still lives, or spent the majority of their time in Wythenshawe,”¹²⁶ Woolham

¹²² Bate, C. Reece-Taylor, A. et al. (2017). *Walking Through Social Research*. United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

¹²³ Ingold, T. Vergunst, J. L. et al. (2008). *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*. United Kingdom: Ashgate.

¹²⁴ Careri, F., Polytekton. (2017). *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*. United States: Culicidae Architectural Press.

¹²⁵ Woolham, S. (2016) *IN SEARCH OF THE SHORTCUTS: Walking and narrative in physical, virtual and psychological space*. Doctoral thesis. Manchester Metropolitan University. p.94

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* p.95

records the contemplative conversations that occur between himself and his companions that are prompted by the rhythm of walking. These recordings, along with site-specific Biro drawings, were later developed as an ongoing series of virtually re-enacted narratives and measured filmed stills that were taken from carefully chosen sites.

Similar to Woolham's walks, my perception of the past city is irretrievably entangled with my experiences of present Plymouth due to the embodied nature of walking. This temporal unsettlement evokes ethnographer Pepper G. Glass' 'past as performed' approach to history which he presents as being subjective, embedded in everyday experience, and from the position of the present shaping the past.¹²⁷ Glass discusses that his 'go-along' interviewees, residents of Ogden, Utah, performed the past through autobiographical experiences which were tools of present interaction. "The past here is not of 'before' influencing the 'now'; it is a product of the present that shaped the past. It emerges not from tangible documentation by professionals, but from people constructing it from memory and imagination."¹²⁸ The past and contemporary city are not separate entities as historical documentation often implies but instead is one place whose appearance and identity have been irrevocably altered by time and traumatic disfigurement.

The process of a walk typically creates the illusion of linear progress through sequential time; a start-point, successive steps, and finally an end-point. However, the experience of walking rarely follows this formulaic pattern, especially when immersed in a location which contains jarring historical shifts in buildings. In *Walkscapes*, architect and researcher Francesco Careri writes that fragmented spaces emphasise a city's mutability and disrupt linear flow so that walking "turns out to be a tool which, precisely due to the simultaneous reading and writing of space intrinsic to it, lends itself to attending to and interacting with the mutability of those spaces, so as to intervene in their continuous becoming by acting in

¹²⁷ Glass, P. G. (2016). *Using history to explain the present: The past as born and performed*. *Ethnography*, 17(1), p.97. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26359119>

¹²⁸ Glass, (2016), pp.107-8

the field, in the here and now of their transformation”.¹²⁹ The setting in which the walker moves through is not static and separate, it is in a continuous flux of change and the walker’s bodily presence is part of that, it is embedded.

In contrast to remote study, by examining a location through walking it, the researcher physically places themselves within their object of examination. The experiences of the body in relation to a particular place, its situatedness, is always already entangled, or embedded. By immersing the body into the location, the researcher must be aware of their physical, sensorial, and emotional interaction with the location as well as the features of the environment itself. The physical interaction between the body and the world constrains the possible behaviours of the researcher, for example an overgrown thorny bush may block a desired path, the presence of stairs can limit chosen routes for parents with pushchairs or people with limited mobility. In this way, the examined location impacts the walker’s movement within it.

It is useful to explore the linguistic meanings of embeddedness and embed in relation to walking. The transitive verb *embed* means to lay, include, or encapsulate something in a surrounding matter. The prefix *em-* meaning in, into, covered, or bring to a certain state, combined with the suffix *-bed* from the Proto-Germanic *badjǫ* meaning plot, grave, resting place.¹³⁰ It is enclosed, infiltrated, covered, or incorporated into something as an essential characteristic. There is also an implication that is held or buried within an overarching construction or framework and that it is perhaps inactive, dead, or latent. However, despite this submersion it still exerts influence on the environment within which it is situated. And so, if we consider this in relation to walking, the walker is embedded within the location in which they travel but they remain active and can affect it as much as the location affects them. Walker and city are ‘reciprocally vulnerable’ to each other.

¹²⁹ Careri (2017), p.51

¹³⁰ Online Etymology Dictionary,

https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=embed&utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=ds_search. [Accessed 23rd May, 2022].

We must also consider how the walker is embedded within their particular perceptual experiences. Knowledge, memory, and inherent subjectivities are always already tied to the cultural and contextual frameworks and this position is affected by not only what the walker can directly perceive in the here-and-now but also what they have previously seen. This form of perspective is described by Stein as a zero point of orientation.¹³¹

Receptivity through pace and perspective

In an increasingly speed-centric world, the walker's pace allows full bodily immersion in place. Rebecca Solnit states that "modern life is moving faster than the speed of thought, or thoughtfulness."¹³² The slower pace of walking provides a pace of perception that better allows the walker to 'see something' such as historical traces and otherwise overlooked details, including the multiplicity of colours, textures, shapes and alignments embedded within the cityscape that would otherwise be obscured by the swift motion of a vehicle. Solnit continues that the "rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts."¹³³ In this way, walking can assist in the perspective-shifting undertaken to empathically come-to-know another's walk through a city. Realising the degree of a hill's gradient and the discomfort of climbing it in the height of summer evokes a specificity of reflection that would not occur from looking at a map alone. Such sensorial understandings can be too prosaic for record, but they still hold their own importance in the current experience of walking, the remembering of a route, and in assisting a sense of kinship with those who have also experienced them.

Despite the reassuring solidity of concrete and tarmac, places and paths can move, disappear, or spring up after the moment of recording. From archival and cartographic

¹³¹ Stein, p.43

¹³² Solnit, R., 2001. *Wanderlust: A History Of Walking*. Verso, p.10.

¹³³ Solnit, p.21

documents, we can establish the discrepancies and similarities between the present and the past location. Such arresting moments arise when attempting to navigate a current city with past cartography such as a pre-Blitz street map. The topography of the cityscape has altered due to the heavy bombing of the Second World War and the passage of eighty years. Some streets have shifted, and some have become blocked by newly arisen buildings thereby obstructing a walker from following the passages of past pedestrians. Nina Sääskilahti has discussed the “spectral geography” of Lapland’s provincial capital Rovaniemi left by the memory and post-memory of town buildings and landmarks, long after they have disappeared due to the city’s destruction in 1944. In this way, former structures continue to exert influence upon current perceptions of space, despite their irreversible absence.¹³⁴ Urban structures, be they roads or buildings, are not passive or static but can affect the walker. If a city, as feminist geographer Doreen Massey posits, is composed of ever-moving “intertwining ongoing trajectories [...] acts that are moments-in-progress, never to be stabilised”¹³⁵ then it is congruous to encounter them through movement, to walk as a means of feeling-into. The pace of walking intertwines with the pace of the city itself allowing the contemporary walker to keep pace with the past pedestrian, and instead of comparing a binary past vs. present, the walker can envisage that they are accompanying just out of touching distance.

Stein’s conception of empathy always involves at least two perspectives, the self and other. In this regard, empathy is an interpersonal process, and in the phenomenological sense an intersubjective experience. The empathiser is always relating to the empathised, even when empathising with one’s past self. The walker naturally inhabits the role of the empathiser simply by sharing an experience of walking through the same location as another, whether present or past. By temporarily ‘stepping aside’ from our personal perspective or positionality, the walker can accompany the other in order to see from their viewpoint.

¹³⁴ Thomas, S., 2018. *Lapland’s Dark Heritage: Exploring the Material Legacies of the Second World War in Finnish Lapland*. Presented at 3D3 Residential Weekend, AIR, Falmouth University.

¹³⁵ Massey, D., 2003. *Some Times of Space* in Olafur Eliasson: *The Weather Project*. Exhibition catalogue. London: Tate Publishing.

This accompaniment is bracketed within Stein's second stage of empathy which I will examine in Chapter Two. The empathiser fulfils [*Erfüllt*] or performs the analysis, explanation, and 'unfolding' (from the Latin *explicare*) of the other's experience.¹³⁶ There is a certain delicacy in this definition in that it presents an image of the other's experience as an object; a folded note that with careful etiquette the empathiser opens and reads.

The relationship between a walking body and a cityscape is not always an effortless negotiation. Frequently, such navigations "are fraught with obstructions, interference, fear, hurt and sadness. At the same time, privilege is paced out through cities, with some bodies more able [and more accepted] to go wherever they want, whenever they want."¹³⁷ Each walker of the city moves and interacts with the world with and through their own, intrinsically unique perspective. And yet, urban planning has often been designed and built, for and by, a particular section of society. This resulted in a pedestrian discomfort, or even exclusion, for those who do not fit within the calculated remit of 'city walker'. In this regard, walking is an egalitarian and effective method of shifting perspective in order to ascertain some awareness of the experience of others.

When the empathiser-walker completes the last step of perspective-shifting and returns to their own (metaphorical) position they can compare their approximation of the other's experience with their own. "Adopting the perspective of the observed person is necessary but regaining one's own perspective plays a vital role in emotional empathy. [...] Only through self-perspective can one vicariously experience the emotion of another person."¹³⁸ This return is the recognition stage of Stein's empathy, the 'comprehensive objectification of the explicated experience'. The empathiser resolves their experiential knowledge attained through perspective-shifting and compares it, as an object of study, alongside their own present lived experience. And by doing so, the empathiser recognises that this

¹³⁶ Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=unfold>. [Accessed 24th May, 2022].

¹³⁷ Bates, C. and Rhys-Taylor, A., 2017. *Walking through Social Research*. Routledge, p.3

¹³⁸ Chiu, C. and Yeh, Y., 2018. *In your shoes or mine? Shifting from other to self perspective is vital for emotional empathy*. American Psychology Association. *Emotion*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p.44

form of knowing is always partial as we can never fully know another's present, lived experience as we can never fully inhabit their zero point of orientation, or perspective.

Receptivity for empathic encounters with a city

I have discussed how walking is a useful means of investigation in terms of bodily agency and mobility, physical inclusion within the environment of examination, and its ability to assist in perspective-shifting. I will continue by exploring how walking with receptivity can initiate an empathic encounter with a city. To do this I will refer to artist-researcher Emily Orley who has taken the aphorism that James Joyce jotted into the margins of *Ulysses*, “places remember events”, as an idea that can be “actively employed as a method to encounter the places we pass through everyday.”¹³⁹

Orley begins her inquiry by unfolding two ideas of place from anthropologist Keith Basso and feminist cultural geographer Doreen Massey and how each of these ideas speak to Joyce's proposition. The purpose of reviewing Orley's examination is to expound the ways in which a walker uses empathic attention as a means of investigation. I put forward that Orley's examination of encountering is fundamentally empathic in that the subject, or empathiser, is attempting to understand the sensorial and emotional character of place by feeling-into it as an experience.

A city that remembers

Keith Basso examines how place, as an anthropomorphised entity, possesses “a marked capacity for triggering acts of self-reflection”¹⁴⁰ that arises through a process of ‘interanimation’ between individuals and places. This process, which Solnit describes as

¹³⁹ Orley, E., 2012. *Places remember events: Towards an ethics of encounter in Liminal Landscapes*. London: Routledge. p.36

¹⁴⁰ Basso, K., 1996. *Wisdom sits in places*. United States: University of New Mexico Press. p.53-4

'thoughtfulness', occurs when the individual invests attention to a location which, in turn, evokes multiple meanings. Orley writes that "as the place animates the thoughts and feelings of the attentive visitor, these same thoughts and feelings animate the place in turn, in a reciprocal and dynamic process."¹⁴¹ This concept of encountering is empathic in that it positions the object of examination (the city) as an entity that senses and feels as the subject (the walker) does. Basso's term interanimation is also evocative of Meier's analysis of Stein's empathy as a mutual process of being 'reciprocally vulnerable' with the object of examination.

Orley continues that there are some places that 'do' the act of remembering. The physical traces of a city's past are irrevocably 'held' and its "holding-of-histories"¹⁴² can span from the mundane to the profound. On the Boulevard Saint-Michel near the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, a wall of the École des Mines is pockmarked with damage from bullet holes sustained during both the First and Second World Wars. The granite gate posts to what was the entrance of Millbay station bear marks of bomb damage from the Blitz. Such marks retain the physical traces of what has happened on that spot, they are not activated by the walker but are inscribed in stone.

A city, as a habitat in which to live, work, and move through, is filled with overlooked markers of presence. The apprehension of details in a city is an embodied way of coming-to-know qualities of the city itself; in paying attention and developing a sensitivity to them, a walker can pause in order to sense the city. Through empathic attention, or slow looking, a walker of a city can discern, via material details, connections between themselves and the place in which they are moving through. Such details prompt the walker to utilise a heightened perception of looking and explication. In this regard, these urban details have the capacity to 'trigger' perceptual attunement from the walker and by doing so the walker and object are brought together in closer proximity.

¹⁴¹ Orley, p.37

¹⁴² *ibid.*

While places, and in the context of this thesis, a city, can contain traces, particularly indexically, of past events upon the material elements of their composition, be they the bullet marks or memorial plaques, this does not inherently mean that the city *remembers*. The act of remembering is performed by a person whose attention is activated by the trace, such as text on a page. Conversely, this act of remembering, as Orley describes, animates the inscription by “actively sensing it and paying attention to its physical details.”¹⁴³ Therefore, the act of remembering does not come from the city itself but arises from the encounter the walker has with it. However, while the location may seem to ‘speak’ to the individual, it is important to remember that this activation or animation is engineered by the individual themselves. Consequently, while the place may retain material traces of past events, it only ‘remembers’ what and when the individual chooses it to do so. This is problematic in that it can lead to a colonisation and hegemony of experience; that which is remembered is human-centric, limited, and wholly dependent on the individual who activates and controls the process.

Although it is useful to discuss cities as holding or retaining histories, it does not mean that they are static. Doreen Massey recognises the desire to reveal and clarify meaning to gain some stability within fast-paced living and constant change; however, this need to fix an identity of a place is precarious as it reinforces tendencies for assumptions, traditions and conservative thinking. For Massey, to define one singular identity of place is to discount and exclude the multitudes of differing identities and is, therefore, a pursuit categorised by outdated and inappropriate frameworks. The construction of definite meanings sets boundaries which in turn isolate and hold that which resides within in stasis and prevents any alternate viewpoints from entering and initiating change.

¹⁴³ Orley, p.37

A city that is porous

Massey instead calls for a progressive sense of place that favours the thinking of them as possessing multiple identities rather than single; as ever-evolving processes rather than static entities; and that there is no clear delineation of boundary between inside and outside. In 'Space, Place and Gender', she writes:

Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself.¹⁴⁴

And so, Massey would argue that a city is composed of an accumulation of varied viewpoints and connections that converge as encounters in the here-and-now. If a walker's encounters with a city are constructed with not only location but also the contexts and perspectives that are brought to the 'articulated moment', then we must also consider the *when* of the encounter. The time of day, the season, the specific time of our personal lives, all influence the character of the encounter itself. It also highlights that the present moment of the encounter is the only time when all these variables are assembled so that this particular place exists purely in the here-and-now. The located 'here' in the city will not be the same in the 'now' of tomorrow and is inherently unstable and constantly in flux.

The here-and-nowness of a city is also manifest in the details of the cityscape. Detail is textural in that its physical presence allows it to be isolated and identified, but its visual immediacy is countered by the knowledge that the object is also part of something that is missing from view. These physical details speak of that which is omitted and so invite the walker to 'fill in gaps' and generate inferences between them. In this way, detail is relational in its capacity to reduce the temporal distances it contains to a past city. And so physical detail that is embedded within the present cityscape also exists and connects to a past context that can be activated through a visual attunement and perceptual interpretation.

¹⁴⁴ Massey, D., 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. Germany: Polity Press. p.154

By filling in gaps and creating connections, the walker can dismantle boundaries or differences in their relation to it. They must deploy a “lively alertness to the more-than-oneness of space [in order to] disallow that relegation of contemporaneous difference to the past, and the convening of space into time.”¹⁴⁵ The walker is entangled within, what Massey calls, the ‘*throwntogetherness*’ that makes up a city and such ‘lively alertness’, or receptivity, allows the walker to encounter it in a full, complex manner. As a walker I see, in the here-and-now, the indentations and craters that mark the two granite pillars at Plymouth Pavilions. I cannot see how the pillars looked at the entrance of Millbay station before the Blitz but I am aware of how their presence points to an absence and so I interpret their averted side, that of their past appearance. This form of vision represents the city as malleable and democratic in that it does not promote one past or one fixed identity. Massey writes:

The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'. Places viewed this way are open and porous.¹⁴⁶

And so, a Blitzed city is not characterised in isolation but rather in its connections to other places, be they similarly damaged or not, and the “constellation of interactions”¹⁴⁷ that occur in, through, and from it. Massey continues that thinking of places in this way characterises them as “open and porous networks of social relations”¹⁴⁸ and that their ‘identities’ will therefore be multiple, complex, and liable to change over time. Therefore, with multitudes of stories and histories dependent on who is walking, any articulation of the city is always inherently subjective as each description highlights decisions of what to include and to exclude.

¹⁴⁵ Massey, D. 2003. *Some Times of Space*. In *Olafur Eliasson: The Weather Project*. Edited by Susan May. Exhibition catalogue. London: Tate Publishing p.107-118

¹⁴⁶ Massey, (1994). p.5

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.139

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* p.121

Encountering a city of encounters

Orley brings Basso and Massey's, apparently contradictory ways of viewing place together to posit an approach that is embodied but with the understanding that such a 'body' is unfixed and ever changing. She writes that the "memory of place may be thought of as fluid, transitory, and open-ended, activated only by those who pass through. The memory of place is not bound to one particular social group or time. [...] places are events that might remember other events."¹⁴⁹ This approach, Orley argues, puts forth an ethical and creative mode of encounter that can be divided into two stages. The first involves an awareness, or lively alertness, of our embodied and embedded emplacement within the location. "This allows us to engage in a close, hushed and stilled observation of the place's details."¹⁵⁰ I posit that the first half of Orley's encounter is founded on a receptive ability to perceive the givenness of the object of focus in the here-and-now. The importance, or usefulness, for the walker to perceive the details of a city has already been discussed.

The second stage of Orley's encounter is non-primordial and characterised by a working-through, or responding to, the direct experience with the city.¹⁵¹ This can involve critical thinking, remembering the bodily experience of walking in the location, compiling and examining documentation of the experience, and the production of work creatively made in response to the encounter. Such processes invite further readings of the object of foreign experience, i.e., the city, either from the walker re-examining the initial encounter via material works or for another to attempt to understand that experience of walking in the city through the material works. In this manner, the city is animated as a site of reflection, creativity and change. But it is imperative to remember that when responding to a city in this way that we inherently bring our own contexts to the context of the city. Cultural, social, historical, and economic factors must be acknowledged as we, inevitably, project past experiences onto that which we attempt to read, be it objects, places, people.

¹⁴⁹ Orley, p.40

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.42

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.42

Orley discusses the ethicality of this mode of encounter in that we “must necessarily recognise that we cannot know the other and must not attempt to fix their identities with our own narratives. We must be open to their understanding of themselves. As we come face to face with the other, in a recognition of our mutual vulnerability, this encourages an openness, dialogue and respect for difference.”¹⁵² This echoes Stein’s discussion of empathy in its third stage where the empathiser recognises the impossibility of ever fully knowing another’s lived experience but the importance of being, as Meier interprets, ‘reciprocally vulnerable’ in the attempt of understanding.

The combination of these two ways of thinking about place is a beneficial approach to the context of this thesis. A city can be understood as an unfixed, ever-changing assemblage of transitions and transactions, and that it is also capable of retaining the residual remains of past events and activities that are activated by those who pass through it, i.e., by walking. Additionally, empathy is typically discussed within interpersonal relations, however, Stein herself defines empathy as intersubjective. It follows that if we can examine a city as though it were a person–complex, ever-changing, containing material memories–then it is useful to deploy phenomenological thinking in the examination of the relationship between walker and city. It is in this manner that the walker is empathically receptive to the city.

Through awareness and self-reflection of their personal engagement with a city, a walker can consider their physical position within the urban landscape and how their perception is informed and implicated by personal context. By harnessing a receptive form of awareness, or lively alertness, the walker initiates an empathic mode of encounter. Receptivity requires the walker to undertake a slow, stilled, observation of a city’s details, to be aware of how the city functions around the walker, and to evaluate the walker’s bodily relation and response to the city. This positions the city as an object of foreign experience that faces, in the here-and-now, the walker who is immersed within it. The walker’s empathic perception brings forth ways of knowing the city in an embodied and embedded

¹⁵² *ibid*, p.41

form. A key feature of this ethical way of knowing is that it is given through reciprocally vulnerable receptivity.

Chapter one Section three: Reflective critical analysis of illustration practice

In this section I present and reflect on the practice-led research developed in response to the first investigative walk through Plymouth. This practice demonstrates how the first stage of Stein's empathy process, or receptivity, initiates an empathic encounter. It is this moment where the object of experience emerges to the empathiser.

In the first half of the section I examine a collection of damaged ceramics held in Plymouth City Collections.¹⁵³ 'The damage that decorates' demonstrates, through writing, receptivity used as a method of close examination of the objects. It is a form of practice that not only evidences my empathic encounter but also the objects as indexical signifiers of the traumatic experience of the Blitz. The writing performs the same descriptive role as the pencil drawings of damage and decay found in the city and as practice-led research are a means of looking closely and slowly at this initial stage of an empathic encounter.

Lastly, I examine further visual practice made from Walk One that includes some of the photographs taken during the walk; the production of maps; and an illustrative object that I term a *Cityscope* with its accompanying diagram. Through self-reflective critical analysis of the visual practice, I examine how it has contributed to the processing of theory.

¹⁵³ Bell, L. (2019) *The Damage that Decorates*, Journal of Illustration volume 6 issue 1, Intellect Publishing

The damage that decorates: empathic attention of objects

Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* explores the qualities and capabilities of description. The book, framed as a conversation between the elderly emperor Kublai Khan and the explorer Marco Polo, examines imagination and the imaginable through the descriptions of cities. In the third chapter, the protagonist attempts to describe the city Zaira but struggles to do so. The city, in fact, is made from its "relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past..."¹⁵⁴ For instance, in order to evaluate "the tilt of the guttering,"¹⁵⁵ we must also consider "a cat's progress along it as he slips into the same window" that an adulterer has leapt out of at dawn. Calvino illustrates through prose Massey's concept of place (or a city) as composed of a "constellation of interactions", a *throwntogetherness* of encounters happening in the here-and-now.

Calvino continues that a "description of Zaira as it is today should contain all of Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of windows, the bannisters of steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls."¹⁵⁶ And so, Calvino proposes that the city contains its past in the manner of Basso's holding-of-history. However, the city is not a static entity; as "memories flow in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands."¹⁵⁷ It is porous, unfixed, and affected by its pasts. In this regard, the city of Zaira is, as Orley posits, "an event that might remember other events."¹⁵⁸

Following Stein's first stage of empathy and Orley's method of encounter, I receptively examined objects that are indices of a traumatic past. In 2018 I was granted access to a

¹⁵⁴ Calvino, I. (1997). *Invisible Cities*, London, Vintage Classics, p.9

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Orley, p.40

selection of ceramics from Plymouth City Collections that were on temporary display as part of an exhibition of Plymouth's Blitz. I photographed and discussed the objects with curator Lottie Clarke and from these images I studied them with receptive attention. The writing is a postmemory response to the damaged ceramics as part of the multi-modal praxis of illustration. Writing is used as an illustrative device to affectively evidence and communicate the first stage of an empathic encounter where the experience, the Blitz, appears to me, quite literally, as an object.

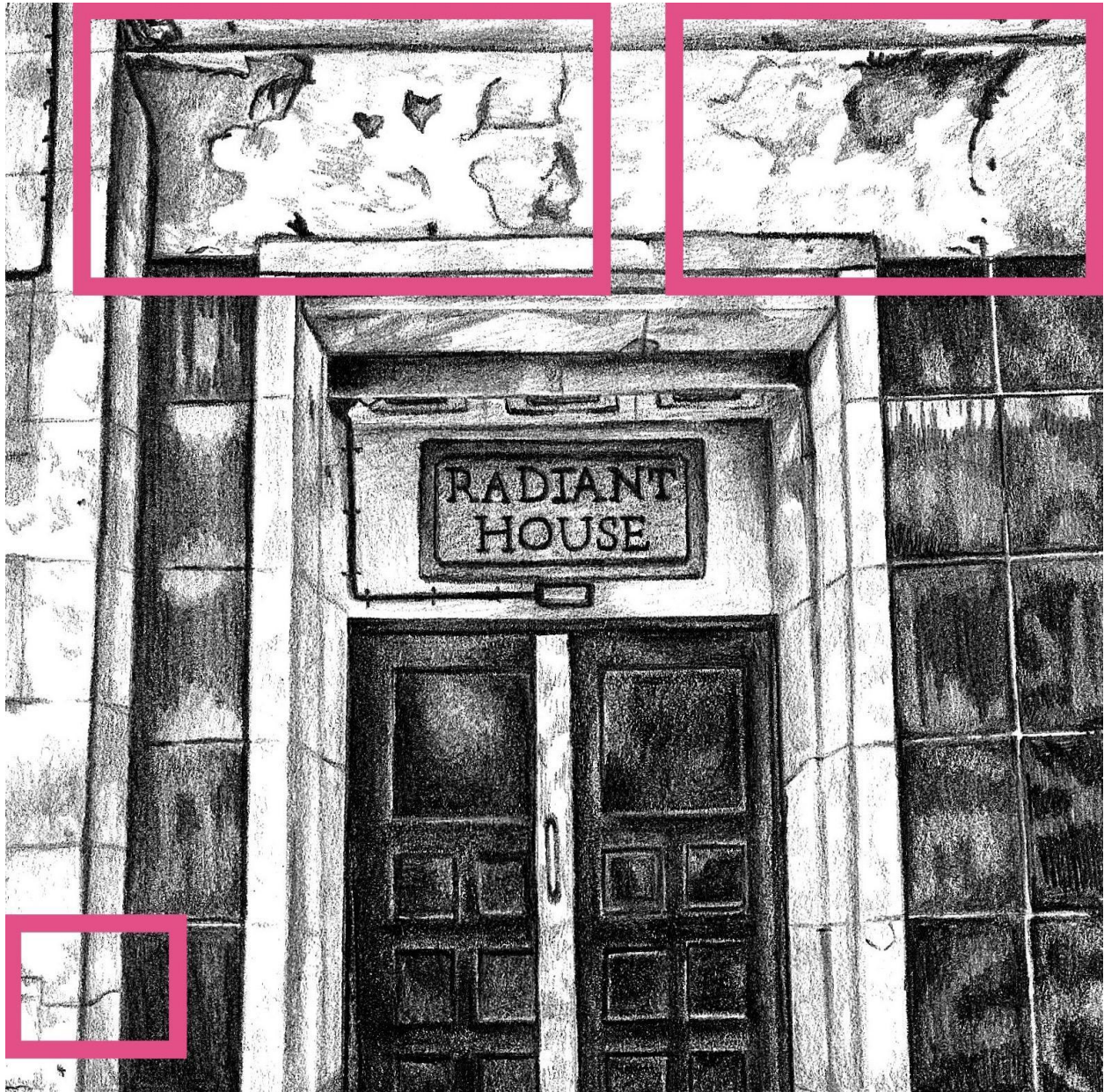


Fig. 1

By examining terms such as decoration and ornamentation through the lens of trauma ‘the damage that decorates’ is paradoxical in that to damage is to impart physical harm thereby impairing usefulness and value whereas, to decorate is to impart value. The Latin root of decoration *decus* contains meanings of distinction, honour, dignity and grace.¹⁵⁹ Ornament

¹⁵⁹ Latdict: Latin dictionary and grammar resources, *decus*, <http://www.latin-dictionary.net/search/latin/decus>

is to embellish, to adorn, and thereby distort.¹⁶⁰ These ceramics are adorned with their own damage and capable of creating connection to a former city. The damage does not devalue them as objects but are indexical marks that describe the event that defaced them. As artefacts they are embellished by their brokenness and are a material metaphor of the city's bombardment.



Fig. 2

Either through a process of decay or sudden damage, breakage disrupts an object from the confines of completeness; the object's original context becomes fragmented leaving space for other narratives and meanings to emerge. The event that caused the damage is the

¹⁶⁰ Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Ornament&utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=ds_search

experience that 'arises before me all at once and faces me as an object'. The ceramic objects' brokenness illustrates the dislocation from their original meaning or purpose: a broken cup will leak rather than contain. And yet, even when such things or objects are cut away from their auratic contexts they are never fully emancipated. Vestiges of their original identity or meaning clings to them, their history is 'held' within their appearance and materiality. These residual meanings are *throwntogether* with the others that the breakage elicits. Breakage transforms the ceramics into what Jane Bennett terms "vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics."¹⁶¹ They are vivid in their vulnerability.

Marcus Boon writes that "the breaking up or breaking open of a form...is said to liberate energy which is 'contagious', 'viral', and 'infecting' of other forms".¹⁶² Damage and disintegration are disruption from the ordinary, or whole, and catches the viewer's attention leading to closer examination. Through breakage, fragments are 'liberated' and the fragment, which comprises absences as much as presence, compels those who encounter it to fill in its gaps; to perceive its averted sides through speculation. The ceramics are articulate in that they tell a story through their damage. Their testimony is material, measurable and evidential; they were *there* and are also *here*—perhaps speaking for those who cannot. The experience of the Blitz emerges before me when I encounter the ceramics; I can see the effects which lead me to imagine the experience they underwent.

¹⁶¹ Bennett, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter*, Durham: Duke University Press. p.5

¹⁶² Boon, M. (2013). *In Praise of Copying*. United States: Harvard University Press. p.154



Fig. 3

When converted into a PDF document, a group of photographs (including fig. 3 and 4) glitched causing the colours to invert from a photograph of a pink door. Fuschia, magenta, coral, cobalt and teal compete in images that they did not originally inhabit. The fluro-colours highlight cracks and damage while the cooler hues mask areas of absence. The original damage is documented with photographs and they, in turn, are damaged; disrupting the images and arresting attention. By examining damage with receptivity, contexts multiply and arise with complexity and transform the object beyond established assumptions.



Fig. 4

Plymouth is a Blitzed city; traces of the damage inflicted during World War II and the subsequent civic restoration are still present. The first bombs fell Saturday the 6th of July 1940 and in early 1941, five raids reduced much of the city to rubble. Attacks continued as late as May 1944 with two minor air raids in that month. During the 59 bombing attacks, 1,172 civilians were killed and 4,448 injured.¹⁶³ In the height of the Blitz, the night sky would be as bright as day, painted red by fire and smoke. The marines and guns of ships fired tracer bullets of various colours, searchlights darted all over the sky, and the sound of bomber engines was continuous.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Gill, C. (1993). *Plymouth. A New History*. Devon Books. pp. 259–262

¹⁶⁴ Dawes, D. (2003) BBC - WW2 people's war - War through the eyes of a child: Plymouth Blitz, [bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/53/a2050453.shtml), 16th November, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/53/a2050453.shtml>

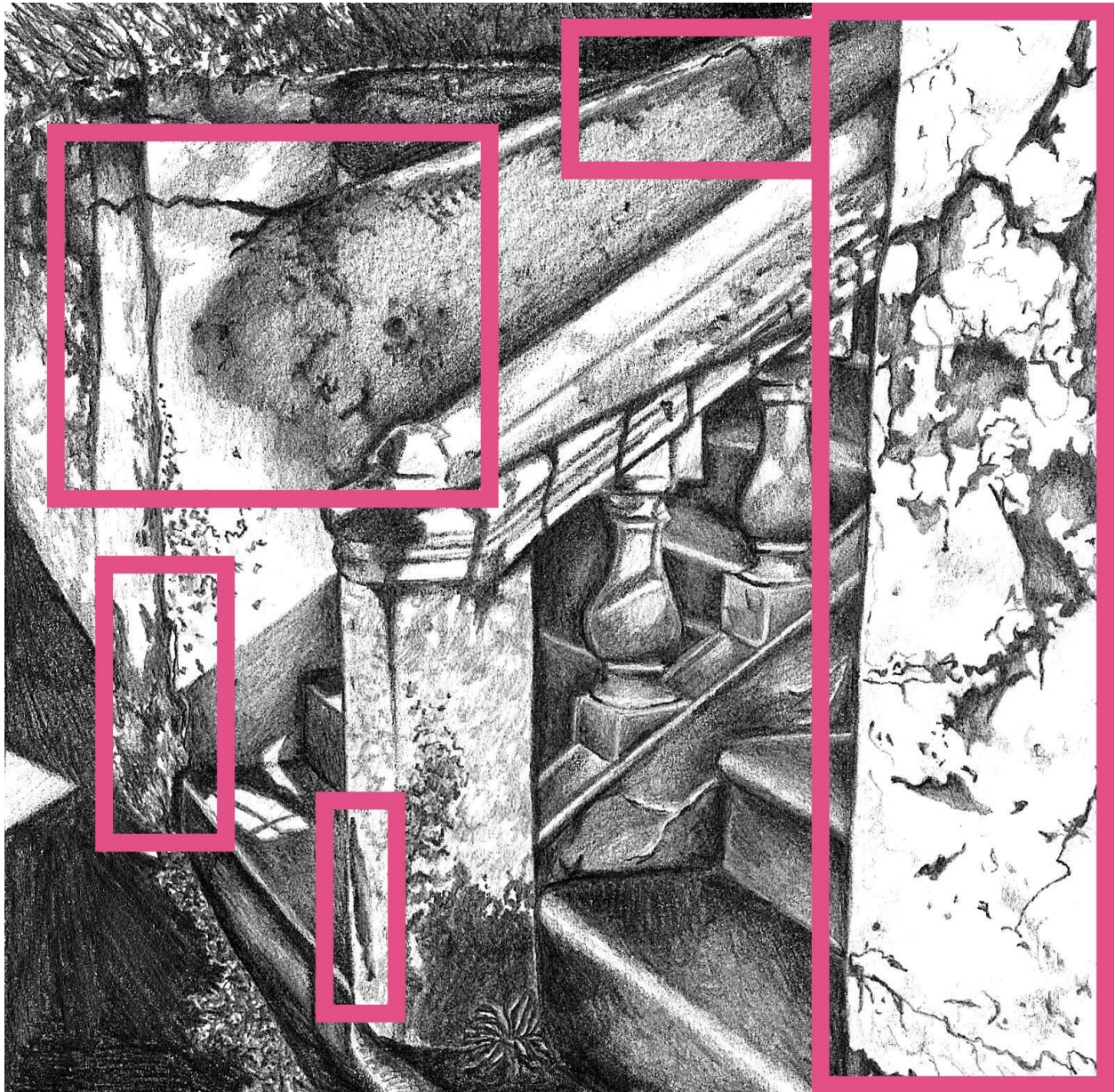


Fig. 5

The ceramic objects were damaged during early raids over the city in 1941. Most were salvaged from the Athenaeum theatre, but the jug was retrieved from the wreckage of the Guildhall. The objects illustrate the intense heat conjured by incendiary bombs which approached 1000°C. Most incendiary bombs only weighed one or two kilos but their thermite filling created fires hot enough to melt steel. One aircraft bomber could carry hundreds and in a single raid, tens of thousands could be dropped. Shrapnel, red hot, would

fall like rain. By morning the fragments would be cool enough for children to collect and archives would grow within pockets.

The debris of a Blitzed city acts as a physical link to a past place. However, there is no single previous city as there is no single past, it is rather a series of seemingly similar cities each with their own persona and particularities. Each has an echo of identity which is strengthened or weakened by the passage of time. When triumph or tribulation occurs the memory of the event contaminates the current as well as the following. Lying quietly beside these previous places are the seeds and shoots of the future city. The next city will grow up and out of its current city which, in turn, shall repeat this renewal. From this continuous process detritus drops that act as artefacts of the previous city.

A coffee cup (fig. 6) is tinted with a brown-grey haze akin to a house sparrow's chest. The surface is speckled with minuscule fractures made visible by the staining of cinders. The cup is decorated with a delicate floral design but the foliage and flowers are burnt and crackled. The effect of the fire upon the cup has inadvertently mimicked Japanese Raku-ware. A fired raku piece is removed from a hot kiln at around 1000°C and then allowed to cool in the open air. The harsh cooling process and the copious oxygenation paints unpredictable patterns and colours upon the glaze. If the ceramic is placed near combustible material, such as newspaper and kept covered, the smoke will stain the unglazed portions of the pottery black.

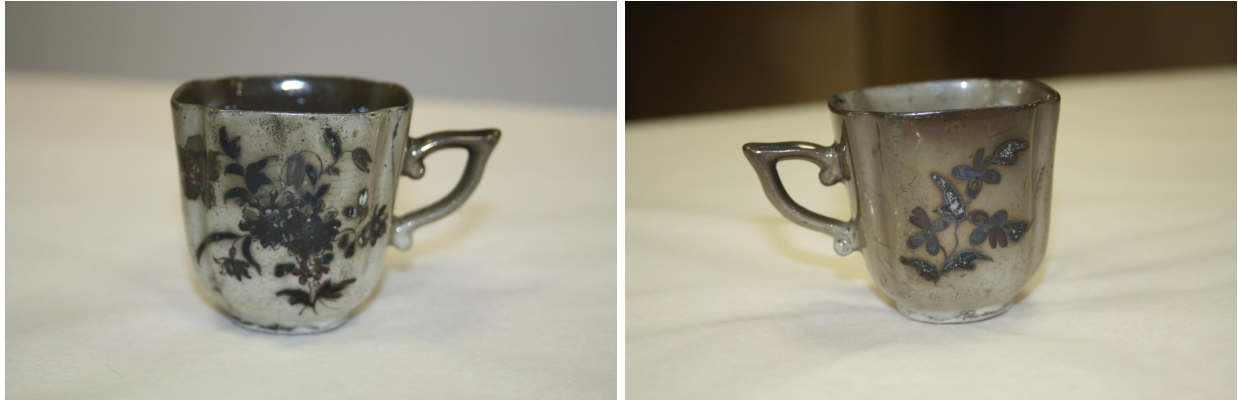


Fig. 6 and Fig. 7

The smoky gradient and smudged lines also remind me of Chinese Shan Shui or 'mountain-water' ink wash landscape paintings. The rim of the cup is a dark brown which lightens as it drops to the base; there is an airy, misted quality to this dissipating colour. It is a colour gradient that is mutable, infused with movement and weight, a soot-filled condensation that forms after a firestorm. On the back of the cup (fig. 7) is a rusty semi-circle, the chemical stain of skin and saliva. The lip-print is forever incorporated with the vessel.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

A teapot (fig. 8) has become separated from its spout which lies prostrate in front of the wide, mouth-like hole. It is conspicuous in its *unusefulness*. The decorative glazing is burnt; rust coloured and dappled. The dark green shading on the leaves is blackened but the red poppies remain true. A woman wearing what looks to be an eighteenth century gown stands with her arms spread wide, flanked either side by amorphous black shapes. Her skirts and sleeves are charred, traces of ruby are hinted on her bodice. Her face, turned in profile, is made anonymous by the bombing, her features smeared charcoal black. These circles of damage are reminiscent of the clerical dots peppering Plymouth's bomb map, each blood-red circle denoting a puncture into the cityscape. The map is displayed below the ceramics, bearing them like upturned stigmatic hands (fig. 2).

On the other side of the pot sits a figure within a coppice. The upper body is turned like the woman's and is bedecked with an ostentatious hat and collar (fig. 9). Shapely stockinged legs crossed in repose suggest that the figure is male but the face is masked by darkness. The extreme heat of the fire has altered the ink's chemistry; the black-outs hinder our reading of the design like a censored document. These occurrences are as dark as rabbit-holes and, like Alice, we fall into them. They are filled with, as John Berger notes, "not the colour black but with the mystery, the invitation of black."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Berger, J. and Christie, J. (2000) *I send you this cadmium red...*, Barcelona: ACTAR



Fig. 10

What I thought was a blackened bottle (fig. 10) is in fact, a possible tea caddy which transforms (like all these objects) when turned (fig. 11). Female figures grace both sides. One is so harshly burnt it's difficult to find her, but there she stands trailing a length of fabric in her hands. The surface is cracked so tightly that it looks like dry skin, like lines of a hand, or a burned beam of timber. The charring slows the viewer's encounter with the object and with receptive attention a hidden image emerges from charcoal shadow. Her sister is swathed in ivory and caramel tones, she holds a plant (perhaps tea) aloft and the smoke stains the ceramic in ripples mirroring the folds of her dress. The sepia discolouration is an unruly ornament on the china. The prefix *orn-* meaning to furnish, equip, adorn, and the suffix *-ment* meaning instrument, medium and result of (such as *movement*). The bottle is furnished by the results of the bombing.



Fig. 11

In *Illuminations*, Walter Benjamin compares the construction of story to craft practices; “...traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the pot”.¹⁶⁶ On this object, the staining is an index of the fire and is a tactile transmission as a form of authorship. It is an actant, an intervening force catalysing a disruptive event. The meeting of the flight crew’s touch to button or lever releasing the destructive cargo is activated by the intervention of such forces. Fire, a disruptive event, is an effect of an incendiary device, which is an effect of aerial warfare. The chain reaction of these effects has marked these ceramics, the trace of which clings to their matter.

¹⁶⁶ Leslie, E. (2007) Walter Benjamin, London: Reaktion Books. p.169



Fig. 12

I see that the Guildhall jug (fig. 12) was once white however its experiences have rendered it a curdled yellow. It is not a hopeful sunshine colour but as sickly a shade as found in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, "...a smouldering, unclean yellow"¹⁶⁷ [...] "it is the strangest yellow [...] it makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw - not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things."¹⁶⁸ From the base, a sombre bruise blossoms, enveloping this yellow. It spreads across the surface like fungus on parchment. Cream lines, dots and triangles divide the creeping blackness, they are furrows left from lost paint.

Vein-coloured lines emerge when the jug is turned revealing a delicate filigree design (fig. 13). Contributing to the pattern are measles-like blemishes scattering this pale side. Melted upon the inside of the neck, permanently mid-pour, is glass from a lost object. It has

¹⁶⁷ Gilman, C.P., (2009) *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Auckland: Floating Press. p.8

¹⁶⁸ Gilman, p.27

congealed into an organic looking form that looks heavy and precious; something between a slug and a diamond. There is a temptation to prise it off like the absent-minded picking of dripped wax. This glass jewel is performative in its ornamentation in that it equips or adorns the jug with an element of beauty. However, this beauty is also terrible due to its formation; the melted glass is infused with the death and destruction of the bombing raids.



Fig. 13

The infusion of instability can suggest other ways of knowing by treating breakage as part of the history of an object rather than something to disguise. The Plymouth ceramics have the event that transformed the city written upon their surface. Damage decorates the ceramics, and they in turn ornament the city. As I photographed the ceramics, curator Lottie Clark said that she found it remarkable that these objects survived the severity of the bombings: “you think ceramic as quite fragile, but they withstood the heat.”¹⁶⁹ These small,

¹⁶⁹ Clark, L. (2018). Personal interview. 22nd October.

vulnerable vessels are articulate; they were transformed from ordinary objects into vivid entities that tell the story of the event that damaged them.



Fig. 14

Walk One illustration practice reflection

I claim that the act of illustration practice is a creative, process-driven articulation of Stein's theory of empathy. What is important to clarify is that it is the *act of making* illustration that is inherently empathic and not the visual practice outcomes itself; these are rather leftovers or remains of an empathic encounter. Orley writes that the encounter is divided into two stages, the first happening in the here-and-now through sensory engagement and the second as a non-primordial working-through. And so, illustration practice acts as testimony to my empathic encounters with the city.

The route of my first investigative walk across the city was shaped by the archival research conducted into the destination and the pre-war tramways. This immersion into historical documentation was countered by my present, lived experience of walking the contemporary city. The photographs that I took along the way were not only *aide-mémoires* of my experience of walking but also contributed to a personal emerging image repository which I used in the development of illustration practice. However, apart from three drawings developed from these photographs for reference, I felt that the photographs communicated the presence of urban layers more eloquently than if I had translated them into drawn images. I shall discuss the ways photographs can act as illustration in Chapter Two. As such, the illustration practice presented for Walk One are drawings made in response to still and moving images from South West Film and Television Archive; a small book of photographs charting the walk; digitally imposed overlaid maps for route making; and a three dimensional illustrative object of the destination Millbay Station - Plymouth Pavilions. In this section, I will critically reflect on the photographs, map, and 'Cityscope' object, and explore how, as illustration research, they can be characterised by Stein's first stage of empathy.



Fig. 15

Photographs

If, as previously discussed, a city both contains the residual remains of the past but is also a permeable, dynamic ‘constellation of trajectories’, then it is prudent to think of the city as both living and layered. While walking, I examined with what has been described as careful attention, slow looking, or lively alertness to the ‘*throwntogetherness*’ of the cityscape’s surfaces by documenting with my iPhone camera particular details. This mode of attention allowed me to discern complexities of the cityscape as they made themselves known to me. I was able to read the complexities of parts of the object of examination and their interactions with others, i.e., a palimpsestic door and the interplay of its effaced and eroding layers.

Details that caught my attention were architectural markers of the pre-Blitz city as well as noticeable interventions such as temporally competing building materials, plants growing

between cracks, graffiti, and a can slotted into a wall. By examining such interventions, I could explore a complexity of perspectives as they materially evidence both human and non-human trajectories, or 'articulated moments' that are reciprocally vulnerable to each other. Not only do they as Orley writes, evidence events, but they are also entangled within ongoing transitory events: blossom will continue to flower and then will fall, more paint will peel and then may be covered.



Fig. 16

The practice made for this first walk pointed to a growing preoccupation with the palimpsestic nature of a cityscape. A palimpsest, from the Greek word for *scraped again*, often refers to a type of manuscript, typically of papyrus or parchment, that has been reused and written on more than once with some of the previous markings remaining

partially visible. It can also be an object or location that contains “diverse layers or aspects apparent beneath the surface”,¹⁷⁰ such as a city. Whether these layers are temporal, spatial, or even imaginary, a city and its constant transformation are exemplary embodiments of a seemingly never-ending palimpsest at work. The accumulation and degradation of layered surfaces materially evidence the multiplicity of temporalities. Surfaces that are in a transitional and vulnerable process of disrepair catch my attention. A surface that is complete and unabridged is in some ways invisible, whereas the exposed patches of peeled paint on a door hint at the mutability of the city (fig. 16). Here the door not only holds the history of past paint but is also always already entangled in articulated moments of exchange. The combination of damp, heat, time, and potentially hands have stripped sections of the door’s blue surface so that the previous red paint as well as the bare wood is visible. Green algae stain the bottom of the left door contrasting the remnants of red.

Lynsey Ly, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at The Graduate Center (CUNY), writes in her article *Palimpsest Landscapes* that rather than thinking of palimpsests as layers of writing to be read and interpreted, we can also consider them “through the twinned acts of emergence and submersion”,¹⁷¹ mutating records of engulfment, enfolding and envelopment. “Palimpsests name the way matter is made simultaneously absent and present [...their] untimeliness condenses and refracts that moment a trace reappears and makes itself known, affixes and demands our attention to matter out of place.”¹⁷² In this way, the palimpsestic nature of a city reflects Orley’s proposition that ‘places are events that remember other events’. It is also worth noting the German translation for layer [*Shicht*] helps to form [*Geschichte*] meaning event, struggle, story, history. This forms the stratigraphic idea that the story of a city is a continual process of effacement, accretion and revealing, enfolding and unfolding.

¹⁷⁰ “Palimpsest.” *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web.
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/palimpsest>

¹⁷¹ Ly, L. 2020. *Palimpsest Landscapes*, *Theorizing the Contemporary*, *Fieldsights*, September 22.
<http://culanth.org/fieldsights/palimpsest-landscapes> [accessed 08.07.2022]

¹⁷² *ibid*

The photographs taken during each walk illustrate the first stage of Stein's empathy process in that they are records of a receptive moment of attention. They capture phenomenological encounters with details of the city; these are experiences that emerge before me. For example, the door at the pavilions with its peeling paint "arises before me all at once and faces me as an object". The object of attention, i.e., the door, arises as it appears to me, as Massey would argue, through a convergence of trajectories; mine and the door. Not only this, the physical multiple layers of the door (graffiti, poster, paint, wood) are arising in that they are peeling; several different times of the door are present in *throwntogetherness* of the here-and-now due to the palimpsestic exposure of material layers. And so, these pasts that the door has been enmeshed within face me as an object and are vulnerable in their visibility.

As previously stated, the photographs document the primordial moment of lively alertness to my embodied and embedded emplacement within the city. They are images that happen in the here-and-now, while walking, in the initial stage of an empathic encounter. And yet, they are additionally used in the non-primordial, or working-through stage of the encounter in that they have been used for rereading, reinterpretation, critical thinking and creative practice as a response to that moment of phenomenological experience.

Maps

Before undertaking the first walk, I collected several maps of Plymouth that were accurate before the Second World War. Two Ordnance Survey Street maps from 1938 and two tram service maps, one of which was printed on the back of a tram service timetable leaflet. I made two 'overlay maps' where I decreased the opacity of these collected maps and placed them over contemporary Google Maps screenshots (fig. 17). By doing this, I could better understand where certain buildings and features would have been located in order to orient myself to them within the contemporary cityscape and as a means of wayfinding.

In contrast to palimpsests where the past layers are located, or behind, newer layers, with these overlaid maps the base level is the contemporary (at the time of making) city. The semi-transparent lines of the past accrue on top of the present in a ghostly manner. With the layering of information, maps visually articulate multiple temporalities of the cityscape: what was here, what is here and what may be here in the future. They also map the spaces in-between; those that are hidden from view or ignored. And yet, all maps are transitory and carry their own agendas.



Fig. 17

The agenda or purpose of my maps was chiefly to ‘find a way’ of following my grandfather’s routes through the city eighty years apart. They were made for my personal investigative walks and in this manner, they are illustration-led research made from archival research that then led to further practice-led research, i.e., the walks themselves. They were made in response to absence, that of my inability to ask my grandfather directly if he took such walks and the routes he used. They also visually communicate the absences of lost buildings and roads and are an articulation of my presence within the city.

Cityscope

In August 2018, I undertook a week-long artists' residency at The Old Bank Studios, Penryn, during which I produced illustration-led research in response to my first investigative walk. Along with examining ideas of multiple surfaces and layers I was also interested in the connected concept of depth and how best to attempt to communicate it. The destination site of the first walk, Millbay's Pavilions, is characterised by the accumulation and partial erasure of surface layers that when stacked upon a same site creates an incremental and stratigraphic composite. My archival and visual research attempted to explore the site as a multi-layered object of examination in order to gain some understanding of its differentiations between my grandfather's and my own presence in the city.

I was influenced by geological maps and archaeological illustrations in their diagrammatic communication of physical and temporal depth (fig. 19, 20, 21). Cross-sections can articulate with clarity the formulation of built-up deposits whether natural or cultural. Rather than going back in time the excavator digs down. A technique used by archaeologists to recover evidence for past vegetation and land use is sediment coring. A steel rod with a chamber, known as an auger, is driven into the ground and a column of the sediment removed for analysis (fig. 22). Sediments show information about a site without having to strip back the plough soil.¹⁷³ The physicality of the core deposits remind me, in an inverted manner, of looking down a well as both processes materially evidence the multiplicity of temporalities always already present in the here-and-now of a place. My examination of an urban site was composed of a stratification of archival text and images as well as my own photographic documentation. And so, I was not only looking at representations of physical depth but also representations of metaphorical depth.

¹⁷³ Archaeological Research Services Ltd. Sediment Coring.
<https://www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com/lantonwebsite/how/coring.html>

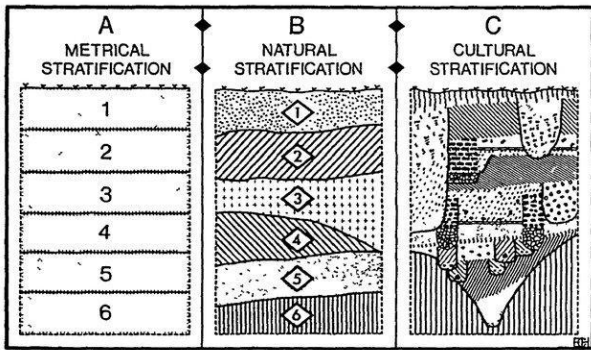


Fig. 3. Three main types of stratification are shown; the first (A) is false, B pertains mostly to geological situations and 'cultural stratification' is the type of which archaeological sites are composed.

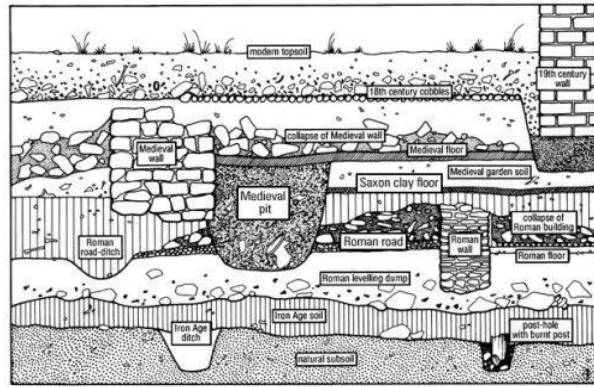


Fig. 19 and Fig. 20

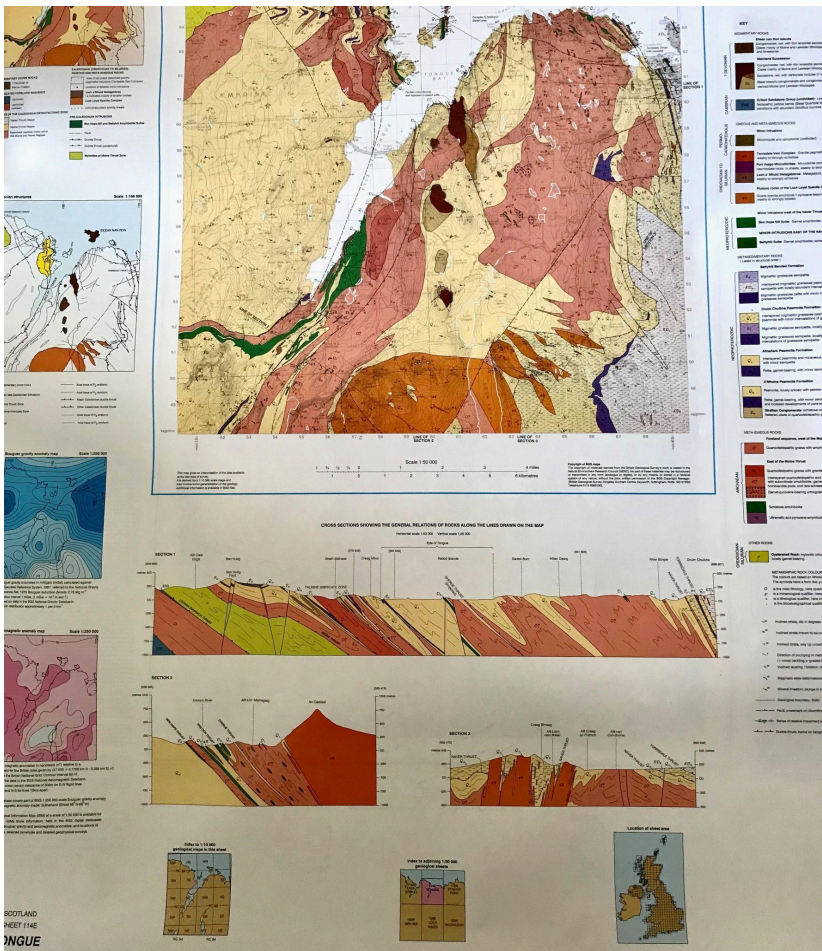


Fig. 21 and Fig. 22

Walter Benjamin describes the storyteller as a craftsman whose layered and accrued knowledge of place imparts depth to a story.

All great storytellers have in common the freedom with which they move up and down the rungs of their experience as on a ladder. A ladder extending downward to the interior of the earth and disappearing into the clouds is the image for a collective experience to which even the deepest shock of every individual experience, death, constitutes no impediment or barrier.¹⁷⁴

The story [*Geschichte*] is built up of multiple layers [*Schicht*] generating a verticality of time. This idea is continued by Berger in his discussion of time in French villages; "...that extension is vertical, it is to do with time and that's where the dead take part. And the present and, in a certain sense, the future. That vertical continuity."¹⁷⁵ Both Benjamin and Berger imply that metaphorical layers accrue sequentially from the past below to the future above. While that image does translate to geological and archaeological excavations, it is however too tidy. It does not account for Massey's *throwntogetherness* of the multiplicity of temporalities that coexist within place.

¹⁷⁴ Benjamin, W. 2008. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited. p.83

¹⁷⁵ Berger, J. 2016. *The Seasons of Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger*. Curzon Artificial Eye.



Fig. 23

The Cityscope object is constructed of nine stacked perspex discs; each layer represents a decade (fig. 23). At the base is a close-cropped print of the 1938 Ordnance Survey Street map that shows Millbay station. The second disc, the 1940s, I have deliberately broken, and its fragments are glued together with gold painted along the joined cracks. The cracks illustrate the damage and destruction incurred to the site by the Luftwaffe bombing raids of the Blitz and references the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold lacquer. At this stage of the PhD, I was still researching Kintsugi as a methodology for examining the city; what I found particularly interesting in connection to urban trauma was the acknowledgement of damage rather than the concealment of it.

The seventh disc, the 1990s, displays an outline drawing of an aerial view of Plymouth Pavilions displayed on the layer of the decade in which it was built. I made the drawing of

the current building to the same scale as the OS map and positioned it to illustrate the urban stratigraphy of the site. There are nine discs as they represent the time during and between my grandfather living in the city (1939) and my investigative walks across it (2018). Seven of the nine discs are blank and act as a record of time. They exclude any of the countless encounters that existed outside of my grandfather's or my own reach that took place at the site during the years between our experience with the cityscape. They record absence. This exclusion highlights how all maps and cartographic documents are inherently subjective and contain the agendas of those who made them. The object visually communicates Massey's description of the *all-at-oneness* of place: by encountering the city I can see the *throwntogetherness* of both the present and all the past iterations of the city. It arises before me...as an object.

Contained within the Cityscope are three forms of line: archival (map), physical (broken cracks), and drawn - all are representative in a similar manner to differing lines present on a geological map. These lines and the content they visually communicate are visible but are also held within the object. This enclosure of content echoes a displayed museum object, i.e., 'to put under glass' isolates the held information and protects it. The layered discs are also reminiscent of lenses: the microscope is a lens for looking closely at something small, and the telescope is a lens for looking at something far away. Both are tools for a mode of looking closely with focus and study. A lens articulates my desire to see elements of the past city in or through the contemporary city.

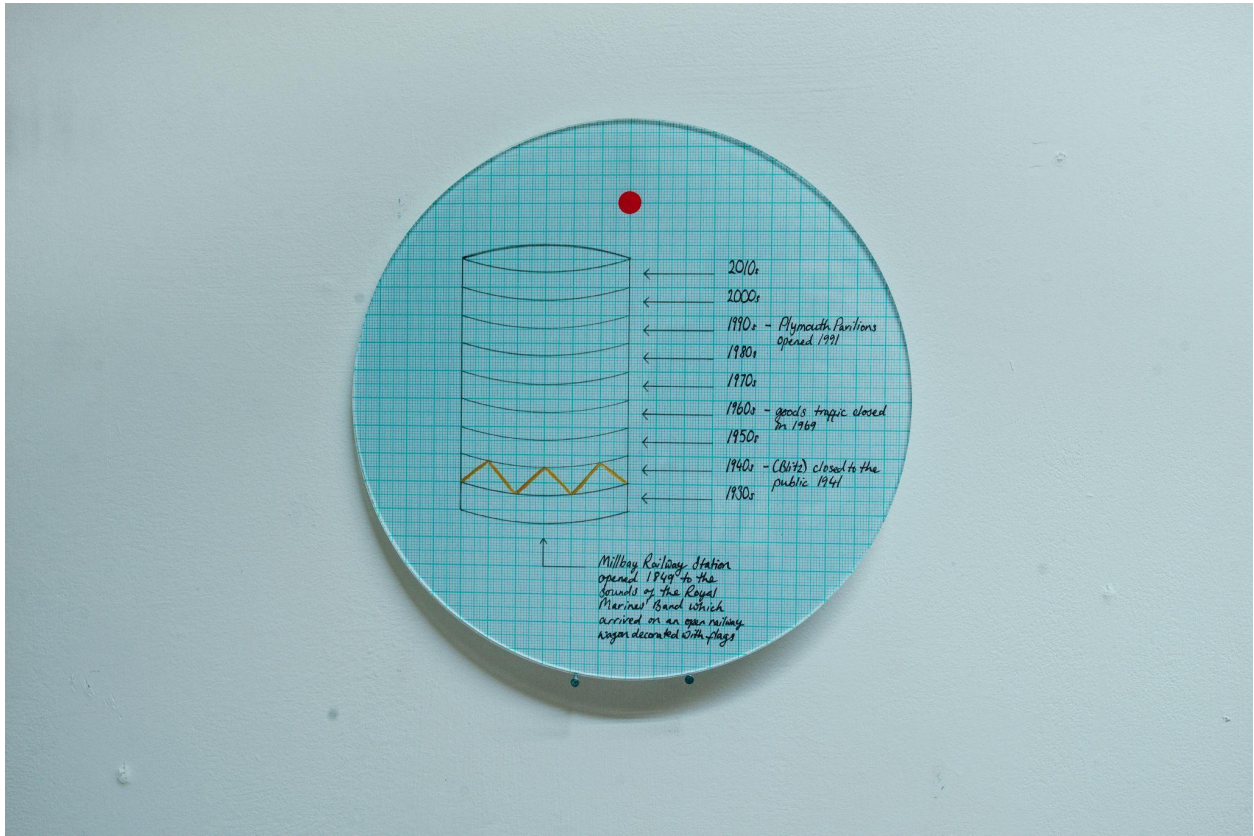


Fig. 24

The diagram that accompanies the Cityscope acts as a map legend in the definition of specific features presented in the object (fig. 24). The blue graph paper uses the grid as an abstract means of displaying information. The squares visually link to cartography while, on a practical level, assist in creating a balanced composition of the diagram. Arrows and annotations assist the viewer in understanding the diagram much like a map's legend. There are also brief lines of information pertinent to the site: the opening of the station; the bombing; the closure; and the opening of the pavilions. Although I wanted to provide the necessary information for the viewer to understand what each element of the Cityscope represented there is purposefully a limited amount of text. This was to maintain significant gaps (of text, written knowledge) in order to illustrate other ways of knowing the object through closer, more focused attention. To slow down looking. It also articulates the significant degree of not-knowing involved within an empathic encounter and the impossibility of any form of 'full' comprehension. I hand-wrote the text to explicitly

demonstrate the subjectivity of my inquiry; the PhD is a qualitative examination of my own personal encounters with the city. Handwriting also shares a gestural quality with the hand-rendered drawing, and both are used in tandem in the attempt to communicate. I included the detail of the Royal Marine band as I wanted to insert a small element of evocative colour at the bottom of the diagram in counterbalance to the red dot at the top. It also made me think of the band and the flags present in the Honicknowle carnival film and so chose to include it as a small connection.

The red dot is an abstract symbol representing this particular walk. I assigned red to Walk One in reference to the colour of the tram livery; blue for Walk Two and the sea; and yellow for Walk Three and the celebratory summer street carnival. The three primary colours are also logical, as a trio, in allocating the three walks and the three stages of empathy. In this regard, they assist in documenting the ephemeral experience of the walks and my presence in the city in contrast to my grandfather's absence. The red dot, and the repetition of circles present in the visual practice across all three walks, is also a subconscious referent to the red dots marking bomb hits on the Plymouth Bomb Book (fig. 25). I realised this when exhibiting the visual practice for the three walks at Devonport Guildhall in 2018. I analyse the impact this document has upon my practice-led research in chapter three, 'Prevalence of Circles' (p.190).

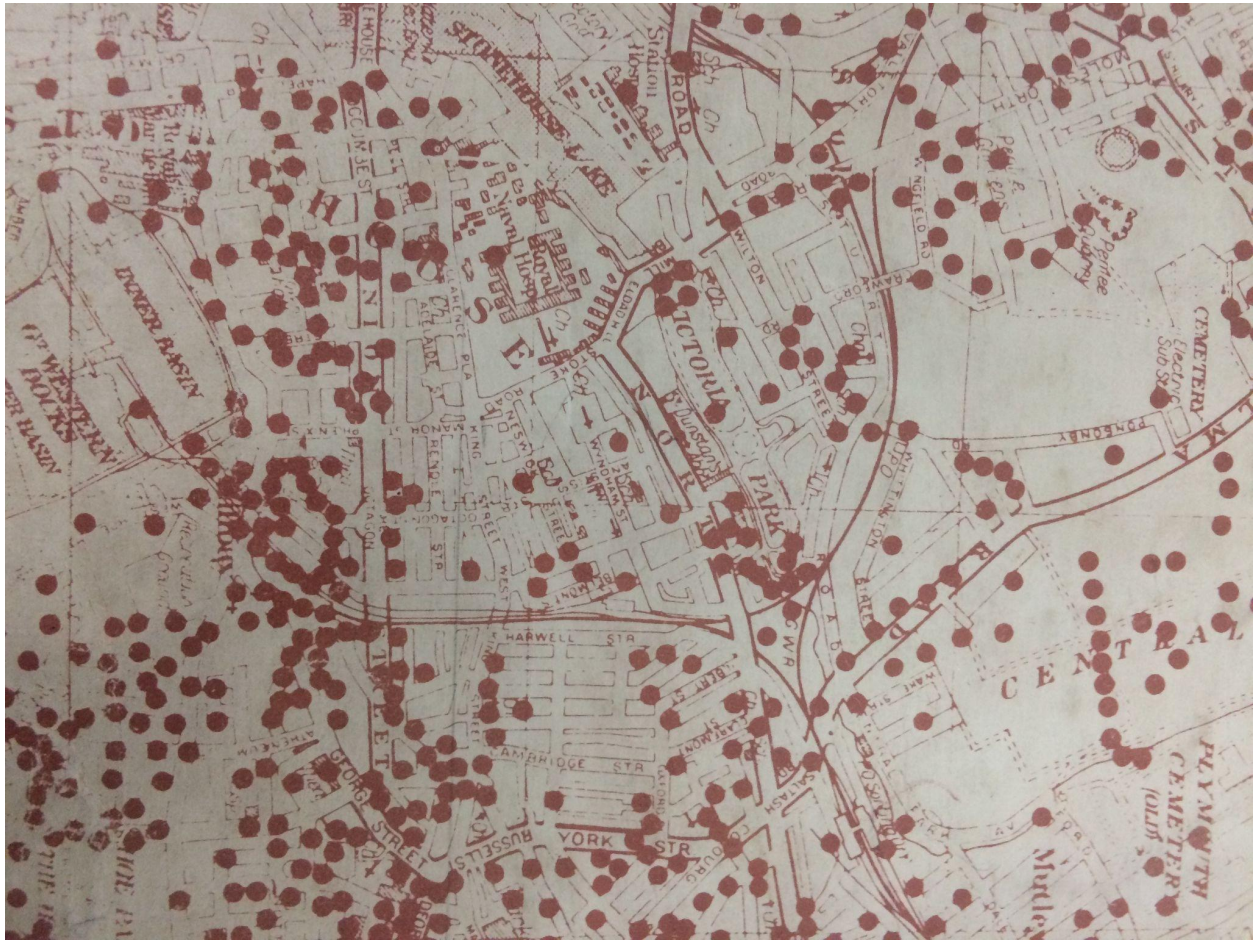


Fig. 25

Chapter One Conclusion

In this first chapter I have discussed how the process of illustration can be aligned with Stein's first stage of empathy in that the object of study, 'the foreign experience', makes itself known to the empathiser who investigates it through receptivity: careful, studied, sensorial attention. Empathy, as a direct, immediate and given experience is led by 'the foreign experience'. The 'emergence of experience' may be a detail in a cityscape, or a lip stain on a cup, that animates the empathiser to invest time and further examination which will lead them into Stein's second stage of empathy.

Walking, as an embodied and embedded phenomenological practice, can assist in the empathiser in gaining a deeper awareness of a city. This can include noticing complexity such as urban details of the pre-Blitz past as well as the complexity of interactions between those details within a wider context in what Massey describes as a *throwntogetherness*. This developed disposition to *see* (whether that is by sight, sound, touch, smell, taste) these complexities and the deferment of assumptions or conclusions of the object of study are what makes this mode of attention inherently empathic and an ethical way of knowing.

I have also discussed the ways in which Stein's first stage of empathy can be articulated in the development of illustration practice. The object of study appears before me in the here-and-now and is an initiation of an empathic encounter that will be later explicated through illustrative practice. The granite pillars of what was Millbay station face me, I am confronted by them while walking around the current Plymouth Pavilions, I see the material evidence of the city's bombed past inscribed upon them, I see the pillars as part of the palimpsestic layering of the site. Alongside archival research, receptive encountering recognises the city as being both porous and capable of holding-histories and informs the development of illustration practice in the attempt to *see* these layers in their complexity. However, the desire and the attempt to know my grandfather's experience walking

Plymouth both before the war and recently after is a postmemorial pursuit predicated on a familial connection to the city; this is what I will unfold further in Chapter Two.

II

The granddaughter-illustrator as a performing
agent of Postmemory

As I cannot ask the subject of my empathic inquiry, my grandfather, about his experience of the city, two methods of research are required in the attempt of coming-to-know his walks in pre and post-war Plymouth. By examining archival materials such as documents, photographs, and films I was able to obtain some information about how the past city looked and operated. By walking possible routes he may have taken, self-reflexive and experiential knowledge of my own personal emplacement and movement through the current cityscape arises. These two ways of knowing were fed into the production of illustration practice which, in itself led to further insights. The result of these research operations was an estimation of another's experience combined with the acknowledgement that such knowledge is always inherently incomplete. The combination and coordination of these research activities are what I consider my illustration practice to be and it is this that I align with Stein's process of empathy.

This chapter is divided into three sections, the first of which is concerned with my second investigative walk and its destination, and an interweaving of practice-led research (walking) and scholarly investigation. In the second section I bring forth Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory and I discuss how I believe it connects to Stein's study of empathy as well as its application to this doctoral study. In the last section of this chapter, I use Stein and Hirsch's writing as a contextual lens through which to analyse visual practice made by a figure I term the 'granddaughter-illustrator'. This figure includes German-American illustrators Line Hoven and Nora Krug, whose graphic memoirs are compared with my own practice produced in this PhD. Although my claim that it is the process of illustration, rather than the outcomes, that can be compared with Stein's empathy, I can only discuss that assuredly with regard to my own practice. With Hoven and Krug's work I must rely on my expertise as a practitioner, visual analysis, and comments made by both illustrators in interviews that reveal insights connected to empathy and postmemory. Explored through illustration practice are ideas of familial recognition as well as forms of physical erasure of contentious images. The practice analysed contributes to a concept of the granddaughter-illustrator in the experiential stage of an empathic encounter.

Section one: Investigative walk to Tinside

In this initial section of Chapter Two, I present a historical context for the chosen destination of my second investigative walk. This context encompasses the installation of a diving platform at Tinside, Plymouth and its popularity in the 1930s; how it was used during the Blitz; and its eventual removal in 2010. As with Walk One's Millbay Station, I have chosen this destination as a site that my grandfather may have walked to as a young man in the pre-Blitz city, and because it is a site that is absent in the present cityscape. Lastly, I chart my second investigative walk from what was my grandfather's house to where the diving platform once stood through a sequence of photographs taken while walking.

The second investigative walk undertaken was to the location of a diving platform next to Tinside lido in Plymouth's sound. Following a long tradition of bathing on the Devon coast, the lido, a slide, and the diving platform were installed in 1935 on the edge of a natural cliff-face in close proximity to the city centre. Modernist living promoted sunlight, fresh air and exercise to improve the bodies and minds of the masses. Aided by the railways, coastal holiday resorts took advantage of health-driven leisure by constructing art deco lidos that were fed by filtered sea water and surrounded by extensive breeze-sheltered sunbathing terraces.

Seaside resorts and coastal towns had long been popular destinations during the eighteenth and nineteenth century as places of restoration and recovery for the upper classes. To 'take the cure', a pseudo-scientific practice of full body immersion in sea water was touted for its wide-ranging health benefits. At the start of the 1930s it became as essential for a seaside town to have a lido as it had been to have a pier forty years before to attract and cater for the dramatic increase in holiday makers.¹⁷⁶

Swimming, and diving, were highly fashionable throughout the interwar period across all classes and encouraged many local councils of seaside resorts to invest heavily in outdoor municipal pools. It was generally believed that there was an imminent possibility of another

¹⁷⁶ Braggs, S., Harris, D. (2006). *Sun, Sea and Sand: The Great British Seaside Holiday*. United Kingdom: Tempus.

war and that the young people fighting needed to be in better physical condition than those who fought in the First World War.¹⁷⁷ An important aspect to this public health improvement was outdoor exercise and exposure to sunshine and magazines were full of references to general fitness through activities such as hiking, climbing, skiing, and swimming. Lidos were open-air pools that enabled individuals to participate in the healthy exercise of swimming, whilst exposing the body to as much sunlight as possible. In consequence to the physical culture movement with its patriotic and militaristic associations, there was a change in the way beauty was seen and presented. White skin, which had previously denoted nobility and the upper classes in comparison to tanned workers and labourers, lost its value as the dominant social norm. Bronzed skin and athletic appearance now came to exude social prestige through its association with leisure.¹⁷⁸

Deriving from the Italian word for seashore, the term 'lido' was associated with the Venetian resort that fashionable 'bright young things' of the 1920s would frequent.¹⁷⁹ By adopting this name, local councils imbued exotic excitement and continental sophistication to their pools and were seen as part of a wider movement in inter-war Europe to provide architecturally modern outdoor leisure and sport spaces for the urban population. Such facilities included rounded concrete and steel diving boards, cafes, fountains, ballrooms and sunbathing terraces in shades of blue and white.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Marino, G. (2010) *The Emergence of Municipal Baths: Hygiene, War and Recreation in the Development of Swimming Facilities*, *Industrial Archaeology Review*, 32:1, 35-45, DOI: 10.1179/174581910X12680800821459 p.39-41

¹⁷⁸ Marino, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Pussard, H. (2007) *Historicising the spaces of leisure: open-air swimming and the lido movement in England*, *World Leisure Journal*, 49:4, 178-188, DOI: 10.1080/04419057.2007.9674510 p.180-181

¹⁸⁰ Pussard, *ibid.*



Fig. 26

Plymouth's swimming season ran from the start of May until the end of September and was open from 'daybreak until dusk'. A variety of clubs and competitions formed in both the pools and the open water and the hire of swimming attire, hats, towels and sun loungers were available at low prices. During the Blitz, locals and aid workers would come to the Lido after clearing debris to rinse away rubble-dust. Situated next to Tinside lido and slide, the 60ft multi-platform diving stage afforded divers views of Drake's Island and the dramatic South West coastline (fig. 26). The latter half of the twentieth century saw a decline in the use and condition of the lido and diving platform leading to their closure. But while the grade II listed pool was renovated in 2003, the diving platform was caged then eventually dismantled in 2010 after concerns of health and safety. All that remains are algae-lined steps that rise from the depths onto a concrete levelled shore.

Walk Two





“Places are not 'given' - they are always in open-ended process. They are in that sense 'events'.”

Doreen Massey



“This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page.
To describe space: to name it, to trace it.”

Georges Perec



“With our steps we trace out the everyday routines of the previous habitués of the ruin, and are in this sense possessed by them. This spectral aspect extends to walking along well-marked paths, where we follow in the footsteps of numerous others.”

Tim Edensor



“In the course of a walk we usually find out something of our companion, and this is true even when we travel alone.”

Thomas A. Clark



“...an indeterminate space without precise boundaries...a place outside the circuit of the productive structures of the city, an internal, uninhabited, unproductive and often dangerous island, simultaneously on the margins of the urban system and a fundamental part of the system...the counter image of the city, both in the sense of a critique and a clue for a possible way to go beyond.”

Luc Lévesque



“Evidence is a remnant left over by chance. Very often, historical documents survive because they were not important enough to destroy at the time. They are what was not consumed by the rhythm of events.”

Norman M. Klein



“Traces of the past city are, somehow, traces of the selves we might have once been.”

Lauren Elkin



“Shadows, footprints and echoes are all ‘left behind’ in this strange in-between place, all three serving as poignantly temporary markers of a momentary human presence: a walker is only ever passing through.”

Kerri Andrews



“...water is at the heart of every city...it is water that keeps cities alive. It is also water that in so many cases shapes the character of a city.”

Deyan Sudjic

Section two: Contextual examination of Stein's second stage of empathy and its application to postmemory practice

In this section I explore and interpret Stein's second stage of her empathy process, 'the fulfilling explication'. I outline why I term this stage 'feeling-into' the experience of the other and discuss it in relation to my practice-led research which includes investigative walks across Plymouth and the act of making illustration. I then continue my contextual review for this chapter by examining Marianne Hirsch's term 'postmemory', its characteristics, and the ways in which I connect it to Stein's empathy process. I detail how postmemory affects certain generations and how for those born after a particular traumatic event, 'reaching back' is a dynamic action that generates certain forms of knowing. I follow this with examining Plymouth's relation to existing ideas of 'postmemory of place' and then close by detailing how practice-led research made within this doctoral enquiry enacts postmemory.

Feeling-into: stage two of empathy, the fulfilling explication

Stein describes the second stage of her empathy process as 'the fulfilling explication'¹⁸¹ [*die erfüllende Explikation*] which I have termed *feeling-into* in accordance with Stein's explanation that this is the stage in which the empathiser *feels into* the other's foreign experience. While Meneses puts forth that this stage of the empathic act involves "a kind of transposal or projection of the self,"¹⁸² I believe that *feeling* rather than *projecting* is a neater parallel to Stein's description. Examining the etymology of *fulfil* and *explicate* is useful in illustrating this and in understanding Stein's meaning of the mechanics of the second stage.

Deriving from the Old English *fullfyllan*, "to fill full" or "to fill up", meanings of *fulfil* include: to satisfy, to bring to completion; to follow, comply, obey; to emotionally or artistically

¹⁸¹ Stein, p.10

¹⁸² Meneses, p.132

satisfy, to develop (a theory) to the fullest.¹⁸³ Explication, a process of analysis or interpretation derives from the Latin *explico* meaning an act and result of explaining, or to tell a story. To explicate involves clarification, interpretation, explanation and development. It also means to unfold, unfurl, uncoil, loosen; arrange, adjust, solve, untangle; deploy, display, extend; exhibit, set forth.¹⁸⁴ And so, by feeling-into the foreign experience, I unfold it in the here-and-now.

[W]hen I inquire into its [the foreign experience] implied tendencies (try to bring another's mood to clear givenness to myself), the content, having pulled me into it, is no longer really an object. I am no longer turned to the content but to the object of it, am at the subject of the content in the original subject's place. And only after successfully executed clarification, does the content again face me as an object [stage three].¹⁸⁵

Stein writes that in stage one, the foreign experience 'arises as an object' and leads the empathiser. In this second stage of empathy, the empathiser is 'pulled' into an experience which has transformed from a perceived object. The foreign experience of the other, i.e., the shame that Stein perceives (as an object) in the manifestation of the blush, leads her to attempt to understand experientially the content of the other's shame. She is no longer examining the blush but instead the cause. I perceive a swimming pool as an object, but once I am immersed in it the pool becomes an experience of *being in water*, when I get out it returns to me as an object but I am filled with a direct subjective understanding of the sensory experience of it. The empathiser follows and fills their awareness of the experience to the fullest. In order to attempt to understand my grandfather's experience of walking the city I perform the same action from start (his old house) to completion (a set destination site). Through walking I feel with sensory awareness as an embodied and embedded presence in the contemporary city. Additionally, through the act of making illustration practice I feel-into the image or object that I am communicating, be that of drawing, object making, or descriptive writing. Each are methods in the attempt to sense the experience in

¹⁸³ Online etymology dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=fulfil> [accessed 16 August, 2022]

¹⁸⁴ Wiktionary, the free dictionary, <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/explico> [accessed 16 August, 2022]

¹⁸⁵ Stein, p.10

the here-and-now. When drawing the face of a tram conductor I feel-into the image and he becomes present to me; I imagine the texture of the uniform's collar and the weight of the ticket machine.

Rita Meneses puts forth that in order to understand what empathy is at this stage (or level, as she describes) it is worth following Stein's step-by-step guide of what it is not.¹⁸⁶ From this she concludes that stage two is:

- 1) experienced (not reasoned, or imagined, or simulated).¹⁸⁷
- 2) a means of accessing genuinely foreign experiences (not hypothetical "probable" experiences;¹⁸⁸ nor conjured, or projected, experiences).¹⁸⁹
- 3) direct (not based on any kind of past knowledge, such as the empathiser's past experiences).¹⁹⁰

Despite the shift from an objectification of the foreign experience to an immersion into it, the empathiser and empathete are not co-experiencing or merged into 'oneness'.¹⁹¹ Unlike fantasy, imagination, or recollection, the origin of the experience comes from something outside myself, it is an experience that always originates from the other's subjectivity. Through the second stage of empathy I feel-into the subjectivity of the other and this experience depends on a felt sense of difference between my subjectivity and theirs. The ambivalence or otherness of the experience, implicitly a self-other differentiation, is one of empathy's defining attributes as 'knowing' another's experience can dangerously boil down to removing the uniqueness and complexity of another's experience by equating (and thereby assimilating) with one's own.¹⁹² I do not know my grandfather's experience of

¹⁸⁶ Meneses, p.132

¹⁸⁷ Stein, p.14

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.27

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p.20

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p.27

¹⁹¹ Stein, p.17

¹⁹² Williams, R. (2020) *StED Talk - Bishop Rowan Williams - Ethics and Empathy*, St Edward's Institute for Christian Thought, Cambridge, UK. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acxh-U4CymU>

walking the city but can only attempt a 'quasi' knowledge by reproducing similar actions, or motions and thereby non-primordially accompanying him.

Empathy, and this stage of it, is not a simple matter of identification with others' emotions, and yet you are with the other, alongside, almost as if having the experience personally, but with an awareness that it is not. As Stein states, the empathiser "exhibits the non-primordial parallel to the having of the experience"¹⁹³ But, as Meneses interprets, this experience is not about the 'feeling' of one's own personal experience through another but the ways in which we feel the experience of another.¹⁹⁴

This happens in an exploratory lived manner, unfolding in the present with the foreign experience. Then, through this act, other sides of the foreign experience are revealed[...] Consequently, one fulfils (the term adopted by Stein) one's awareness of another's experience – or, at least, one's awareness is enriched. This act is an explication precisely because it details, in a more fulfilled manner, that which was initially perceived.¹⁹⁵

In feeling-into the city through walking it I unfold direct, personal, sensory (and perhaps emotional) experiences that I would not access otherwise. Although this cannot award me with my grandfather's original experience, it does elicit a parallel experience that occurs in my here-and-now from which I can interpret or imagine his. The performativity of this experiential feeling-into is characterised by the empathiser's desire to know the other's experience and the impossibility of such complete knowledge. This impossible desire of one to understand another's experience is what defines Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory.

¹⁹³ Stein, p.10

¹⁹⁴ Meneses, p.137

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p.136

Postmemory, the third generation, and feeling-into a past city

Marianne Hirsch defines her term postmemory as “the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural traumas of those who came before. This relationship is characterised by experiences that those born after ‘remember’ only by means of stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up.”¹⁹⁶ Originally used in reference to Holocaust survivors and their children, it has since expanded to include later descendants and distant contemporary witnesses of other tragedies and atrocities. These descendants can include those of victim survivors, as well as of perpetrators and bystanders; all connect to their past generations remembrances and experiences through a form of memory that has been transferred.

Hirsch writes that “at the same time, these members of what Eva Hoffman calls a ‘postgeneration’ also acknowledge that their received memory is distinct from the recall of contemporary witnesses and participants.”¹⁹⁷ This clarification is important in terms of postmemory’s ethicality and its comparison with Stein’s description of empathy. Stein asserts that the empathiser can never *fully* know the experience of the other and to claim such is an act of appropriation. The empathiser and the empathee’s subjective experiences are connected (through the act of empathy) but are not identical or interchangeable. In comparison, Hirsch presents “the legitimacy of second-generation memory while simultaneously preserving the unique status of the survivor memory. Postmemory refers back to the original memory, yet the act of referring back is not appropriative. It reveals, rather, that the first-generation’s memory is constitutively different, and that this difference ought to be accounted for in any postmemorial act of viewing.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Hirsch, M. (2012). *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. United Kingdom: Columbia University Press. p.5

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Heckner, E. (2008) *Whose Trauma is it? Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*. United Kingdom: Camden House. pp.67-8

Like empathy, the object of focus in postmemory is the experience of the other. It originates from outside of me and my primordial experience and so is a way of perceiving the other. Postmemory is inherently empathic in that it does not claim to be a means of acquiring knowledge of another's subjective experience but is instead a receptive coming-to-know a past that includes what can never be known.

Postmemory is characterised by layering, belatedness, and absences. Like a palimpsest, there is "an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture",¹⁹⁹ the events of the past continue to exert influence over the present. Hirsch defines postmemory not as a "movement, method, or idea...rather, as a *structure* of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience. It is a *consequence* of traumatic recall but (unlike post-traumatic stress disorder) at a generation removed."²⁰⁰ This concept is a "powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through imaginative investment and creation."²⁰¹

It is useful to clarify the generations that postmemory encompasses and connects. Those who survived, perpetrated, or witnessed the original traumatic experience are the first-generation. Those who survived but were children during the experience, too young to have an understanding of what was happening but old enough to have *been there*, are the 1.5 generation. Children of those who *were there* are the second-generation and the grandchildren are the third. Consequences of traumatic experiences are not limited to the first-generation but can be felt by others in the environment of those who were directly exposed. To reiterate, the traumatic consequences felt by others are not the same as the first generation's original experience; they are different but connected by association.

¹⁹⁹ Hirsch, (2012), p.6

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ Hirsch, M. (1997). *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. United Kingdom: Harvard University Press. p.22

Clinical psychologist Melissa Wasserman discusses the ways in which intergenerational trauma can affect familial relationships through shared behavioural traits of Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Wasserman cites psychologist Yael Danieli's description of "a conspiracy of silence"²⁰² between the first and second-generation. The first-generation often didn't share their experiences with their children, this may be because it was too soon; they were compartmentalising their new life; the relationship was 'too close'. And so, what was communicated was silence. Additionally, the second-generation did not necessarily want to inquire about their parents' experience for fear of retraumatising them, and so a circle of silence became entrenched. However, Wasserman notes that this conspiracy of silence does not seem to translate to the third-generation as there is a different type of identification and relationship at work. The third-generation are more open to inquire about the traumatic experience of the first-generation who are more open to share. This may be due to the amount of time that has elapsed or perhaps the relationship, a generation at one remove, felt safer to share.²⁰³ The benefit of conversations of individual experiences of trauma brings forth nuance to discussions which habitually fall into collective, generalised memorialisation. These nuances are important as they are capable of eliciting feelings of inclusion or identification and therefore, connection.

Identification provides a basis for what classics scholar Froma I. Zeitlin terms 'vicarious witnessing'. Zeitlin contends that the fact of living after an event does not preclude deep engagement with phenomena one did not witness:

Far from foreclosing any identification with these events, this very belatedness leads [individuals] urgently to seek ways of linking the present to the past. Even more, it seems to engender the desire of representing the past through modes of reenactment—even reanimation—through which the self, the "ego" of "the one who was not there," now takes on a leading role as an active presence. Common to these

²⁰² Danieli, Y. (1984). *Psychotherapist's participation in the conspiracy of silence about the Holocaust*. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 1(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0736-9735.1.1.23>

²⁰³ Wasserman, M. [Holocaust Museum LA] (2021, May 11), *Intergenerational Trauma in Second and Third-Generation Holocaust Survivors* [Video], YouTube. <https://youtu.be/3Em3FScSp38>

efforts is an obsessive quest to assume the burden of memory, of remembrance, by means of which one might become a witness oneself.²⁰⁴

Zeitlin's term is useful in that it alludes to the perspective shifting involved in the second stage of empathy. Vicariousness is not first hand experience but rather an action performed to bring forth understanding of another's experience such as through watching, reading, walking. However there is no merging of experience, but an awareness that it is an indirect way of knowing another's subjective experience that is performed on behalf of, or as a consequence of the other. The testimony of a witness can be proof of an event by the fact of the witness' *having-been-thereness*. Representation made by the vicarious witness cannot, non-fictionally, make such a claim due to its belatedness. Instead it will always signify the 'obsessive quest' or desire to link past to present.

In Stein's comparison of empathy with the act of perception, she writes that both have their object (focus of examination) there and meet it directly through encountering. Stein continues that "they need not represent it in order to draw it close"²⁰⁵ and that knowledge [Wissen] is the same in that it is created *in* the encounter. "Knowledge reaches its object but does not 'have' it. It stands before its object but does not see it. Knowledge is blind, empty, and restless, always pointing back to some kind of experienced, seen act. And the experience back to which knowledge of foreign experience points is called empathy."²⁰⁶ Representation or documentation made by the vicarious witness points back to the original experience felt by the other.

While I agree that an empathic encounter does not require representation for it to be fulfilled, I do propose the act of representation can be an effective means of drawing close and reaching towards the object of foreign experience. Postmemorial creative practice performs this process: the illustrator, writer, visual artist, actor, etc., use representation, in whichever form chosen, as a means to *reach back*. Those who are born after attempt to

²⁰⁴ Zeitlin, F. (1998) The Vicarious Witness: Belated Memory and Authorial Presence in Recent Holocaust Literature. in *History and Memory*. Vol. 10, No. 2. Indiana University Press. p.6

²⁰⁵ Stein, p.19

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

vicariously grasp, through creative practice, that which was 'seen', perceived, and experienced by the ones who *were there* and they also use representation as a way of 'speaking' that experience.

Hirsch reads Caruth's definition of trauma as "an encounter with another as an act of telling and listening"²⁰⁷ and therefore alludes to the reciprocally vulnerable nature of empathic encountering that is predicated on a capacity to perceive, experience, and recognise. Hirsch's interpretation also points to the precedence of knowing over knowledge. As Stein writes, "knowledge is characterised by 'encountering' [...and] is created in the encounter."²⁰⁸ The process of 'telling and listening' is a way of coming-to-know another's experience. Postmemory practice is a way of seeing that is an appropriate means of encounter in order to ascertain a particular empathic way of knowing experiences that are difficult to communicate.

In an examination of young Romanians' relationship to the communist past, geography researchers Remus Crețan and Claudia Doiciar propose that postmemory sits in places.²⁰⁹ Like artist-researcher Emily Orley, Crețan and Doiciar combine ideas of place from anthropologist Keith H. Basso and feminist geographer Doreen Massey in order to explore place as a site which postmemory can manifest. Places of postmemory are sites to which memories of a past are connected, that engage those who have no living memory of the past in question.²¹⁰ Crețan and Doiciar claim that some places are particularly receptive to postmemory examination as they are shaped by "histories of displacement, physical destruction, and social trauma resulting from state violence."²¹¹ They continue that such places are marked by their histories "in the form of architectures, monuments, and

²⁰⁷ Hirsch, M. (2001). p.12

²⁰⁸ Stein, p.19

²⁰⁹ Crețan, R. & Doiciar, C. (2022): *Postmemory sits in places: the relationship of young Romanians to the communist past*, Eurasian Geography and Economics, DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2022.2052135

²¹⁰ *ibid.* abstract

²¹¹ *ibid.* p.4

memorials associated with dominant power”²¹² so that the past continues to exert influence over the identities of post-war places.

Crețan and Doiciar consider traumatic memories to be ‘in places’ rather than ‘of places’; a city therefore is capable of ‘holding-history’ as Basso puts forth. And yet, they extend that postmemory is not restricted in its locality to places, quoting anthropologist Arturo Escobar that we should instead recognise that “place, body, and environment integrate with each other; that places gather things, thoughts, and memories in particular configurations.”²¹³ They continue with Massey’s suggestion that the past of a place is as porous as the place itself and therefore open to multiple forms of reading. Memory is “embedded and shaped by landscapes and the environment [...and this] dynamic understanding allows for a more fluid process of interactions between memory and place.”²¹⁴ The memories, and postmemories, that are situated in places are as mutable as the places themselves and are “always in a state of becoming, of being worked on, struggled over. Some bear repeating, others are forgotten or ignored.”²¹⁵ The wound that I ‘listen to’ in this doctoral enquiry is the city and it is through my encounters with it that I can come-to-know the experience of the other; my grandfather’s walks across the pre- and post-Blitz city.

If a city as Orley (via Basso and Massey) proposes, can be understood as an unfixed, ever-changing, porous assemblage that it is also capable of retaining the residual remains of the past, then we must consider the effect that walking, as a form of re-enactment, imparts on any empathic encounters. By performing the same action as the other, walking the city, a researcher can attempt to approach the past empathically by engaging in encounters of the present. Walking, as re-enactment, is not a method of explicating the past from a contemporary perspective but is a creative process of interpretation, which accordingly includes both imagination and critical thinking. Nor is it identical replication;

²¹² *ibid.*

²¹³ *ibid.* p.5

²¹⁴ *ibid.* p.5

²¹⁵ *ibid.* p.5

the acting-out is made from its differences as well as its equivalences with the original experience. What I perceive and experience while walking the city is markedly different from what my grandfather saw and experienced. My walks from the same location re-enacts his, they are connected by action, a familial link, and place and yet the two experiences are divided by gender, time, and subjectivity.

Hirsch writes that “the gap between generations is the breach between a memory located in the body and the mediated knowledge of those who were born after”²¹⁶ and so the gap or breach of memory is my grandfather’s embodied experience of walking the city. I have no way of fully knowing that particular experience, however, I put forward that by replicating that same bodily action I can empathically attempt a way of knowing that includes all lines of difference, such as gender, age, place, etc. In this regard, it is a way of ‘drawing close’ the experience of the other.

My grandfather’s experience of the war was not connected to the horrors of the Holocaust, nor did he directly witness the death and devastation of close conflict; however, many of his friends who were pilots, navigators, and gunners died during this time. When looking at a group photograph from his and my grandmother’s wedding he would point to the numerous people pictured who had died. It must also be considered that in his role as an engineer, he would have fitted and fixed planes that may well have bombed German cities. His grief, the witnessing of his home city’s destruction while walking, the unspeakability of that walk, and potentially an ambivalent equivalence of Plymouth with other bombed European cities, is what I position as the foreign experience of the other, the trauma.

As a granddaughter-illustrator, I attempt to draw close his experience through walking and illustration practice. My subject is characterised by a postmemory preoccupation but the way in which I attempt to unfold and understand it, through illustration practice, enacts

²¹⁶ Hirsch, (2012) p.80

Stein's stages of empathy. In the following section I examine how this is presented in my practice and in the practice of two other granddaughter-illustrators.

Chapter two Section three: Reflective critical analysis of illustration practice

In her book *The Generation of Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch writes that “in looking at postmemory through the lens of the daughter, I bring feminist negotiations between commonalities and differences, and feminist theorizations of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and of political solidarity, to bear on the theorization of memory and trauma. [...] Identifications can cross lines of difference, and the daughter can function as a familial position or identificatory space open to extra-familial, even male, subjects.”²¹⁷ These feminist negotiations of postmemory continue into, and benefit, the third-generation who, as Wasserman stated, are more inclined to inquire into the difficult and traumatic experience of the first-generation, be they survivors, onlookers, or perpetrators. In comparison to my positioning and practice, I put forth that as granddaughter-illustrators, Line Hoven and Nora Krug are performing agents of postmemory in that they are acting out and working through the past of another (i.e., a grandfather) through the production of vicarious testimony in their graphic memoirs. Each undertakes research processes such as reading diaries, looking at family photo-albums, and examining archives in order to perceive, to some degree, the experience of the other or the context of that experience. The third-generation’s lack of full knowledge of the experience of the first-generation is an insurmountable gap that exists between generations. While photographs are indexical in their direct having-been-there-ness, illustration, particularly postmemorial practice, can reveal things that feel true to the practitioner, moments that could be but that there is no evidence for. The vicarious testimony that the granddaughter-illustrator creates does not evidence the original experience, that of the other, but rather their own, unique, subsequent experience in relation to the other; it evidences their empathic encounter.

²¹⁷ Hirsch, (2012), p.87

Line Hoven, *Love Looks Away*

German-American illustrator and cartoonist Line Hoven published her graphic-memoir *Love Looks Away* in 2007. After finding diaries that belonged to her grandmother, Hoven decided to write and illustrate an account of her family. She compared the family stories that she had been told, in all their differing variations and perspectives, with what was written in the diaries alongside family photo-albums. From these oral, written and photographic histories of a family Hoven constructed a version she believed to be true, or *felt true*.²¹⁸

In the first story of her book, Hoven depicts her paternal grandfather Erich as a happy child of around ten enjoying marching with his friends in a group of *Deutsches Jungvolk*, as evidenced by his uniform and flag. Erich builds a radio through which he comes to hear and enjoy Mendelssohn's overture no.7 but is then conflicted when he hears that the composer is Jewish. Hoven illustrates Erich putting on his uniform in two parallel images that occur either side of the event of listening (fig. 27 and 28). In the first he is looking at the knot of his tie in a mirror and is carefree, untroubled, content. In the subsequent image Erich looks into his own eyes with an expression of guilt, trepidation or sadness.

²¹⁸ Hoven, L. [School of Visual Arts NYC], (2017), *Ferocious Ink: A Conversation between Line Hoven and Nora Krug* [video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/DGXqNldGqoM>

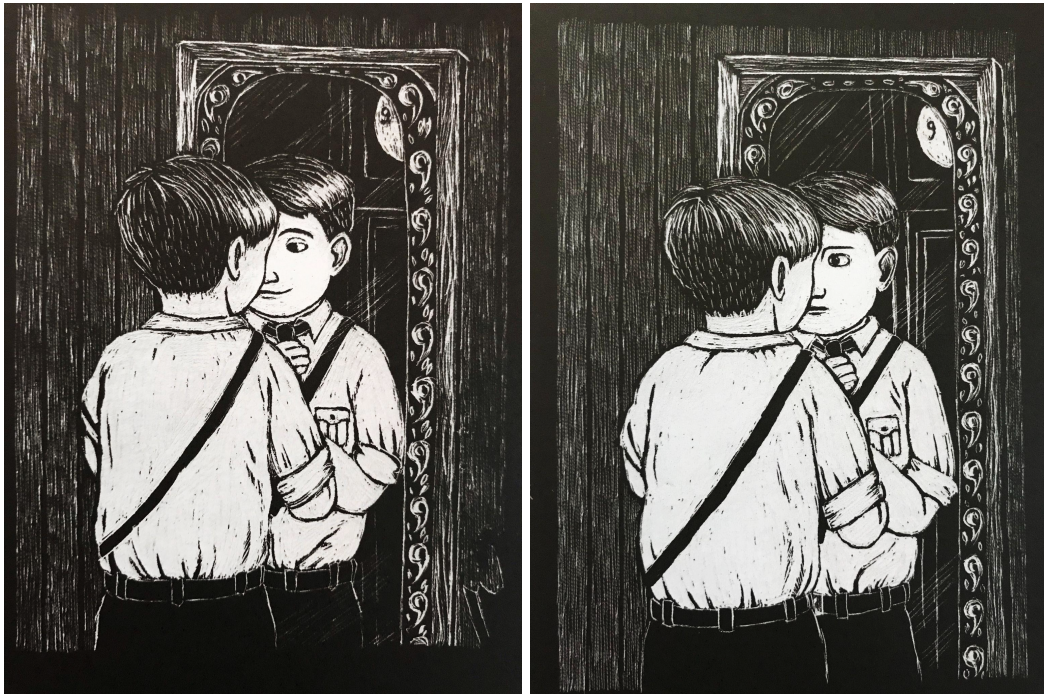


Fig. 27 and Fig. 28

Erich is portrayed as a young boy and yet, in actuality he was seventeen when he came-to-know that something beautiful could be created by someone who was Jewish. Hoven imagines and depicts a small but seismic moment of disillusionment, where guilt that would be passed on generation to generation began. She initially visualised her grandfather as a child when this moment occurred, “the thought, or realisation he had seemed so simple and childish,”²¹⁹ that she envisioned herself, as a child, having that same realisation. Hoven kept this fiction as it was part of her memory and “was the only way I could cope with that memory.”²²⁰

Hoven makes her images using scratchboard (or scraperboard), a medium and technique of using sharp knives and tools for engraving into a thin layer of white China clay that is coated with dark, often black India ink. Surface layers are scraped away to create an array of contrasting lines, surface areas, filigree textures and highlights that resemble woodcut

²¹⁹ Hoven, *ibid.*

²²⁰ Hoven, *ibid.*

printing. It became a popular medium for printing as it was cheap and allowed for a fine line appearance that could be photographically reduced for reproduction without losing quality. From the 1930s to 1950s, during the timespan of Hoven's grandfather's narrative, scratchboard was one of the preferred techniques for medical, scientific and product illustration.²²¹

The act of scratching, or scraping, at the dark surface is a way of illuminating in the most direct sense; it is a form of drawing that reveals highlights made through the excavation of lines. As a technique, it is rarely used as it is so time consuming and laborious, Hoven describes the production of her scratchboard images with the German word *Leidenschaft* meaning passion through suffering.²²² This description is interesting in that the act of illustration is a considerable and intentional investment of time, attention, and physical effort in the postmemorial desire to reach back and bring close (through representation). Such image-making could also be read as a votive action of penance when using it to illustrate her grandparents involvement in the Hitler Youth and Germany's inherited collective shame of complicity and culpability.

²²¹ Lozner, R. (1990). *Scratchboard for Illustration*, Watson-Guption Publications, p.12

²²² Hoven, *ibid.*



Fig. 29

In *Love Looks Away*, Hoven includes full-page spreads that replicate family photo albums with deckled edges, handwritten annotation and pressed flowers (fig. 29). She illustrates the four corner tabs frame of a removed image of her paternal grandparents 'Erich & Irmgard at Hitler Youth summer camp'. By illustrating her family's historical self-censorship, Hoven evidences an unspoken erasure of memory.

Omissions, or absences, that act as illustrations of Germany's complex relationship with its difficult past also feature in Tacita Dean's work *Die Regimentstochter* (2005). Dean's artwork consists of thirty-six opera programmes from the 1930s and 1940s that Dean found in a German flea market in 2000.²²³ Each one has an opening cut into the front cover to remove a swastika or other indicators of the Third Reich (fig. 30 and 31). The removal of the symbol demonstrates repression following oppression with these physical gaps suggesting gaps in memory.

²²³ Dean, T. (2005). *Die Regimentstochter*. Synopsis. Steidl Verlag: Göttingen

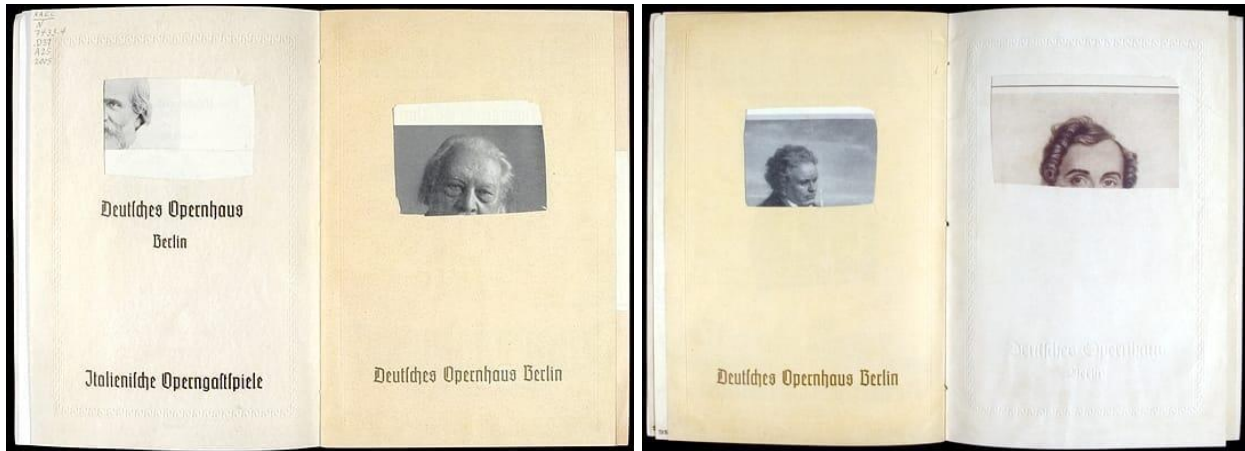


Fig. 30 and Fig. 31

The cut-outs also act as windows through which the viewer can see the past in a surreal conjunction of revealing and concealing. As with Hoven's representation, Dean presents a specific historical situation and its destruction by showing what remains. The artefacts evidence the original owner's intervention with them, making us question if the action of cutting away the offensive mark was compelled by a knowing-filled shame after the war or as a means of preservation. The title of the work, *The Regiment's Daughter*, references one of the operas included in the programmes but also alludes to the inheritance of postmemory; it could be imagined that a daughter of a perpetrator or bystander received these documents and it was her who removed the stains of memory as a way of erasing, or altering the past. The cutting is an action that both conceals the connection to the Nazi regime and also reveals a subsequent intervention with the regime's material remains.

Despite Hoven's love for her family, she does not 'look away' but faces the moment of redaction directly; the gap left by the removed photograph demonstrates their shame which Hoven attempts to feel-into through meticulously drawing. In this manner, she demonstrates how the practice of illustration can be empathic: she is receptively aware of the experience of the other's shame as it appears to her as an object, a removed photograph; she feels-into her grandparents' experience through the action of drawing

thereby witnessing their 'averted sides'; and finally she accepts their participation and their guilt, recognises this as part but not all of her family's history, leading her to address its effect on the here-and-now in the production of her own version of this narrative. Illustration provides Hoven with something that existing images and accounts could not fulfil. It was through producing and authoring illustration practice that she could make meaning, through a third-generation perspective, of inherited memory. The construction and representation of a narrative that includes felt-truths is Hoven's way of negotiating inherited memory and by encountering these experiences through her practice of illustration she can show how these moments of the past affect her in the here-and-now. Hoven states that it is "me telling the story [as] I'm the only one who can do it *this way*."²²⁴

Nora Krug, *Belonging: a German reckons with History and Home*

Nora Krug's book *Heimat: a German Family album* (German title), or *Belonging: a German reckons with History and Home* (US title), is a 288-page illustrated and hand-lettered visual memoir of her German family's memory of the Second World War. It is a work of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, meaning coming to terms with, or coping with, the past.²²⁵ With the distance of grandparents and uncle, Krug's book displays a transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge. Born decades after the fall of the Nazi regime, Krug's childhood and youth was inexorably under the shadow of Germany's actions during the war. After living outside of Germany for nearly twenty years Krug realised that what she knew and had learned about the war remained on an institutional, collective level and lacked the experiential investigation of her personal family history. Krug also realised that it had actually been taboo to directly ask what your grandparents had done during that time, a conspiracy of silence had become entrenched. In order to confront the subject in an

²²⁴ Hoven, *ibid.*

²²⁵ Oltermann, P. (2018). Nora Krug: 'I would have thought, what's left to say about Germany's Nazi past?' The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/03/nora-krug-germany-nazi-past-heimat-memoir-author-illustrator>

honest way, Krug decided to go back and ask her family questions that she didn't know or think to ask previously, questions that had formed in the distance of the event, the country and the new perspectives gained from living away.²²⁶

Returning to Germany, Krug conducted research by visiting archives and interviewing family members; she uncovered stories of her maternal grandfather, a driving teacher in Karlsruhe during the war, and her father's brother Franz-Karl, who died as a teenage SS soldier in Italy. Krug's book illustrates the uncomfortable contradictions of the idea of *Heimat*, the German word for the place that first forms us, where the sensibilities and identity of one generation pass on to the next.²²⁷ In conversation with Krug, academic Claire Gorrara puts forward that *Belonging* demonstrates a "grappling of heritages that have been gifted without request,"²²⁸ this inheritance of guilt and the history that it connects to is part of who we are; the past doesn't exist outside the present, it is always already entangled. The third generational perspective is the attempt to find a way to carry the weight of inherited memory. Krug argues that one of the ways of doing this is to convey a sense of empathy towards the subjects through personal narratives, to create visual narratives that deal with personal experience in order to create a sense of fuller understanding (fig. 32). In conversation with Hoven, Krug explains the importance of subjectivity in her work:

Personal experience is the only legitimate way of telling a story of identity that is encumbered with collective shame and guilt; both in family identity and national identity. To make it as personal as possible, not to try to be a historian, not to talk about other people, but to really and deeply think about what it means to me.²²⁹

²²⁶ Krug, N. [Louisiana Channel] (2019). *Nora Krug Interview: Who I Am As A German*. [Video]. YouTube: <https://youtu.be/ajO39wGKKDs>

²²⁷ Krug, N. (2016) [Personal Website] <https://nora-krug.com/belonging-heimat>

²²⁸ Gorrara, C. [School of Advanced Study University of London] (2021). *The Second World War in the Contemporary Graphic Novel: A Conversation with Nora Krug*. [Video] YouTube: <https://youtu.be/zuXiMVqkduk>

²²⁹ Krug, N. [School of Visual Arts NYC], (2017), *Ferocious Ink: A Conversation between Line Hoven and Nora Krug* [video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/DGXqNldGqoM>

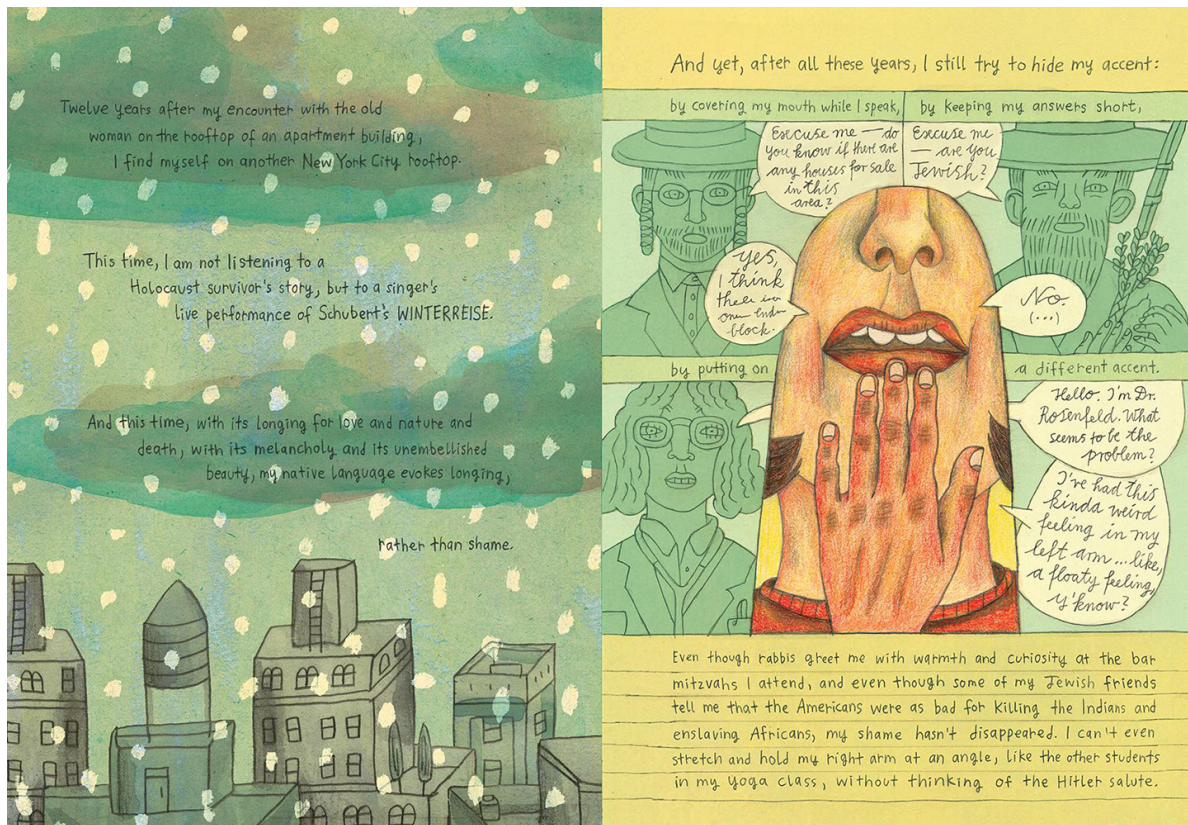


Fig. 32

In a manner similar to Hoven and Dean, Krug examines the censorship of memory through the use of photography. On one 'memory archivist' page (fig. 33), Krug groups together items found in German flea markets which correspond to the theme of erasure. By examining these items, the viewer can see the different ways visual artefacts are physical spaces for repression as well as that it comes from multiple agents, i.e., those who were there, those who were born after (family), and those who were monitoring (Allies).

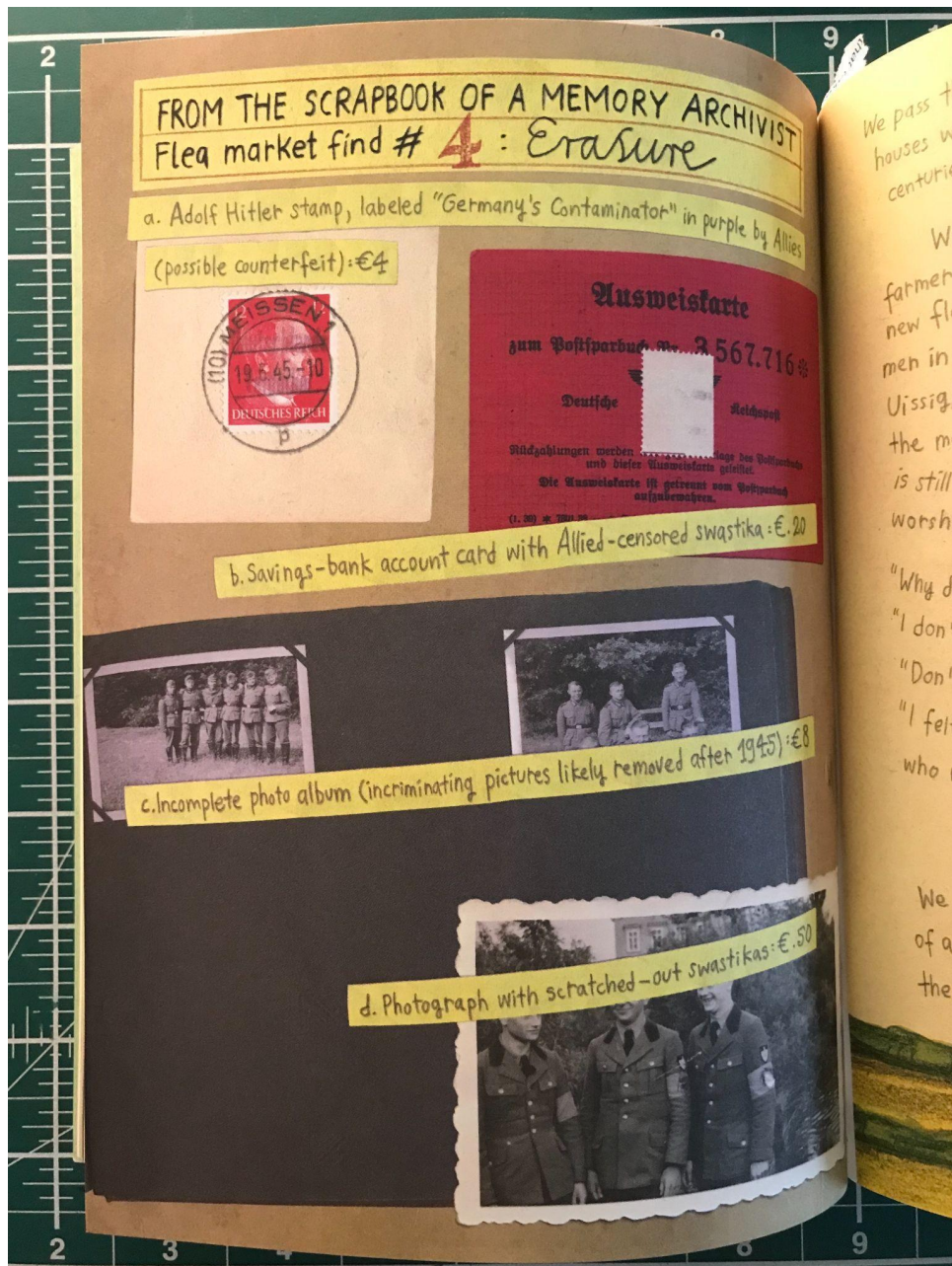


Fig. 33

A photo album shows young soldiers standing in groups by trees, they are smiling with arms casually circling each other's shoulders. The images speak of their youth and perhaps excitement, they could be any young men from any regiment, but there are also gaps where other photographs should be. Such gaps make the viewer question not only what or who they evidenced, but also who has removed them. Whether they were taken out by those in

picture or by relatives, and if the removal was an act of preservation or guilt. In another photograph, swastikas on soldier's uniforms have been scratched away from the image in a retrospective act of concealment. While Hoven's illustrative practice of scratchboard is used to excavate or reveal narratives of the past, those who have scratched at these photographs have attempted to scrape away an abhorrent association. In Krug's work, photographs are never presented as a neutral or documentary source; but are always annotated or marked in some way and interwoven within a complex constructed narrative. Historic photographs are utilised to convey specific moments of the past but also evidence an act of witnessing; that of Germans looking at their own past, culpability, and guilt, and the ways in which they attempt to address that, i.e., through erasure.²³⁰ Krug utilises these archival photographs to act as illustration as they are images that visually communicate or point to a particular historical narrative.

The *Reichsadler*, the heraldic eagle carrying a swastika, is obscured by a white stamp-like sticker on a savings account card. The clean, white rectangle presents a bureaucratic mandate to remove visual culture of the regime; the unassuming white rectangle that is belatedly applied, like tip-ex, over a tremendous error. But while Dean's opera pamphlets bear the action of excision, of deliberate cutting away, this symbol is buried with the tips of the wings still visible. The past cannot be erased despite such attempts, it is always already *throwntogether* with the present and therefore requires recognition, reconfiguration, reexamination so that while the second-generation response may be to reject, the third-generation's focus is much more concerned with the authors asking themselves what to do with, and how to apply, such difficult heritages.

Krug uses a collage aspect to the construction of *Belonging*, such compositions illustrate the postmemorial aspect of looking back, arranging to find narratives, and feeling-into the past as a way of understanding. It also replicates the visual aspect of memory that, as Krug comments, is composed of individually experienced moments that are collected and made

²³⁰ Krug, N. [German Consulate General Vancouver] (2022) *Graphic Autobiography and the Holocaust: Nora Krug, Leela Corman, and Miriam Katin*. [YouTube] https://youtu.be/B_CfLIB16RE

sense of retrospectively. *Belonging* is a fragmented arrangement of the past because perspective is always subjective and partial; the desire and grasp for knowledge of another must inherently include things that can never be known and these gaps are as important and meaningful as those which can be pulled-close through representation.²³¹ This fragmented arrangement also typifies the illustration practice that I have generated. Drawings, prints, photographs, and objects are grouped according to their corresponding walks but are not bound within the pages of a book, as with Hoven and Krug, and so can offer flexibility in their display allowing reconsideration of the relationships between each piece of practice.

Drawing photographs as feeling-into experience

In *Taxonomy of Deception* (2014), Catrin Morgan defines illustration as a description of “an image acting in combination with other elements to form a ‘complex text’”.²³² This is made up of both written and graphic components as well as design choices and physical qualities which comprise the illustration’s mode of delivery. Morgan posits that many types of images behave or “operate as illustrations” through their interaction with text. This leads to the discussion of illustration’s capability as a communication tool which can be utilised outside traditional parameters of the discipline. She writes that “photographs, text, diagrams, stains on paper, appropriated images and reproductions of works of art may all serve as illustrations”²³³ despite the lack of critical discourse of them in regard to their illustrative qualities and function. So rather than sitting complacently within static frameworks which demarcate disciplines, when moved or placed into particular contexts these ‘images’, which may not have originally been made as illustrations, can actively change and mutate into illustrations.

²³¹ Krug, *ibid.*

²³² Morgan, C. (2014). *A Taxonomy of Deception*. (Ph.D). Royal Academy of Art. p.21

²³³ Morgan, *ibid.*

Traditionally photographs have been positioned as the opposite of illustration and while it is true that not all drawing is illustration and not all illustration is made through drawing, this antithetical positioning is still largely upheld. Illustrator Alan Male writes that within editorial pages and advertising, it is the job of illustration to communicate in greater depth and definition the complexities of a topic “rather than, like photography, [which] presents just the ‘veneer’ or ‘surface’ of the subject.”²³⁴ He continues that illustration goes “beyond the traditional photographic picture in terms of its inherent being as a visual language”²³⁵ in representing pictorial truths. While I agree with Male’s promotion of illustration’s strength in communication, I do not believe that such grandiose posturing is fruitful in discussing illustration’s capabilities. It must also be noted that his argument of illustration practice is primarily framed within the commercial sector of the discipline. Recent years have given rise to an increasing number of successful and innovative illustrators whose practice lies outside of these grounds and frequently engage, authorially, in diverse forms of media. Although Male’s succinct definition that an illustration is an image dependent on a context is an appropriate maxim, there is a distinct lack of clarity as to what form the image takes and of the corresponding context.

²³⁴ Male, A. (2017). *Illustration: A Theoretical and Contextual Perspective*. Switzerland: Bloomsbury Academic. p.68

²³⁵ Morgan, p.19-20

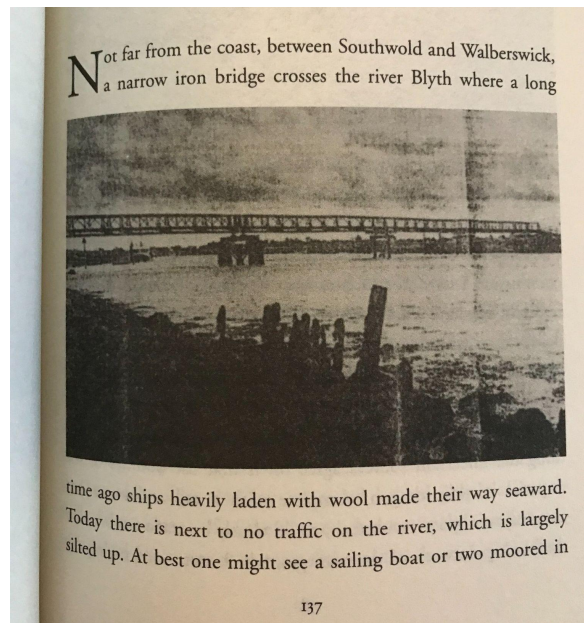


Fig. 34

Male's polemic positioning of competition between photography and illustration is unravelled by Morgan's claim that existing images can behave as illustrations. She uses authors W.G. Sebald and Javier Marias as examples of appropriating and embedding photographs within fictive texts as an illustrative device. The images provide an indication of evidence in that they are perceived as documentary 'proof' of what is written. However, both authors employ this supposition to "test notions of veracity and the boundaries of fiction".²³⁶ A photograph when connected to the text is illustrative in its communication, however, that communication is not necessarily truthful. If, using the etymological adage, illustration is illumination, we need to make clear that this does not necessarily mean that what is being illuminated is empirically correct. Even an unaltered photograph without filters and manipulation can be used to misdirect or support a fictional narrative. Furthermore, Sebald often performed processes to obfuscate his selected images through repeated scanning on copy-printers. This process generated a visual effect which erodes the discernible content of the image and to trigger doubt about systems of visual representation. Sebald's scanned images also mirror the repetitive compulsion exercised

²³⁶ Morgan, p.19

with traumatic memories; he returns attention to the image, multiples it, in order to conversely find or hide something located within the image. And so, rather than offering only the 'vener or surface' of what is being said in the text, Sebald's photographs complicate the text in their relationship with it. They are not dependent or secondary to the text as they hold enough weight to utterly alter our reading of the text. As well as being highly useful in generating research for illustration, Sebald's images show that photography can be utilised to perform a complex illustrative function, thereby acting as illustration.

In April 2018, I was looking through a photography book of 1930s Plymouth when my attention was caught by a portrait of a tram conductor who looked like my grandfather at that time (fig. 35). Literary theorist Roland Barthes writes evocatively of such photographic encounters, "what am I doing, during the whole time I remain with it? I look at it, I scrutinise it, as if I wanted to know more about the thing or the person that it represents."²³⁷ Barthes' desire to gain knowledge from the image is tempered by the conjunction 'as if'. There is instability in 'as if', it is murky with an implicit potential truth rather than an outright statement. Barthes is tentative in defining what he is doing during the 'whole time' he remains with the photograph. But such imprecision is perhaps appropriate for a perceptive act that is filled with a desire for knowledge and the recognition that it can never be fully granted.

²³⁷ Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida*, 2000, Vintage Random House, London, p.99



Fig. 35

The face of the tram conductor is almost recognisable, it is 'as if' I know him, and yet I know this recognition is false. There is a strange discordance between the peripheral, almost-knowing and my solid, logical knowledge; they undermine each other. Stein suggests that the move to empathise initially arises through non-deliberative physical manifestation: "it is a gesture and it is also an act, an action, of resemblance. It is travelling with the image."²³⁸ Resemblance arises before me, all at once, initiating an empathic encounter. I face, or look directly at, the face of the conductor that looks like the face of my grandfather as a young man.

Marianne Hirsch describes how when looking at a particular family photograph, it "touched me in a way I could not verbalise".²³⁹ In this act of examination, Hirsch and the photograph are reciprocally vulnerable and touch each other in turn; the photograph is scrutinised,

²³⁸ Chare, N. (2013). *On the Problem of Empathy: Attending to Gaps in the Scrolls of Auschwitz*. p.38

²³⁹ Hirsch, M. (1997) *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Harvard University Press. p.79

interpreted, handled, scanned, enlarged, while Hirsch is affected in a manner that she struggles to communicate. Such actions reflect the postmemorial desire to reach back into the past and empathically pull close the experience of the other. The photograph's content, in the words of Stein, 'pulls [her] into it' thereby eliciting an emotional experience.

The photograph that touches Hirsch and the image that catches my attention both perform the same action: that of emerging before us and pulling us into them. I am no longer facing the photograph, as an object, but am immersed within the feeling of recognition, facing the conductor himself. Barthes aligns photographs that touch him with feeling tenderness toward the subject; he is receptive and vulnerable to these images through what Hirsch terms 'the familial gaze.'²⁴⁰ According to Hirsch, family portraits are images which bring forth relational forms of viewing that are idiosyncratic and focused through the lens of the viewer's own particularity. "Recognising an image as *familial* elicits a specific kind of readerly or sPECTORIAL look, an *affiliative look* through which we are sutured into the image and through which we adopt the image into our own familial narrative."²⁴¹ Barthes' affiliative look is invested in the search for his recently deceased mother and Hirsch is examining a photograph of her maternal grandmother and aunt. I was examining the book's images of Plymouth at the time my grandfather lived there to try to come-to-know his experience of the city. My grandfather's face, as a young man, was present in my mind while looking through the book.

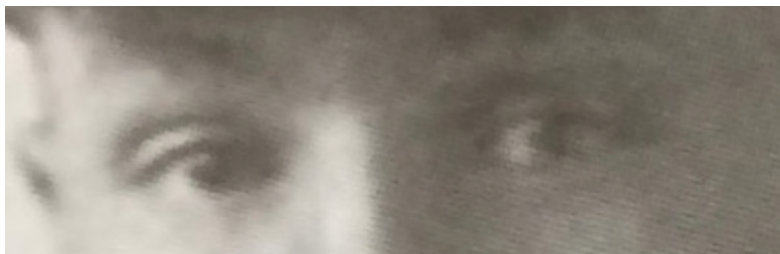


Fig. 36

²⁴⁰ Hirsch, M. (1997). p.11

²⁴¹ Ibid. p.93

In the face of the conductor I could *almost* see my grandfather. Recognition is a regaining of knowledge, a remembrance, and yet despite the similarity I knew that this recognition was misplaced. The photograph holds the conductor's face forever young, his features are rounded before any definitive inscription of time and character can mark it so that it transforms under subjective inspection. Through misperception there is an element of willing confusion: the man in the photograph *looks like* my grandfather at that age, but it is an inadequate, empty likeness. Such likeness left Barthes "unsatisfied and somehow sceptical,"²⁴² it is always inherently lacking and his desire to find his mother within the image can never be fully met. His scepticism is hesitant with doubt present in the 'somehow', the person in the photograph is *like* them; not definitively them but not definitively *not* them. Knowing and not-knowing are entwined so that mistrust emerges from the confusion of the print's midtones and grain. Barthes' scrutiny that is predicated on the 'as if' of wanting to know more and Hirsch's inability to verbalise the way in which the photograph touches her both point to a failure of language in communicating the combined knowing/not-knowing that arises from such affiliative encounters. The image's ability to touch the viewer fosters an intersubjective way of knowing that words cannot convey.

Barthes writes that the photograph is a "bizarre medium...a hallucination"²⁴³ but unlike a transitory, experiential illusion, the photograph is a material artefact that documents the physical presence of a person in a past moment. Its bizarre, hallucinatory aspect is that of a visual echo of a past moment reverberating each time a viewer in the present examines it. I attempt to *read* the photograph of the conductor, to feel-into the surface, it depicts both that which was there and that which is not here; this is a contradiction at the core of the photograph's composition, an absence constantly contrasted by a previous presence. The young man in the photograph no longer exists; I am faced by his *not-there-ness* but at the same time I am aware that he *was* there. He stands, poised in the posed action of holding the ticket dispenser and yet "he is dead and he is going to die."²⁴⁴ The photograph is an

²⁴² Barthes, pp.102-3

²⁴³ Barthes, p.115

²⁴⁴ Ibid. p.95

artefact of an arrested moment of time. The abyss between the conductor's presence and absence is compressed into the shallow depth of the image, reduced to the speed of the shutter. Far from being evidential, the photograph brings forth questions instead of offering absolute answers.

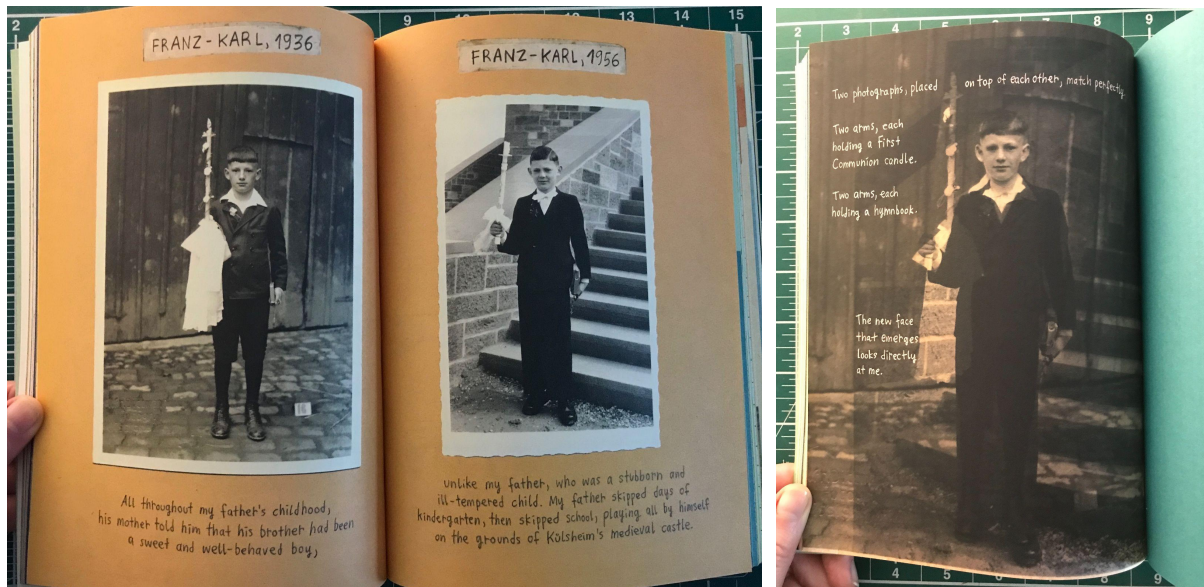


Fig. 37 and Fig. 38

In *Belonging*, Nora Krug plays with the hallucinatory properties of family photographs. Born twenty years after his brother and namesake, Krug's father is posed to mark the occasion of his first communion. The pose, the props of the candles and hymn book, and the sibling resemblance all echo the other Franz-Karl to whom Krug's father was regularly compared. The images are constructed for comparison; the viewer looks at the equivalences and the differences of location, hairstyle, quality of clothing (fig 37). When Krug merges the two Franz-Karls she visualises the ghost or shadow of the dead brother that clings to the living (fig. 38). The first boy is applied to the second, through resemblance, and is also within him, through internalised comparison and inherited grief. It is also a symbol for the inherited history that is carried by those born after that needs to be acknowledged.

The emergence of my empathic experience was seeing the photograph of the conductor which provoked a feeling of recognition. My receptivity to the image and this sensation that it elicited pulled me into the image with a desire to understand and explicate details of the experience. By drawing, I attempted to feel-into it gesturally in an exploratory manner in the here-and-now. Drawing was a means of immersion within which I could try to make sense of; coming-to-know the other and my subjective response. Through the act of representation I could reach back and draw close this unknowable figure and evoke a sensation of a co-presence as although over eighty years separates the date of the photograph and the date of the drawing, the belated and layered nature of image making brings forth a vestige of his primordial experience to meet with my primordial moment of looking and drawing. The figure of the conductor acted as a proxy: my grandfather, as a young man, is inherently unknown to me and therefore inherently fictitious. As Hoven felt the need to depict her grandfather as a child rather than a young man, a proxy felt like a safer, if acknowledged, fiction. And yet, through illustrative practice, differences became pronounced between the photographed face and the drawn face so that resemblance dissipated. The face changed through the act of drawing so that a look of shyness became glazed or vacant. His gaze moved from being directed towards the viewer (fig. 36) to away or behind the camera (fig. 39). The more that I worked at the face the more distant it drifted.



Fig. 39

I scanned the drawing to reintroduce photographic light to the face digitally. The drawing was converted from the fragility of the pencil marks into pixels. In the dislocation from the

context of the book, it is indeterminable when (or if) the conductor *was* situated. The lines of the drawing are coloured burgundy to match the livery of the trams and the route map then printed onto acetate. Rather than lying flat, I positioned the acetate to float from the wall suspended by magnets so that the conductor could stand upright. I directed light to the acetate and the printed lines acted as a barrier so that in the gap between the acetate and the wall a shadow-conductor was cast (fig. 40). This brother written with light had a fragile existence, his death occurring when the light went out. And yet, he could also return to the here-and-now with a flick of a switch. Through this gesture, illustration practice performs postmemory in the impossible desire to return or re-invoke the past.



Fig. 40

Hirsch asks “what, in this picture, has touched me so strongly that I claim its familial relation to me, even though I don’t actually *recognise* the individuals represented?”²⁴⁵ The conductor’s likeness to my grandfather counters my knowledge that the young man was not him. My recognition is a fiction but the similarity is strong enough to *almost* cast doubt. Additionally, the resemblance manifested due to the medium as it is only through photographs that I could see the face of my grandfather in his youth. I was able to see him (as he was as a young man) and not-him (as I knew him when he was an old man). My action of reaching back revealed that the original, both the conductor and my grandfather, were different to my perception of them in the here-and-now, but this difference is inherently part of the act. That which is not known, as well as what is imagined or authored is part of the composite of coming-to-know the other within postmemory practice and an empathic encounter.

Diver’s Line

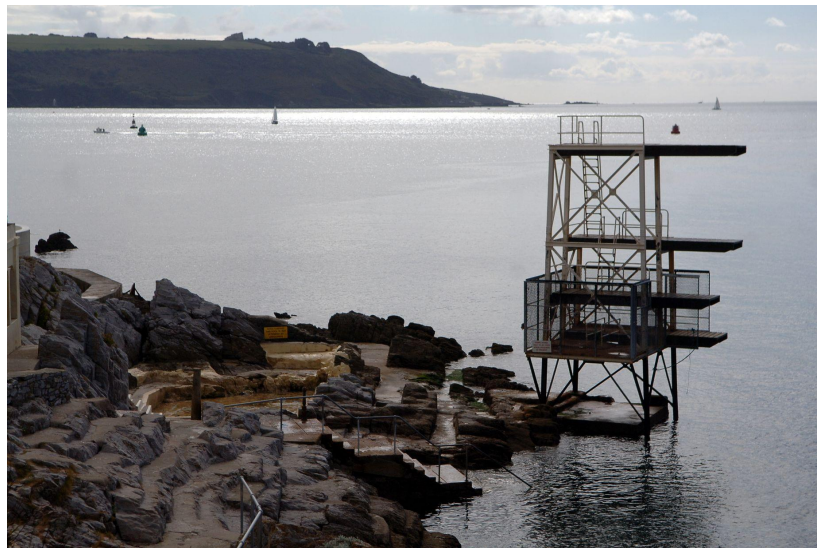


Fig. 41

²⁴⁵ Hirsch, p.80

Following Walk One, I researched through the production of illustration practice the transitory nature of a particular place or destination site. The location that contains what was Millbay train station and what now contains Plymouth Pavilions is an urban palimpsest built up of accumulated and deconstructed material layers. Whereas, the destination of Walk Two, Tinside diving platform (fig. 41), does not have something that exists in its place. Closed to the public in 2003 and dismantled in 2010, all that remains of the removed landmark are the seashore steps (fig. 42). The presence of the past city within that of the present is evidenced through an example of removal and absence.



Fig. 42

In a manner similar to the station, the diving platform was a structure that facilitated the movement of bodies through space: while the station was for transport, the diving platform was for leisure. In order to attempt to empathically come-to-know another's possible interaction with the structure, I wanted to track the diver's movement, or passage, through the act of representation as I had with my investigative walks. Using archival images of the platform (fig. 43 and 44), I estimated the route that the diver would have taken. This included climbing each ladder to reach the top platform, the trajectory of the jump or dive, before breaking the water and swimming to the surface.



Fig. 43

It is worth explicating the intention of producing a 3-dimensional illustrative object. Through its physicality the object can offer multidirectional viewpoints that, in this instance, an image cannot. By approaching these entry-points for viewed encounters, I can examine from a number of angles in order to, in a literal sense, shift perspective by physically moving around the object. Such bodily movement is an “exploratory lived manner”²⁴⁶ of examination.

The illustrative object represents the movement of a diver and their path of travel across the structure (fig. 45). This past path echoes the ‘worldline’ concept that is used to describe the course of an event. Pioneered by German mathematician Hermann Minkowski, the worldline is applied to physics and theories of relativity to signify an object, or person, in a sequence of events labelled with time and place. The worldline tracks or marks the history of that object or person but is distinguished from the concept of ‘orbit’ or ‘trajectory’ by the element of time.²⁴⁷ For instance, the logbook of a ship is a description of the ship’s worldline when it contains a time attached to each position. This concept is useful as it describes the purpose of the ‘Diver’s Line’ which charts the imagined sequential movement of a past

²⁴⁶ Stein, p.136

²⁴⁷ Ridpath, E. (2018) World Line, A Dictionary of Astronomy (3 ed.) Oxford University Press

person climbing, walking, diving off, and swimming from a structure that no longer exists within the present city. The solidity of the object contrasts the ephemeral nature of the diver's movement thereby illustrating something that is intangible. It is through representation that I attempt to make this ephemeral line materially physical so that it can exist in the *throwntogetherness* of the here-and-now.

The materials and construction of the Diver's Line were outside of my skill and expertise and so it was made in collaboration with an engineer. This process of production required direction communicated both verbally and through diagrams. Standing at 4.2ft, the Diver's Line is at 1:14 scale of the absent 60ft diving platform. It is a scale model of a past event. Colour is used to signify different stages of the diver's journey on the platform: the black and white stripes signified the diver's climb up the ladders, the solid black sections stand for each of the diving platforms, the pale blue diagonal is the diver's fall through air, and lastly the dark teal signified the diver's immersion in seawater.

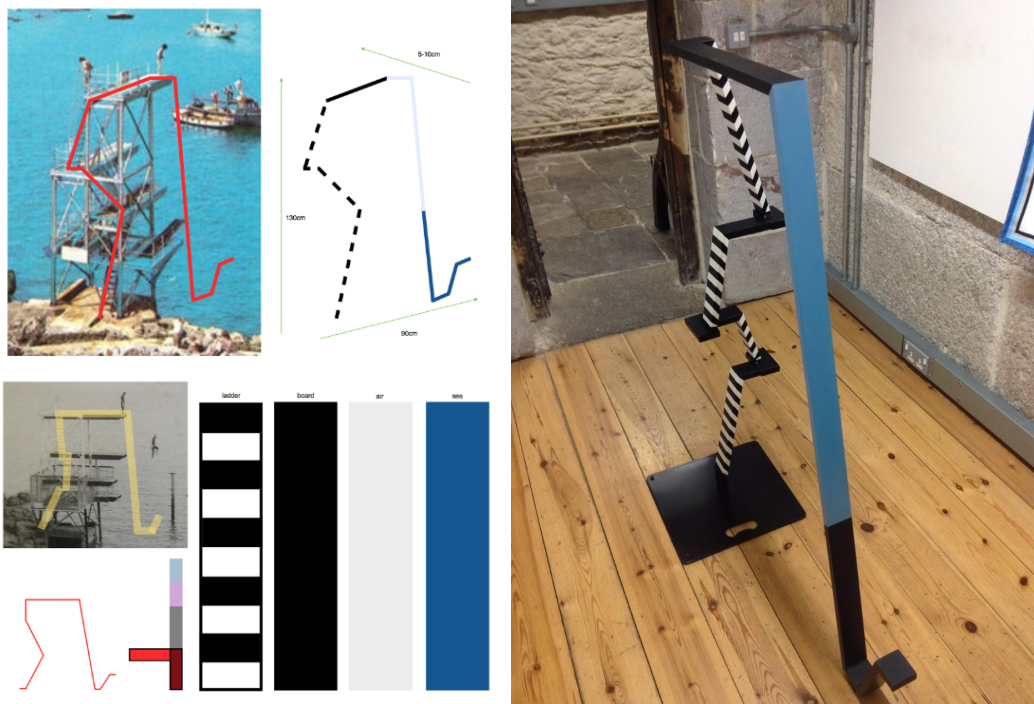


Fig. 44 and Fig. 45

The Diver's Line is 'activated' when placed in relation to other pieces. These 'companion' pieces are arranged to assist my empathic attempt to experientially pull close an understanding of moving on the platform. As with Krug's archival collage pages, the composition and positioning of these corresponding companions create meaning through their interrelation with each other. When creating my exhibition of research-practice at Devonport Guildhall, I positioned the Diver's Line to face an A0 print. This painted view of Drake's Island is what the diver would have faced from the top diving platform (fig. 46).

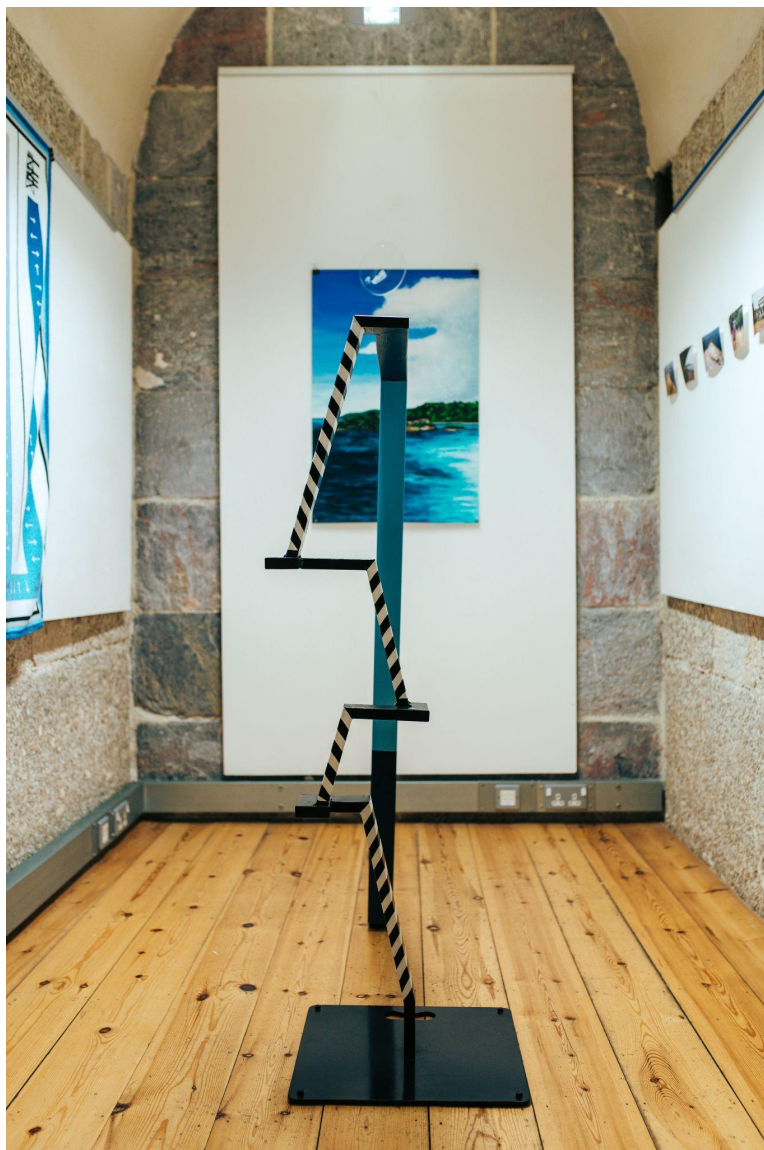


Fig. 46

Suspended above the Diver's Line at the intersection between the top platform and dive is an etched Perspex disk of a diver (fig. 47) made in response to two images: one an archival photograph, located in the same book as the conductor, of a woman diving off the platform in Plymouth; and the second from a 1930s 'it's quicker by rail' travel poster by illustrator Joseph Greenup. In the mid-1930s, the craft of glass engraving experienced a revival in Britain and after the war several large architectural engravings were commissioned.²⁴⁸ One such was in Coventry for the newly built St Michael's Cathedral, situated next to its former, bombed namesake. Prominent glass engraving artist John Hutton took ten years to create sixty-six expressionist larger-than-life figures for the *Screen of Saints and Angels*, on the Great West Screen.²⁴⁹ In 1962, the year of Coventry Cathedral's consecration, Hutton undertook another commission in Plymouth's civic centre for the main lobby of Council House depicting myths relating to the sea (fig. 48).²⁵⁰

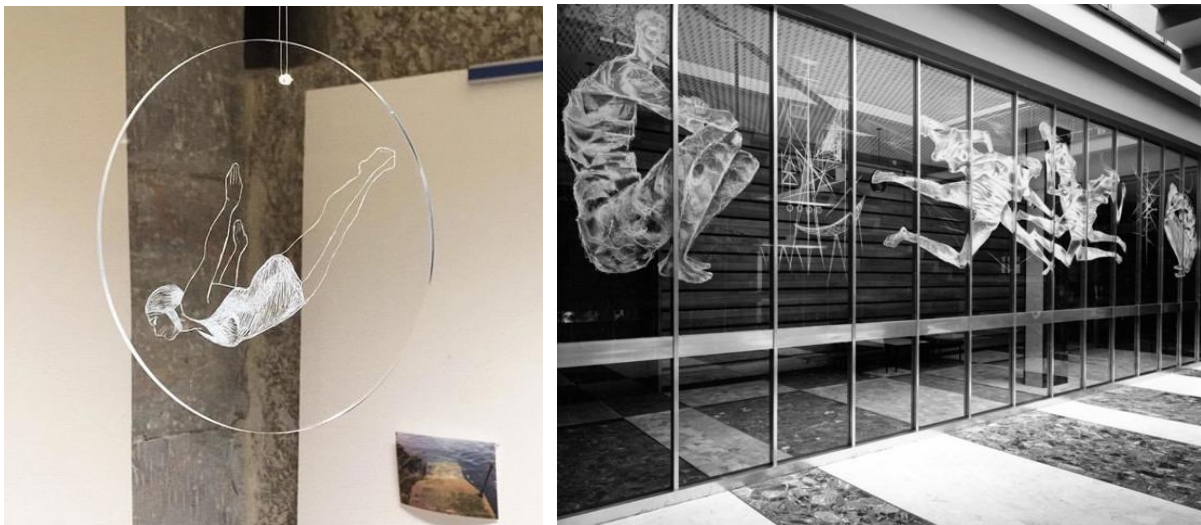


Fig. 47 and Fig. 48

²⁴⁸ Battie, D. and Cottle, S. eds., 1991, *Sotheby's Concise Encyclopedia of Glass*, Conran Octopus

²⁴⁹ The Coventry Society, 2022, *Coventry Cathedral West Entrance Screen by John Hutton*, <https://www.coventrysociety.org.uk/public-art-in-coventry/john-hutton-screen.html> [accessed 10.10.2022]

²⁵⁰ Royal Institute of British Architects, RIBApix 2022, https://www.ribapix.com/Civic-Centre-Princess-Street-Plymouth-the-main-lobby-of-the-council-house-with-glazed-screen-by-John-Hutton-depicting-myths-relating-to-the-sea_RIBA78251# [accessed 10.10.2022]

Similar to Hoven's scratchboard illustration, the figure of the woman in a straight forward-facing dive, is scratched into visibility on the clear surface of the Perspex. The delicacy of line and the transparent negative space imbues a ghostly quality to the pensile image of a past diver. The ability to see through her to the view beyond alludes to the impermanence of human lives in respect to place and yet, the material etched line signifies the ways in which past lives can be preserved, or persevere, through traces.

Chapter Two conclusion

In this second chapter I discussed how the active process of illustration practice can articulate Stein's second stage of empathy, 'the fulfilling explication'. In the initial stage, the empathiser is receptively aware of another's experience and is 'pulled-into' it, thereby moving into the second stage. At this point, they undertake a direct and exploratory means of accessing the experience of the other by 'feeling-into' their subjectivity. The empathiser explores the perspective of the other by, in some manner, 'acting-out' an experience in order to gain fuller, and more complex understanding. Alongside this way of knowing is an implicit self-other differentiation: the empathiser's experience in their here-and-now is connected to, but different from, the other's personal experience.

I considered the ways in which Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory enacts Stein's concept of empathy in its impossible desire to come-to-know the experience of another. I investigated its characteristics and applications to both place and practice, and explored the capacity of a third-generation practitioner to undertake a postmemorial empathic operation in a subjective and reflective manner. Both Line Hoven and Nora Krug use the confines of a graphic memoir as a postmemorial space in which to represent their empathic encounters with their family. While the practice conducted in my research is not located within the same confines, it is illustration made in an empathic attempt to pull close, through representation, the experience of the other. Hoven and Krug display eloquent examples of illustration that visually communicate their investigations, whereas the intent of the practice I have undertaken is to examine what is happening, in relation to Stein's process of empathy, during the production of practice. The illustration practice-led research I made performed this experiential 'feeling-into' stage as well as a postmemorial turn. The empathic stage occurred through production and in the arrangement of companion pieces of practice that worked together in a collage-like fashion to assist the operation of an empathic encounter.

The praxis of research processes undertaken at this stage generated fuller understanding of my grandfather's experience of the pre-Blitz city but also a greater awareness of the gaps of knowledge and differences of my and his perceived experiences of walking the city. The acknowledgement of these differentiations and unknowns is inherently part of any received postmemory and empathic knowing; this recognition is what I will examine in my third chapter.

III

Vulnerable knowledge and making meaning from empathic encounters

As with the previous two chapters, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first details a scholarly investigation of the destination of my third investigative walk along with photographic documentation made while walking the route.

In the second section I examine Stein's third stage of empathy, 'the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience'. I analyse and interpret the translation of Stein's stage with her description of what happens at this point of the empathy process. It is here that the empathiser intellectually interprets that which was initially intuitively known in stage one as well as that which was felt in stage two. The empathiser recognises the experience of the other through what they have come-to-know all the while acknowledging that such knowledge is constructed with unknowns, thereby making it vulnerable.

My use of the term vulnerable originates from Meier's reading of Stein and I explore vulnerability in relation to ideas discussed by feminist scholars Judith Butler and Marianne Hirsch to formulate my proposition of *vulnerable knowledge*. I consider Barthes' writing of a 1926 photograph by James van der Zee as well as British artist Catherine Bertola's interventions with archival photographs, 'Sad Bones' 2013-2018, as examples of vulnerable knowledge made through creative practice as empathic encounters.

In the third section of this chapter, I discuss my interpretation of Stein's last stage of empathy, ideas of recognition and vulnerability, through self-reflective visual analysis of the illustration practice made for the third walk. Illustration practice made to come-to-know the experience of the other, i.e., walking to Honicknowle Carnival in 1939, is a way of feeling-into that foreign experience. My subsequent arrangement, collation, interpretation and analysis of that practice operates as the *recognition* stage of my empathic encounter. In this regard, I propose that the production of postmemorial illustration practice in this doctoral study performs the process of empathy in that it is a way of coming-to-know the experience of the other and it produces a vulnerable knowledge of illustration that is metaphorically perforated with absences and gaps that are as present and prevalent as

remains and fragments. This proposition is notably influenced by the Plymouth Bomb Book which visually articulates the traumatic perforation of the city made by the aerial bombing raids through cartographic devices.

Section one: Investigative walk to Honicknowle

Honicknowle, etymologically derived from *Hana's Knoll*, meaning a hill populated by wild cockerels,²⁵¹ was little more than a village towards the end of the nineteenth century with farms, a dairy, a stone quarry, brickworks, and a Royal Commission fort. By 1914, the three towns of Plymouth, Devonport and East Stonehouse had merged into one and city status was granted in 1928. By 1938, the local authority had redrawn the city boundaries which now included Honicknowle.

In the last week of August 1939, Honicknowle was brightly decorated for its carnival that had been celebrated annually for five years. The community and its colourful festivities were filmed by local amateur Gerald Watkins and the footage was eventually donated to *The South West Film and Television Archive* (SWFTA). The carnival opened with a Sunday service and the week included children's talent contests, fancy-dress competitions, Maypole dancers, stalls and games, parades, floats, and a fun fair. All was presided over by the carnival queen Joyce Chapman. Windows and door frames were covered with streamers, the crêpe paper waving in the breeze. References to the impending war also decorated the carnival; news bulletin headlines were pasted onto boards, the recruitment office door was clearly marked, a child was dressed as a 'ruffled dove' and another as an air raid shelter.

War was declared on Germany on Sunday 3rd September 1939, the day after the carnival ended. The community carnival ceased for nine years then returned in 1948 before ending in the fifties due to the construction of housing estates on what was once farmland and pasture. The reading and recreational hall featured in the film still stands on Butt Park Road with its sign 'established 1927'.

By the late nineteenth century, the term 'carnival' had come to mean an established or

²⁵¹ Ekwall, E. (1960) *The concise Oxford dictionary of English place-names*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/conciseoxforddic0000ekwa>

ceremonial event that offered a sense of ritual and continuity to industrial communities whose working days and weeks were long, full, and laborious. The carnival provided reprieve with “a promise of greater than usual levity, even transgression, with a nod to continental Europe, in a context of growing relaxedness as to how the masses spent their spare time; and a broadening range of primarily visual entertainment forms organised along provider/consumer lines.”²⁵²

Following the end of World War One, recreational events that were described as carnivals became more popular in British culture. The rise of the use of this term was partly due to the expansion of newspaper length with a greater concentration of stories covering charity events and leisure occasions. During the interwar period the term was no longer associated with connotations of immorality but instead implied a degree of temporary transformation. Modern and Contemporary historian Dion Georgiou writes that at this time,

the (formal and informal) labelling of leisure activities as carnivals in this country and period had three particular unifying elements: firstly, an emphasis on ritual and its continuing significance within the temporal configuration of modern capitalism; secondly, a signification of revelry, in a manner reflecting liberalisation of attitudes to usage of spare time; and thirdly, a privileging of the spectacular with a demarcation of watchers and watched derived from the world of commercial entertainment but frequently applied outside that sphere.²⁵³

As a recurrent event of leisure and spectacle, the carnival unlocked the potential for a wide range of public leisure activities for the participation and pleasure of the audience. With black white and rare colour film, Watkins’ footage of Honicknowle’s week-long carnival captures the ephemeral event with a vibrancy that is unusual for documentation of this time. The film’s audience is shown what the filmmaker selects; windows fringed with colourful streamers and foil are presented with a collector’s eye for detail. The carnival can now only recur through playing the recorded film; rather than a living, evolving ritualistic and transitory occasion, it exists purely through its own referent. The destination of my

²⁵² Georgiou, D. (2015) *Redefining the Carnavalesque: The Construction of Ritual, Revelry and Spectacle in British Leisure Practices through the Idea and Model of ‘Carnival’, 1870–1939*, *Sport in History*, 35:3, 335–363, DOI: [10.1080/17460263.2015.1088462](https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2015.1088462)

²⁵³ Georgiou, *ibid.*

investigative walk to Honicknowle was not to a specific site that once contained a building or structure, but to a space that once held an event. My walk, like the carnival itself, was an embodied, performative, and recurrent activity and the photographs taken during it are documentary subjective fragments of the walk itself. As visual media, they operate in a similar manner to Watkin's film in that they are the remnants of an event.



“Observing while walking in their predecessor’s footsteps provides individuals with an understanding of the world that has both continuity and change.”

Alice Legat



“It seems to me then as if all the moments of our life occupy the same space, as if future events already existed and were only waiting for us to find our way to them at last, just as when we have accepted an invitation we duly arrive in a certain house at a given time.”

W. G. Sebald



“The artist returns to the past, gathers it in, binds it and puts its parts together that bring moment and renewed meaning to the original experience or event.”

Joan Gibbons



“At Husserl’s, everyone was awaiting us. Frau Husserl and Elli (her daughter) had wound ivy and daisies into a gorgeous wreath. This was set on my head in place of a laurel wreath.”

Edith Stein



“A place is a story, and stories are geography, and empathy is first of all an act of imagination, a storyteller's art, and then a way of travelling from here to there.”

Rebecca Solnit



“The path unwinds amidst snares and dangers, provoking a strong state of apprehension in the person walking, in both senses of ‘feeling fear’ and ‘grasping’ or ‘learning.’ This empathic territory penetrates down to the deepest strata of the mind, evoking images of other worlds in which reality and nightmare live side by side, transporting the being into a state of unconsciousness where the ego is no longer definite.”

Francesco Careri



“Memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, as the ground is the medium in which dead cities lie interred.”

Walter Benjamin



“It is true that the operations of walking can be traced on city maps in such a way as to transcribe their paths (here well-trodden, there very faint) and their trajectories (going this way and not that). But these thick or thin curves only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by. Surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by.”

Michel de Certeau

Section two: Contextual examination of Stein's third stage of empathy and the formation of vulnerable knowledge

In this section I will examine how the third stage of Stein's empathy process operates and the ways it generates vulnerable knowledge. It is at this point that the empathiser intellectually interprets intuitive insights and recognises, to some extent, the experience of the other. This partial awareness of the experience of the other, and the recognition of the impossibility of fully knowing their experience, constructs knowledge that is vulnerable in its inclusion of gaps. I will explore notions of vulnerability through feminist scholar Judith Butler's discussion of relationality, Meier's interpretation of Stein's empathy as a reciprocal process, and how Hirsch applies it to her concept of postmemory. I will then analyse how gaps and fragments can be assembled to form postmemorial vulnerable knowledge, in order to empathically make-meaning of past experience. Lastly, I will propose how an empathic practice-led methodology can generate other ways of knowing through subjective encountering.

Recognition: stage three of empathy, the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience

The third stage of Stein's process of empathy, [*die zusammenfassende Vergegenständlichung des explizierten Erlebnisses*], is translated into English by her grand-niece Waltraut Stein as 'the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience'.²⁵⁴ I would like to focus on the polysemic nature of Stein's use of *zusammenfassen* (present participle) in order to foreground my interpretation of this final stage of the empathy process. Etymologically it incorporates the words *zusammen* meaning together, jointly, and collectively, with *fassen* meaning to take, fetch, grasp, gather, hold, capture, seize, confine, surround, frame, and

²⁵⁴ Stein, p.10

understand.²⁵⁵ As a compound transitive verb, *zusammenfassen* has come to be understood as to combine, consolidate, unite, and to summarise.²⁵⁶ In the context of Stein's discussion, I consider the definitions of 'seize' and 'capture' to be too predatory or militaristic; the empathiser does not hunt for the meaning of the empathee's experience. Instead, I interpret this term as a gathered collection of ideas, thoughts, experiences, sensations that I hold together in order to come-to-know the other, all the while aware that it is not total and encompassing but a selection of fragments that I have selected. From this interpretation the visual concept of collage is applicable but there is also a connection between knowing and touching. Tactile hand gestures are used by both Stein 'grasp' and Hirsch 'reach' to describe the attempt to know the other which brings back the image of 'unfolding' (from the Latin *explicare*) what is given to the empathiser. Through explication, or unfolding, explanation is gained.



Fig. 49, Fig. 50, and Fig. 51

I suggest that the translation 'comprehensive' is misleading as it suggests *full* knowledge whereas it is always incomplete. In his dissemination of the ethics and paradoxes of Stein's empathy, Rowan Williams states:

Empathic recognition is the recognition of something that is radically inaccessible because while I may imaginatively be at the 0-point of another's experience, I can't actually be in it in the material world. It's possible for me to grasp in some measure the content of what the other perceives but that grasp is always of a view I do not

²⁵⁵ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/fassen#German>

²⁵⁶ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/zusammenfassen>

inhabit, a view I can move away from my own embodiedness. I can imagine but I can never fully abandon my own perspective.²⁵⁷

Therefore, that which I grasp “in some measure” cannot be comprehensive as it is “radically inaccessible” due to the impossibility of fully escaping my own perspective. And so, the knowledge that I form is always inherently constructed of gathered fragments of knowing (through imagination, recall, experience) but also gaps of knowledge, unknowns that exert as much influence as that which I can grasp. Additionally, comprehensive or full knowledge of the experience of the other cannot manifest through empathy due to the fundamental difference of time between the empathiser and the empathee. Stein writes empathy is “an act which is primordial as present experience though non-primordial in content. And this content is an experience.”²⁵⁸ For the empathiser the act occurs in their here-and-now while the content of this act, the experience of the other, does not but is instead happening in the empathee’s personal here-and-now. I see and examine the face of someone blushing, my process of trying to understand the reason of the blush is happening in my here-and-now but that reason is always situated there-and-then, the blushing person’s own here-and-now. Consequently, the attempt to come-to-know the foreign experience of the other cannot be comprehensive as that experience is characterised by a quality of intrinsic otherness.

Psychologist Meneses quotes philosopher Evan Thompson in describing this stage (or level) as where, after the clarification of the other’s experience is complete (stage two), “the experience faces me again, but now in a clarified or explicated way.”²⁵⁹ It follows the stage where the empathiser is immersed within the other’s experience, be that through imagination, recall, or other means, and it is at this point that the empathiser for the first time incorporates an intellectual facet to the process in order to reach a conclusion to the encounter with the formulation of knowledge. The empathiser is returned to their own

²⁵⁷ Williams, R. [Mahindra Humanities Center] (2014) *The Other as Myself: Empathy and Power*, Tanner Lectures: The Paradoxes of Empathy, [video], YouTube, <https://youtu.be/R8e1SRngtNo>

²⁵⁸ Stein, p.10

²⁵⁹ Meneses, p.137

original perspective or view-point, and the focus of examination is no longer something that they are experiencing but is once again objectified and faces them. I am no longer imagining, simulating or remembering the cause for the other's shame but view it once again as their facial blush. For Stein, the empathic process is completed when that which was intuitively given, or known, is intellectually interpreted into an idea or what she describes as a representation. Stein concludes that "empathic representation is the only fulfilment possible"²⁶⁰ in that interpretation must follow direct experience so that it can be understood, with the caveat that it can never be fully known.

The third and final stage of Stein's empathy process moves from the acting out of the second feeling-in stage to an act of interpretation and working through. The empathiser realises, discovers and acknowledges the experience of the other; through interpretation they recognise it in some manner and therefore generate knowledge that concludes the empathic process. But, as Stein writes, this "knowledge reaches its object but does not 'have' it. It stands before its object but does not see it. Knowledge is blind, empty, and restless, always pointing back to some experienced, seen act. And the experience back to which knowledge of foreign experience points is called empathy."²⁶¹ This stage is indirect and non-primordial as the empathiser reflects on what they felt previously so that any conclusion made points-back to the moment of feeling-in. And although the knowledge that is produced is more easily accessible in that it can be explicitly, linguistically, or visually shared, it does not hold or grasp the experience but merely points to it. It is for this reason that I put forward that the illustrative practice made in this doctoral study is not inherently empathic but is worked through evidence of an empathic act.

To return to the naming of this stage, Stein (as translated by W. Stein) describes it as the 'comprehensive objectification of the explained experience', which for ease of understanding could be phrased as the understanding of an unfolded encounter. Meneses terms this concluding part of Stein's model as 'interpretative mentalisation' which is useful

²⁶⁰ Stein, p.57

²⁶¹ Stein, p.19

in indicating what the empathiser is doing at this point.²⁶² I would like to consider a characteristic quality of this stage in presenting my own term as I have done with stage one (receptivity) and stage two (feeling-into). If empathy is a process of coming-to-know and its conclusion is a movement from intuitive knowing to intellectual ideation, then the empathiser comes-to-know-*again* in a fuller way. I position this as a *recognising* stage due to two interconnected attributes. Firstly, the empathiser realises what they know of the other, they perceive the sides that they have faced. Secondly, and simultaneously, the empathiser also comprehends that which they do not and can never know, the sides that are always averted to them. I put forward that *recognising* describes Stein's last empathy stage in that it comprises and combines both known and unknowns in the formation of *vulnerable knowledge*.

Vulnerability as a relational disposition and the knowledge it creates

Empathy, then, is an in-breaking of the other into our own consciousness. It is not an act of our will, rather it would seem to happen to us. We are passive; the experience is given. Certainly this implies that we are on some level open, receptive. In a peculiar way, moreover, we are reciprocally vulnerable to each other. Our boundaries are breached in a participatory experience which leaves intact our sense of being an individual.²⁶³

In an article published in the journal *Spiritual Life*, Lynn A. Meier's analysis of Stein's empathy pays attention to the affective agency that this process has upon the empathiser. She uses metaphorical language to convey the concept that the self is a defensive structure that empathy subverts; there is an "in-breaking of the other into our own subconscious" and "our boundaries are breached". By becoming aware of and coming-to-know the experience of the other, our personal psychological confines are opened and made vulnerable. Both the empathiser and the empathee are sensitive and accessible to the other therefore it is through this exposure to vulnerability that connection is possible.

²⁶² Meneses, p.137

²⁶³ Meier, p.132

Philosopher Elisa Magrì writes that according to Stein, “empathy is primarily rooted in the disposition to apperceive others and to be affected by them at the level of sensitivity.”²⁶⁴ By recognising and ascribing respect to another’s experiential standpoint, fundamental conditions are in place for empathy to unfold and develop. Magrì continues that by viewing empathy in this relation to respect it is possible to examine subjective experience within the context of vulnerability. Magrì puts forward that empathy is an ethical means of attending to vulnerable, subjective experience. She quotes feminist ethics scholar Erinn Gilson in describing vulnerability as “a fundamental quality of openness, an openness to being affected and affect in turn.”²⁶⁵ Much like Meier, this account of vulnerability as being necessarily open or porous presents the image of a mesh screen or latticework, a boundary through which connection can still be made. For Magrì, vulnerability confronts us with the other’s situated, ambiguous experience; we are sensitively aware of radical difference from our own standpoint. And yet the other’s experience, though vulnerable, does not lack agency as its difference requires acknowledgement of “that is centred on the intrinsic significance of subjective experience.”²⁶⁶

Stein’s process of empathy is valuable in examining how vulnerable knowledge is constructed as it “brings to light the intersubjective nature of our experience, empathising with others also brings us to appreciate the alterity of the subjects we relate to. Empathy bridges the gap between self and other while disclosing, at the same time, the other’s autonomous, yet interdependent, standpoint.”²⁶⁷ My grandfather’s experience of walking the city on his first visit after the Blitz would have naturally caused him to visualise the home city that he had left at the start of the war and to compare that memory of place with the damaged city he was confronted with. Additionally, this comparison of pre- and post- war Plymouth perhaps could have also metaphorically pointed to a comparison of his pre- and

²⁶⁴ Magrì, E. (2019) Empathy, Respect, and Vulnerability, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 27:2, 327-346, DOI: 10.1080/09672559.2019.1587260, p.377

²⁶⁵ Gilson, E. C. 2018. “Beyond Bounded Selves and Places: The Relational Making of Vulnerability and Security.” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 49 (3): 229–242. doi:10.1080/00071773.2018.1434972. p.231

²⁶⁶ Magrì, p.339

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p.336

post-war person, an examination of identity with bomb sites representing instances of loss and grief. The unspeakability of that particular walk alludes to the vulnerability of that particular experience. Consequently, in deference to the vulnerable knowledge that consists more of absences and differences than evidence, a methodology that is empathic is an appropriate approach to encountering. It is used as a means of coming-to-know a vulnerable moment but it also generates knowledge or ways of knowing that are vulnerable in their construction. Walking makes the researcher vulnerable in that it is subjective, transitory, and exposes the body to the cityscape. While illustration practice is used as a device to create and continue empathic encounters the outcomes of which (such as image or object-making, illustrative-writing) acting as remains of this attempt. Therefore, vulnerable experience requires empathy which, in turn, produces vulnerable knowledge. My grandfather's and my own experiences of walking the city are reciprocally vulnerable to one another and it is empathy that connects them.

Magri defines vulnerability as a “relational disposition that is, however, tied to the recognition that other affective experiences are worthy of attention and discernment in themselves”.²⁶⁸ The vulnerable moment of a young man walking through his home city and witnessing its devastation nearly eighty years ago is radically different to the experience I have of walking the same city. I recognise his experience as subjective and affective, it is ‘worthy’ of my attention through a practice that is equally subjective and affective in order to connect to it. Magri continues that “empathy primarily consists in the disposition to uncover another’s world-directedness as a meaningful and autonomous standpoint without any presumptions regarding the other’s life, values or agency. In this sense, empathy provides a response to vulnerability that does not oppose or preclude the appraisal of autonomy.”²⁶⁹ Empathy is a way of knowing another’s vulnerable experience but that vulnerability does not lack agency; it is the impossible desire to unfold this moment, an unspeakable walk, that drives this study.

²⁶⁸ Magri, p.344

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Vulnerability as a relational disposition is similarly discussed by feminist philosopher Judith Butler in their 2016 writing 'Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance'. Butler presents vulnerability as a space of openness and connection; a process that is relational in essence rather than simply a state of 'defencelessness' or 'open to attack'. It is a relationship we have to

...a field of objects, forces, and passions that impinge on or affect us in some way. As a way of being related to what is not me and not fully masterable, vulnerability is a kind of relationship that belongs to that ambiguous region in which receptivity and responsiveness are not clearly separable from one another, and not distinguished as separate moments in a sequence; indeed where receptivity and responsiveness become the basis for mobilizing vulnerability rather than engaging in its destructive denial.²⁷⁰

Accordingly, those factors that make us vulnerable makes us inherently capable to relate as we are both open and sensitive to each other. It is interesting that in Butler's explication is the detail that "receptivity and responsiveness" is the foundation for vulnerability; this correlation can be used neatly to describe the first and second stages of Stein's empathy process. The empathiser displays sensitivity, receptivity, or as Massey writes "lively alertness" to the emergence of the experience of the other. In this regard, responsiveness could be the empathiser feeling-into the experience as a way of coming-to-know it. Therefore, Stein's process of empathy not only occurs between those who are reciprocally vulnerable but, as a process, it encourages or facilitates vulnerability thereby generating an interrelational way of knowing.

Butler's discussion of vulnerability is framed within the context of embodied, public resistance to failing infrastructure, i.e., "those who gather on the street or in public domains".²⁷¹ However, they continue that "the street cannot be taken for granted as the space of appearance, to use Hannah Arendt's phrase—the space of politics—since there is, as we know, a struggle to establish that very ground." The street is never neutral as it is always entangled with questions of infrastructure and architecture. Those who enter and move

²⁷⁰ Butler, J. (2016) *Rethinking vulnerability and resistance*, Vulnerability in Resistance, Duke University Press, p. 25

²⁷¹ Ibid, p.12

across a street successfully usually do so because there are no obstructions, either physical or legislative, that prevents their movement; their access is supported by the city. Butler writes:

For the body to move, it must usually have a surface of some kind, and it must have at its disposal whatever technical supports allow for movement to take place. So the pavement and the street are already to be understood as requirements of the body as it exercises its rights of mobility. No one moves without a supportive environment and set of technologies. And when those environments start to fall apart or are emphatically unsupportive, we are left to “fall” in some ways, and our very capacity to exercise most basic rights is imperiled.²⁷²

Any act undertaken by an embodied subject within a cityscape depends on this idea of support so that they can move through place. When this is not available they are excluded and made vulnerable.²⁷³ Consider the bodily risks endangered in certain areas of the city and at particular times by women, trans and non-binary people, and people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. As a woman, specific routes and paths that are accessible to me during daylight hours are diverted at night in the conscious exercise to prevent harm. In this manner, my embeddedness within the city is dynamically different to that of my grandfather’s experience due to gender. And so although common vulnerabilities emerge from the shared experience of walking a city, vulnerability as Hirsch writes, is also “socially, politically, and economically created and differentially imposed. An acknowledgment of vulnerability, both shared and produced, can open a space of interconnection...”²⁷⁴ All who walk or move through a city experience differing degrees of vulnerability in their connection to their surroundings and situatedness; by recognising these differing degrees of subjective experience we empathically acknowledge that which can never *fully* know. Such not-knowing opens space for engagement, enquiry, and the formation of vulnerable knowledge. Vulnerability is not passive as it comes from and cultivates “receptivity and

²⁷² Ibid. p.15

²⁷³ For analysis of this subject see Kern, L., (2020) *Feminist City: claiming space in a man-made world*, Verso: London

²⁷⁴ Hirsch, M., (2016) *Vulnerable Times, Vulnerability and Resistance*, Vulnerability in Resistance, Duke University Press, p.80

responsiveness”, the understanding of how it enters into agency is, Butler writes, a feminist task of undoing binary opposition.²⁷⁵

In Hirsch’s analysis of Barthes writing on a family photograph taken by James van der Zee in 1926, she highlights that the punctum, or wounding details, that draws Barthes attention are the *strapped pumps*, the Mary-Jane shoes (fig. 52) that evoke a tenderness in his looking.²⁷⁶ The details that he tenderly notices arise due to some personal connection he has with them leading to a receptive and responsive empathic encounter. “This acknowledged subjectivity and positionality, this vulnerability, and this focus on the detail—the ordinary and the everyday—all these also belong to reading practices that can be associated with feminist methodologies. And they belong to the work of postmemory.”²⁷⁷



Fig. 52

Vulnerability, for Hirsch, is crucial to feminist memory ethics and aesthetics and can be defined “as a space for interconnection in the face of entangled histories.”²⁷⁸ It invites multimodal forms of engagement and knowing that are enacted with receptivity and responsiveness in the formation of affective experiences and empathic encounters. “Art, in its production and reception, enables the practice of receptivity by means of an

²⁷⁵ Butler, p.25

²⁷⁶ Barthes, R. (1993) *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Classics; New Ed edition, p.43

²⁷⁷ Hirsch, (2012) p.62

²⁷⁸ Hirsch, M., (2019) *Practicing Feminism, Practicing Memory in Women Mobilizing Memory*. Columbia University Press: New York. iBooks. p.58-9

acknowledgment of vulnerability, both shared and produced.”²⁷⁹ An empathic encounter experienced through the act of making illustration practice occurs due to the practitioner’s vulnerability which manifests through a process of openness, interconnection, imagination and a recognition of their own subjectivity and positionality. Additionally, aesthetic works as outcomes of such encounters also have the capacity to elicit their audience to reflect upon their own vulnerabilities.²⁸⁰

Considering vulnerability as a relational disposition that can be used to engage with the past is a fruitful methodological standpoint within postmemorial artistic practice. Hirsch proposes that “if we think of vulnerability as a radical openness toward surprising possibilities, then we might be able to engage it more creatively—as a space to work from as opposed to something only to be overcome.”²⁸¹ The creative practitioner who works with this ethos will be mindful of the vulnerability of their situatedness and positioning, be that their gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, class, mobility, and they will be equally mindful of the vulnerability of the other in that same regard. They will also recognise the vulnerability of any forms of knowing that emerges through empathic encountering and openly include that within the practice itself. The not-knowing, subjective projection, imaginative summation, and self-reflection being presented honestly as always inherently part of the empathic experience and the resulting creative practice. Such porous artworks are characteristic of postmemory as “silence, absence, and emptiness are also always present, and often central to the work of postmemory.”²⁸² The erasure of memory creates gaps that later generations accept and incorporate across lines of difference. In this regard, Hirsch puts forward that postmemory is a feminist practice; within an encounter where “a past life reemerges from a hole in the centre, to be re-embodied in the present, for the future.”²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p.61

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p.82

²⁸¹ Hirsch (2016), p.81

²⁸² Hirsch (2012), p.247

²⁸³ *ibid*, p.249

British artist Catherine Bertola's work encompasses installation, sculpture, drawing and film that respond to particular sites, collections and historic contexts. The work is characterised by an archaeological-like excavation of surfaces, be they objects or buildings, in order to unfold the hidden and forgotten histories of people and places as a way of reconsidering the past. Bertola often looks to the role of women in society, craft production, and labour as figures of history that are often maligned and overlooked. Her practice is typically postmemorial in that she incorporates fragmentation, degradation, and highlights the presence of absence as a way of coming to know the experience of the object or structure of focus and also those who have interacted with them previously. "This excavation of history and heritage, allows me to develop a deeper and more personal understanding, enabling the work produced to have a more profound relationship within the environment it is made to exist in. The research is carried out through a number of methods, reading, looking, touching, talking and making, all of which inspire and inform the development of the final work."²⁸⁴

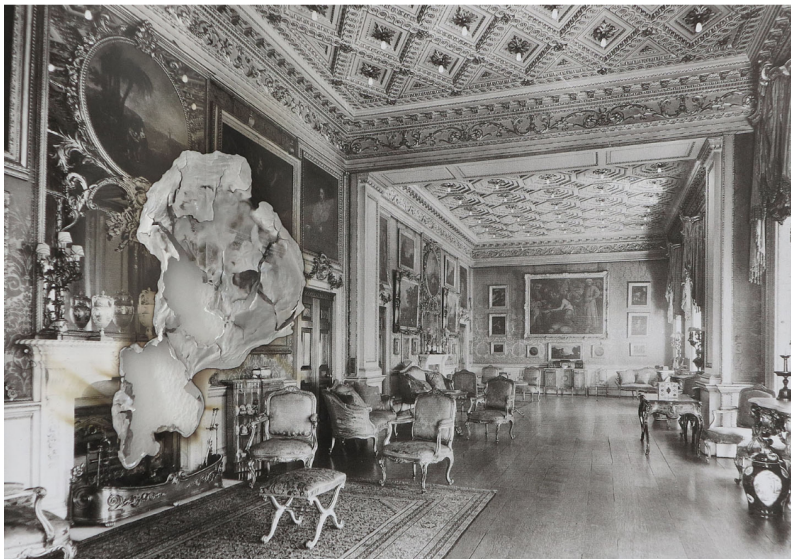


Fig. 53 and Fig. 54

'Sad Bones', 2013-2018, is a collection of photographs from the archives of Country Life Magazine of grand buildings that no longer exist. Many of the depicted buildings were

²⁸⁴ Bertola, C. Artist Statement, Axis Web, <https://www.axisweb.org/p/catherinebertola/#info>

destroyed by fire and Bertola performs a 're-occupation' of those interior spaces by igniting their images. The fireplaces visible within the photographed baroque rooms are momentarily set alight, imparting the images with scorched tears, bubbling, and smoke blackened stains (fig. 53 and 54). The magazine images survive as 'residue' of a past that no longer remains. The histories of such houses are typically dominated by men due to strictures in ownership, inheritance and societal constraints; however, by considering these spaces through the lives of the women who resided within them, who were trapped either by leisure or labour, Bertola attempts to come-to-know a female-centric experience of a lost space through performative practice. The action of burning the images replicates the typically female role of lighting the fires in stately homes, but also connotes the destruction of these spaces.

Bertola's work attempts to connect her contemporary presence to the occupation of a lost space by an unknown other. The work begins from a place of vulnerability in that the empathised other was overlooked and undervalued and the space that inhabited within is absent; therefore, their experience can never be fully known. Bertola feels-into the lost space through its photographic referent and performs an action that may have been undertaken by the other. In this way vulnerability is agentic through the inclusion of temporary and precarious materials. Consequently, the remains of this action is the production of vulnerable artefacts of her encounter. They are vulnerable both in terms of their damaged physicality but also in the ways in which they are interstitial to an irrecoverable experience of place. The incorporation of damage and absence is central to these images; Bertola ambivalently combines the photograph of the building's room at the height of its splendour with the undermining moment of its destruction.

The challenge of postmemory is not to fill memory gaps in order to disguise them but to acknowledge their eloquence and potential for connection. I argue that this challenge echoes Stein's emphatic reiteration that we can never fully know the experience of the other, empathy is not 'I know how you feel' but instead the acknowledgement of

not-knowing with the offer of attentive accompaniment in order to come-to-know some of what the other may feel. Hirsch writes that:

Current pedagogies encourage students to respond to [Sontag's] "the pain of others" through identification and empathy, but my work with postmemory has introduced a distancing awareness, emphasizing that although "it could have been me, it was, decidedly not me." I thus prefer to think in terms of a form of solidarity that is suspicious of an easy empathy, that shuttles instead between proximity and distance, affiliation and disaffiliation, complicity and accountability.²⁸⁵

In her writing *Vulnerable Times*, Hirsch is reluctant to align postmemory with what she describes as appropriative or *easy empathy*, however Stein's model of empathy entails greater nuance than many popular understandings of the process. Stein explicitly rejects the notions of empathy as oneness; empathy as response; empathy as full knowledge. Instead, she makes clear that empathy is a phenomenological way of knowing another's lived experience with the recognition that it can never be *fully* known. Hirsch's statement "it could have been me, it was, decidedly not me" reflects empathic understanding manifested through stages two and three of empathy; the empathiser feels-into the experience of the other and imagines what it may be like as the subject of that experience but recognises and acknowledges that it is not their original experience as it always belongs to the other. I walked from the house that my grandfather once lived in, along routes he may have travelled, to places he may have frequented, and by doing so I imagined what he may have felt performing this action. And yet, I was constantly aware of the multiple differences that divide our experiences: I am aware that I can never fully leave my own positionality what Stein calls the "zero point of orientation",²⁸⁶ and I am aware that I cannot directly ask my grandfather (as a young man) whether what I think he may have experienced or felt is *true*. My empathic encounter "shuttles instead between proximity and distance, affiliation and disaffiliation, complicity and accountability". In this manner through creative practice, Hirsch's concept of postmemory is empathic, in the philosophy of Stein.

²⁸⁵ Hirsch (2016), p. 84

²⁸⁶ Stein, p.43

Postmemorial aesthetic practices offer ways in which empathy can be performed that is dependent on, and generative of, vulnerable knowledge. It requires what Massey terms a lively alertness, or receptivity, along with reciprocal vulnerability and responsiveness as a way of coming-to-know the experience of the other. This form of encountering is brought to bear in the formation of a vicarious testimony that acknowledges its gaps and avoids appropriation as it is “enabled by incongruities that leave space between past and present, self and other, open without blurring these boundaries and homogenizing suffering.”²⁸⁷

Empathy, particularly the last stage of Stein’s model of empathy, is dualistic in its attempt to know alongside the recognition of what Williams describes as the “radical inaccessibility” of the other. The way in which this is performed is through reciprocal vulnerability or as Hirsch writes of postmemory, “radical openness”. Both postmemory and empathy arise from the agency of vulnerability which propels a relational disposition or desire for connection. Such encountering is characteristic of feminist praxis in that it is performed across lines of difference while never superseding the other’s original experience. The knowledge that is formed from postmemory and from empathy processes is porous or perforated, thereby vulnerable. It is formed of gathered fragments of what can be known alongside gaps, holes, lacunae of what can never be known. The empathiser and postmemorial practitioner both gain an understanding of the unfolded experience of their encounters by recognising that both these elements are always inherently entangled in ‘*throwntogetherness*’ when trying to connect to the other, typically in the past. As I have stated previously, the illustration practice made in this doctoral study is not empathic; it points back to my experience of empathy in that it is the remains of an encounter. By examining this practice alongside self-reflection of the experience of an empathic encounter, I interpret what was initially intuited into an idea that is collage-like in its formation. The incorporation of unknowns with insights, as well as the process of coming-to-know that is predicated on a disposition for vulnerability, makes this worked through understanding *vulnerable knowledge*.

²⁸⁷ Hirsch (2016), p.84

Chapter three Section three: Reflective critical analysis of illustration practice

In this section I reflect on and analyse the practice-led research that is focused on my third investigative walk through Plymouth. This illustration practice attempts to demonstrate how the third stage of Stein's empathy process is where the empathiser recognises that which they have come-to-know is inherently constructed with absences, gaps, and loss of knowledge. This is the moment where intuited and felt knowledge is interpreted.

Three pieces of practice made in relation to my walk and the footage of the 1939 Honicknowle carnival are discussed: a folded street scene, a poster for the Booms-A-Daisy dance, and a selection of illustration objects entitled 'Carnival Jewels'. All are evidential outcomes of the last stage of my empathic encounters and I examine the ways in which they are vulnerable knowledge. Through self-reflective critical analysis I examine how the visual practice has contributed to the processing of this concluding stage of Stein's theory.

Lastly, I reflect on the practice-led understanding I came to while collating and exhibiting the practice for all three walks at Devonport Guildhall, Plymouth in March 2019. This recognition, that I was unaware of during the production of practice, has proved insightful to my examination of Stein's empathy, postmemory, and my particular relationship to Plymouth's past.

Folded street

By examining the images of Watkin's film and the photographs I took while walking, I compared my walk to Honicknowle with the imagined walk my grandfather may have taken from his house to the carnival in 1939. I had been struck by the vivid, saturated colours of the footage that was brought forth by the film stock itself, the colourful decorations of the carnival (fig. 55 and 56), and the palpable sense of joy and optimism captured. During my investigative walk, the September weather was warm and bright so that the colours of wall paint, tiles, leaves and berries appeared similarly bright in hue.



Fig. 55 and Fig. 56

Illustration practice was used as a way to come-to-know the buildings featured in both the carnival footage and the pre-Blitz buildings that I saw on my walk. I painted a selection of buildings that had been filmed in 1939 and photographed by myself in the contemporary cityscape (fig. 57 and 58). By isolating the buildings from external contexts of connected buildings, sky, or cars I focused my attention onto the composition of the depicted house, shop or pub and the ways in which they appear vibrant; either through the colours they were painted or by how they are decorated, e.g., celebratory streamers or commercial advertising. Making these images was an exercise of lively alertness with slow, studied attention employed for the examination and depiction of details.



Fig. 57 and Fig. 58

After scanning the paintings I organised the buildings into a composition that reflected the route of my walk and alternated them with the buildings from the film. In this way the images interrupt traditional conceptions of linear time so that the buildings of the past and those of the contemporary city face one another. The buildings are arranged across a horizontal hang line for three interrelated reasons. Firstly, it creates a visual representation of a street and is therefore a condensed version of both my documented walk and the imagined walk that my grandfather may have taken. Secondly, the composition mimics the horizontal plane of unwound photographic film with its sequential frames which refers to the archival footage of the carnival. Lastly, the composition also connotes the horizontal navigation of Google Street View which I used after each of the three walks to track my route.



Fig. 59

Launched in 2007 as an added feature of the technology company's mapping service Google Maps and Google Earth, Street View displays 360-degree street-level panoramas that are composed of millions of stitched photographs. Most of the photographs are captured from cars, but some are taken from tricycles, boats, snowmobiles, underwater apparatus, as well as on foot.²⁸⁸ Street View presents an extended linear visualisation of urban landscapes in which architectural details can be seen at eye level. Rather than an aerial photograph where an entire street can be recorded at one specific time, Street View's stitched panoramas feature temporal jumps between recordings. The journey is made by moving through these images which are fragments of time that are captured and collated. When moving from one 360-degree image to another, changes can occur in season, year and even the transition from day to night. Such temporal discrepancies also mimic the space between frames of analogue film; these edges are liminal spaces where time moves between static images.

I reduced the scanned paintings in scale so that they could align comfortably within the horizontal composition and the depicted details became finer due to their size. Art historian and senior curator of the National Portrait Gallery's sixteenth century collection

²⁸⁸ En.wikipedia.org. 2020. *Google Street View*. [online] Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Street_View> [Accessed 30 October 2020].

Charlotte Bolland quotes Shakespeare's Hamlet, "...his picture in little. S'blood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out",²⁸⁹ in her discussion of portrait miniatures at the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts:

Scale is important in portraiture. It is the uncanny appeal of looking at things 'in little' that underlies Hamlet's comparison of the escalating miniatures of his uncle Claudius, to the popularity of the troupes of child actors who have usurped the affections of the crowd from adult players. [...] miniatures offered something 'more than natural'-an inanimate, yet intimate, object.²⁹⁰



Fig. 60

Often called *limning*, or *painting in little*,²⁹¹ portrait miniatures were typically made as intimate gifts (fig. 60).²⁹² The verb *limn* derives from *luminen* meaning to illuminate a manuscript with gold and bright colours.²⁹³ With this particular act of depiction, the *limner* brightens or shines light on their subject, and this act is also a form of adornment (of a manuscript, or an object to be worn as a jewel). My small pictures follow this tradition in that they are portraits of the buildings as characters within a street scene that I 'make bright' with colour. Their size and rendering also indicates the intimacy of the encounter experienced through illustration practice. The encounter has required receptivity, slow and

²⁸⁹ Bolland, C. (2018) *Tacita Dean: Landscape Portrait Still Life*, London: The Royal Academy of Arts, p.171

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*

²⁹¹ Fumerton, P. (1986). "Secret" Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets. *Representations*, 15, 57-97.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2928392>

²⁹² Ungerer, G. (1998). *Juan Pantoja de la Cruz and the Circulation of Gifts Between the English and Spanish Courts in 1604/5*. Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies.

<https://www.worldcat.org/title/800674221>

²⁹³ Etymology Online, 'Limn', <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=limner>

close attention; looking and painting as a feeling-into the textures and architectural composition of the sides that face me; and I recognise that my representation is vulnerable in that it composes what I can never fully know about the buildings as much as what I can come-to-know.



Fig. 61

The horizontal print of buildings is folded into an *accordion* or *concertina* fold (fig. 61). Panels of the same size are folded front and back so that seen from above they resemble a series of zigs and zags. This serves several purposes; firstly, the fold echoes the visual display of a clothes line, bunting and decorative streamers depicted in the film, secondly it extends the connotation that there is a gutter-like space where time or memory is folded. Representations of the past and present city are overlaid and literally face one another. The fold is a form of connection that displays both difference (of buildings, colours, decoration, signage), and repetition (proportionate scale, rendering, placement). The viewer unfolds the street to understand it and in this way they replicate (re-fold) the action of research;

looking to the past, looking to the present, back and forth. Lastly, the concertina or accordion fold silently signifies the musical elements that may have been present at the carnival in 1939.

Boomps-a-daisy

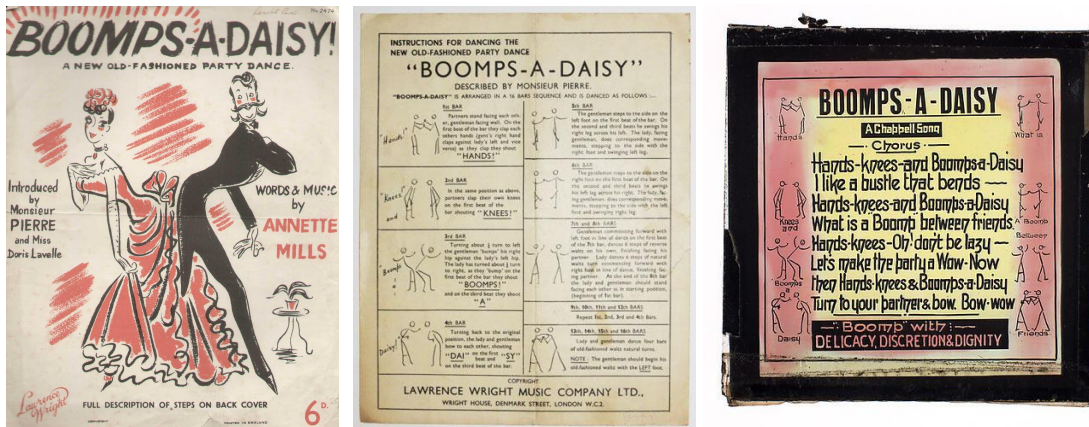


Fig. 62, Fig. 63 and Fig. 64

In February 1939, English dancer and entertainer Annette Mills watched well-known dance instructors Monsieur Pierre and Miss Doris Lavelle incorporate the basic movements of what was to become Boomps-A-Daisy to the music of a valeta dance where they had got the idea to which he replied that it was something they had seen in many ballrooms and that it might easily date back to the 1890s.²⁹⁴ Mills choreographed the steps to accompany the song she wrote, sang, and recorded later that year with the Joe Loss Orchestra.²⁹⁵ Boomps-A-Daisy became a 1939 dance craze similar in popularity to The Lambeth Walk, The Chestnut Tree, and Jitterbug that was performed across Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand. Described as “infectious, noisy, and not too demanding on intellect”,²⁹⁶ dancers would clap each other’s hands, their knees, bump hips, then bow in apology. At one dance hall in New Zealand, the Waikato Times reported that

²⁹⁴ Bay of Plenty Beacon, Volume 1, Issue 66, 25 September 1939, Page 6, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/BPB19390925.2.42>

²⁹⁵ Annette Mills. (2022, November 7). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annette_Mills

²⁹⁶ Bay of Plenty Beacon, *ibid*.

two men “kept ‘boomping’ each other violently at every opportunity, and finally went outside and fought it out.”²⁹⁷



Fig. 65, Fig. 66, and Fig. 67

At several points in the film, the camera pauses on signs, newspaper headlines pasted to boards, and cards held by children labelling their fancy-dress outfits (fig. 65, 66, 67). These homemade signs act as expository intertitles in that they are pieces of printed text that appear in lieu of dialogue, to indicate setting, or to break the film into sections.²⁹⁸ I chose to create a carnival poster that incorporated some of the letterforms and typography the original posters used alongside illustrated instructions of the Boomps-A-Daisy (fig. 68). In the film, there are two sections which feature groups dancing the Boomps-A-Daisy; the first inside a community centre or hall with women in evening wear dresses; the second is outside in the street, a throng of adults and children dancing surrounded by onlookers. Two small girls in brightly coloured dress coats dance and ‘boomp’ so enthusiastically that the smaller of the two nearly falls over. The vibrancy of their coats and the vulnerability of their size in the slightly anarchic revelry seemed, to me, to be representative of the whole carnival. I used the girls to demonstrate the Boomps-A-Daisy in reference to the illustrated instructions people would study to learn the new dance. The circular placement of the figures points to the looping choreography of the dance and also the expectation of the carnival’s annual return.

²⁹⁷ Waikato Times, Volume 125, Issue 21000, 30 December 1939, Page 12 (Supplement), <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WT19391230.2.100.8.10>

²⁹⁸ Chisholm, B. (1987) *Reading Intertitles*, Journal of Popular Film and Television, 15:3, 137-142, DOI: [10.1080/01956051.1987.9944095](https://doi.org/10.1080/01956051.1987.9944095)



Fig. 68

Carnival jewels

The last section of practice-led research is a collection of six illustrations mounted onto 5 cm diameter wooden circles attached to beech wood rings. I wanted the illustrations to operate beyond the limitations of flat 2-dimensional drawings and for the manner in which they were displayed to point to further contextual connotation. The six circle mounts are brightly painted to contrast and bring forward particular colours used within the drawings. These vivid colours and round shapes mimic the displays and apparatus of carnival and fairground game stands in reference to those that may have been present at Honicknowle's carnival. When I exhibited the research-practice for this PhD at Devonport Guildhall I suspended these object-illustrations in a manner similar to a fairground target game (fig. 69).



Fig. 69

The objects hold drawings of delicate details taken from the photographs of my investigative walk and from the archival film. They are cropped to such a degree that they are untethered from their original contexts and could feature interchangeably in the past or contemporary city. These ephemeral moments are details that I consider to be transitory or vulnerable; the movement of bunting, ripening berries, the gesture of a baby's hand and the gold bangle that she is wearing (fig. 70). Like the strapped pumps that Barthes looks at and considers with tenderness, the bangle pushed above the baby fat fold of her wrist and the extension of her pinky finger are punctum; details that wound or prick me in the Barthesian sense. The photographic frames of Watkin's film capture:

an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations that ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ Barthes, R. (1993) *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Classics; New Ed edition, p.80-81

The gesture evokes tenderness in my looking as it is vulnerable in its delicacy; war will be declared days after the baby makes this gesture, she will grow and the bangle will no longer fit, her mother who holds her will die, and she herself in the intervening eighty-three years may also have died. The gesture, *that-has-been* there,³⁰⁰ is also something that faces me and makes me reciprocally vulnerable; the tenderness that is evoked in my examination suggests an intuition and recognition of the vulnerability of that baby's gesture in that past moment. The image pulls me into it so that through drawing, I feel the position of the fingers and the folds of the pink dress, lastly returning to my position in my here-and-now and recognising that I can never fully come-to-know this delicate moment.



Fig. 70 and Fig. 71

Like the portrait miniatures, the Carnival Jewels size “in little” are intimate in both what they depict and their scale; fitting into the palm of a hand. While each of these small illustrations are mounted in allusion to the games played at a carnival or fairground, as small bright objects they are also suggestive of the prizes that could be won and treasured as souvenirs, sitting alongside carnival chalkware figurines (fig. 71). These vibrant jewels, although cheap in construction like many of the pocketable prizes that could have been won, are illustration objects that evidence the process of empathy performed through, or

³⁰⁰ Barthes, *ibid.*

facilitated by, reciprocal vulnerability. They are a gathered collection [*Zusammenfassen*] of vulnerable knowledge made in the unfolding of an empathic experience.

Prevalence of circles

During March 2019, I exhibited in the cells of Devonport Guildhall the illustration practice made during this doctoral study. While installing the work I recognised that there was a clear prevalence of circles. This had not been a conscious, intentional decision but something that was nonetheless repetitive and indicative. The Cityscope, diagrams, and floating diver etching were made using the same Perspex discs, therefore continuity was borne out of the necessity of the materials I had. But, with Walk One, I also made illustrations of a Plymouth Tramways Corporation uniform button, and the route number that ran from Peverell to the Theatre Royal (the route that ran nearest from my grandfather's house and was the last running). These geometric, curvilinear shapes were representational of the documented objects that I had painted. The girls dancing on the Booms-A-Daisy poster, however, formed an implied circle in their positioning on the page and the Carnival Jewels were circular rather than a rectilinear shape of a cut stone. Additionally, the drawing of the conductor shows him posing in the action of validating a ticket by using a Bell Punch machine (fig. 73); the ticket would be printed and punctured with a hole (fig. 72).

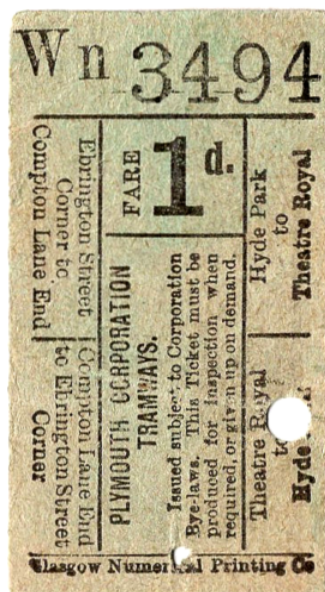


Fig. 72 and Fig. 73

I recognised that this prevalence of circles that appeared in my visual practice pointed to Hirsch’s description of postmemory practice performing memory that is “shot through with holes”.³⁰¹ But rather than being perforated, the practice resembled circular fragments that metaphorically attempted to fill such punctured memory. Also, in a direct connection to the Blitz, the prevalence of circles responded to the Plymouth Bomb Book, a copy of which I had seen at the beginning of the PhD (fig. 74, 75, 76). The Bomb Book cartographically details, according to location and date, of where damage ensued from the various devices that were dropped on Plymouth (excluding Devonport Dockyard, Plympton and Plymstock) during the air raids. Fifty-nine raids with corresponding dated maps are listed in the Bomb Book starting from the 6th July 1940 and ending on the 30th April 1944.³⁰² Each dropped bomb and device punctures the page with a red dot, the coverage of these red dots indicating the size and ferocity of the raid on each day. Some of the earlier maps only show one explosive and the first two pages show unexploded bombs that were cleared by the BDS (Bomb Disposal Squad) but between the 20th March and 30th April, the maps report intensive raids which caused the most sustained and substantial damage to the city.³⁰³

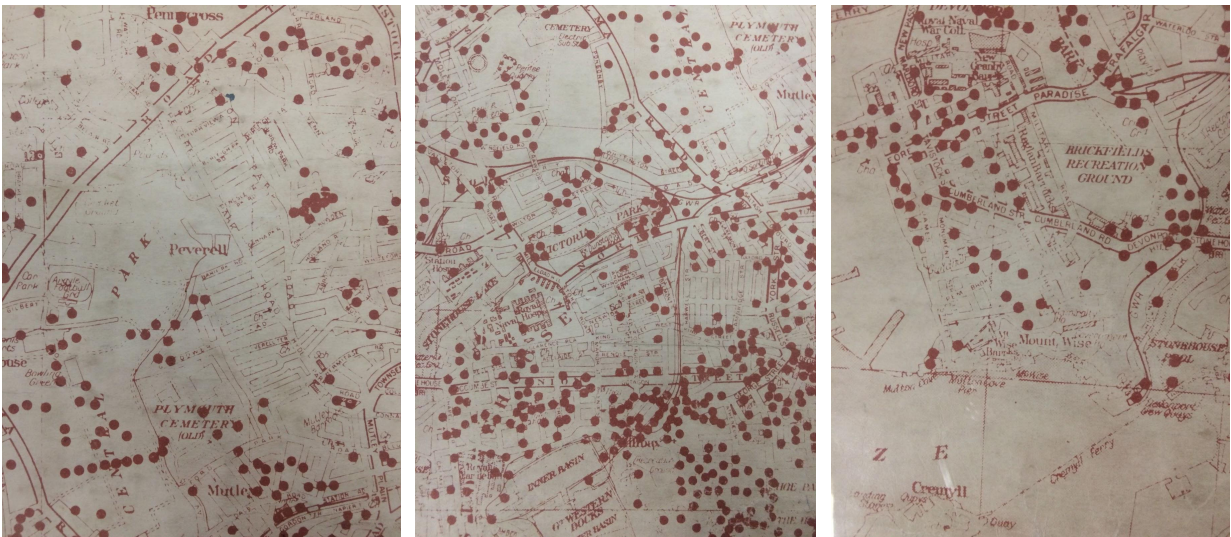


Fig. 74, Fig. 75, and Fig. 76

³⁰¹ Hirsch, M. (1997) *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Harvard University Press, p.244

³⁰² *The Box: Blitz 80: The bomb book*. The Box Plymouth. (2021, April 4). Retrieved November 30, 2022, from <https://www.theboxplymouth.com/blog/history/blitz-80-the-bomb-book>

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

The Bomb Book is a document of vulnerable knowledge in that it was made to record and symbolically demonstrate the damage wrought by the bombing raids. It marks the traumatic gaps and holes of the city, the bomb sites, but also the consequential absences imposed on the city's civilians through loss of jobs, homes, and lives. The blood red dots that pockmark these maps are the city's wounds, made when the trauma was raw and vulnerable (fig. 77). Hirsch writes that trauma offers other conceptions of time, "in that it always occurs in the present, as a form of perpetual return."³⁰⁴ Many of the locations of the bomb sites have been filled or altered in the intervening eighty years but by opening the Bomb Book the urban wounds of the past are made present once again as signified spaces of unknowability and unspeakability.



Fig. 77

The practice produced that corresponds to the Bomb Book combines with it as a palimpsest of vulnerable knowledge. It is postmemorial in that it is driven by an impossible

³⁰⁴ Hirsch, (2016), p.80

desire to fill gaps, to know the experience of the other, all the while recognising that it can never be achieved. I can never fully know my grandfather's experience of walking the city either before the war or that unspeakable walk directly after. My encounters are formed around this not-knowing; they are "shot through with holes". But such loss or lack of memory, represented through visual practice "can themselves become the connective tissue, [...] to makes space so that, generations later, it may be found and affiliatively adopted across lines of difference."³⁰⁵ Not-knowing does not simply make knowledge vulnerable through perforation, but also connective through its porousness. Such porousness is relational and therefore empathic in that it facilitates connectivity but does not presume absolute understanding. My grandfather's inability, or decision not to speak of what he witnessed on the walk after the Blitz is an absence of testimony that I have vicariously and affiliatively adopted. The practice is characterised by an "aesthetics of the aftermath as an aesthetics of vulnerability"³⁰⁶ in that it evidences a granddaughter-illustrator's attempt to empathically encounter with a past person's particular unknowable experience.

³⁰⁵ Hirsch, (2012), p.248-9

³⁰⁶ Hirsch, (2016), p.82

Chapter Three conclusion

In this third chapter I discussed how illustration practice used within this doctoral study articulates Stein's third stage of the process of empathy. Empathy is concluded by an active interpretation of that which was initially intuitively known or felt. The object of the encounter, i.e., the experience of the other, faces the empathiser once again but in an explicated, unfolded way. The empathiser has attempted to come-to-know or grasp the radically inaccessible experience of the other through reciprocal vulnerability.

Following ideas proposed by Judith Butler and Marianne Hirsch, I considered how vulnerability is a relational disposition that is essential to empathic encounters as well as the ways in which it produces postmemorial practice. I draw parallels between Butler's conception of vulnerability as an exposed and agentic disposition, Hirsch's radical openness towards vulnerable temporalities, and Barthes' tenderness of looking. I propose that each of these concepts perform Stein's process of empathy and are useful in understanding how it operates.

Through representation the empathiser recognises that which they have come-to-know alongside that which they can never know; this collage of knowns and unknowns, truths and felt-truths, forms a knowledge that is vulnerable in its construction and content. I explore this using Barthes' tender examination of a photograph and Catherine Bertola's interventions with archival photographs as examples of how empathic encounters that are made through creative practice can generate visual practice that act as vulnerable knowledge.

Lastly, I discussed how my understanding of an unfolded encounter at Stein's concluding stage of empathy operated through the production and analytical reflection of illustration practice. Recognition of material and temporal similarities, differences, fragments and absences are examined through illustration made as a way of coming-to-know the

experience of Honicknowle Carnival Week. While walks one and two were to a building and a structure that is no longer present, the destination of walk three was an event witnessed vicariously through an archival amateur film. Elements of the illustration practice evidence the actions of research conducted; representations of the past and present city face one another in the folded street and understanding is attempted through unfolding. The making of postmemorial illustration practice in this doctoral study performs the process of empathy in that it is a way of coming-to-know the experience of the other and it produces visual outcomes that are inherently perforated with absences and gaps as present and prevalent as remains and fragments. The recognition and interpretation of this collection [*Zusammenfassen*] of known and unknowns gathered through feeling-into experience brings the granddaughter-illustrator to a concluding point of the empathic encounter as “empathic representation is the only fulfilment possible.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Stein, p.57

Thesis Conclusion

Motivation and rationale for research

This study was initiated by a curiosity of locations that are marked by a traumatic past; a story of my grandfather's unspeakable walk across Plymouth on his first visit home after the war; and my move to the South West. The house in Plymouth that my grandfather was raised in survived the Blitz and still stands but I have no documentary or anecdotal information of where he may have walked to, why, and what sort of experience those walks were. I attempted to understand his experience of walking the city both directly before and after the Blitz by undertaking personal investigative walks from the house to destinations that he may have walked to. I could never fully know his experience as the passage of time, the damage and alteration of the cityscape, and the gender of the walkers were insurmountable differences. What remains is an altered city that I examined as a site of intersubjective inquiry. The impossible desire to know the experience of the past person is a characteristic of postmemory practice, and the attempt to do so is inherently empathic.

Discussions of empathy, its role, history, and purpose, have been proliferating since Barack Obama's 2006 speech on America's "empathy deficit".³⁰⁸ Such literature includes Lanzoni;³⁰⁹ Coplan and Goldie;³¹⁰ Assmann and Detmers;³¹¹ as well as Paul Bloom's provocative book *Against Empathy*.³¹² Discourse of empathy in relation to the arts is largely concerned with

³⁰⁸ Kidsincmedia. (2009, March 26). Barack Obama "empathy deficit" 2006. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4md_A059Jrc&ab_channel=kidsincmedia

³⁰⁹ Lanzoni, S. (2018). *Empathy: A History*. United Kingdom: Yale University Press.

³¹⁰ Coplan, A. Goldie, P. (2011). *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*. United Kingdom: OUP Oxford.

³¹¹ Assmann, A. Detmers, I. (2016). *Empathy and Its Limits*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

³¹² Bloom, P. (2017). *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion*. United Kingdom: Random House.

performing arts, see Foster;³¹³ de Groot;³¹⁴ Cummings;³¹⁵ Verducci;³¹⁶ Sevdalis and Raab.³¹⁷ One notable exception to this is Jill Bennett's book *Empathic Vision* which has been instrumental in examining empathy in relation to visual arts and proved pivotal in the early stages of my own research by introducing Hirsch's ideas of postmemory. However, while there are emerging conversations of how illustration can demonstrate and interrogate empathy with the past, see Taylor;³¹⁸ Grünwald;³¹⁹ Kivland;³²⁰ and Cutter;³²¹ this is still a generalised, be it contemporary, understanding of empathy and does not engage in the complexities and nuances that can be found within the 'big drawer' of empathy as explicated by Meneses.

This practice-led research begins to address this gap by providing a systematic examination of phenomenologist Edith Stein's understanding of empathy in relation to illustration practice. By examining each stage of Stein's process, equivalences are made to enable a particular understanding of how the illustration practice in this study operates. Additionally, the creative articulation and interpretation of Stein's process uses illustration's inherent communicative capabilities to help engage and facilitate understanding of this phenomenological paradigm.

³¹³ Foster, S. (2010). *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (1st ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203840702>

³¹⁴ de Groot, J. (2011) *Affect and empathy: re-enactment and performance as/in history*, *Rethinking History*, 15:4, 587-599, DOI: [10.1080/13642529.2011.603926](https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2011.603926)

³¹⁵ Cummings, L. B. (2016). *Empathy as Dialogue in Theatre and Performance*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

³¹⁶ Verducci, S. (2000) *A Moral Method? Thoughts on cultivating empathy through Method acting*, *Journal of Moral Education*, 29:1, 87-99, DOI: [10.1080/030572400102952](https://doi.org/10.1080/030572400102952)

³¹⁷ Sevdalis, V. Raab, M. (2014) *Empathy in sports, exercise, and the performing arts*, *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15:2, 173-179, DOI:10.1016/j.psychsport.2013.10.013.

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1469029213001210>)

³¹⁸ Taylor, R. E. (2018). *Heritage as Process: Constructing the Historical Child's Voice Through Art Practice*. Doctoral thesis, Sheffield Hallam University.

³¹⁹ Grünwald, C. A. (2022) *Last Seen, Empathy and the Past: Outlining, erasing and colouring in*, *Colouring In: The Past A Symposium*, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL

³²⁰ Kivland, S. (2022) *Empathy and the Past: Outlining, erasing and colouring in*, *Colouring In: The Past A Symposium*, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL

³²¹ Cutter, M. J. (2017). *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800-1852*. Greece: University of Georgia Press.

Stein's theory of empathy has, in recent years, begun to experience a developing critical analysis, see Meneses,³²² Moran and Magri,³²³ Haney,³²⁴ Zahavi,³²⁵ Larkin,³²⁶ and Svenaneus.³²⁷ This recognition and examination is long overdue in comparison to Stein's male counterparts such as Husserl; Heidegger; Scheler and Lipps whose work have received far greater attention for so long. This thesis joins a developing critical discourse of Stein's early work and it has potential to prove useful for academics from phenomenological, philosophical, and psychological backgrounds in its articulation of Stein's ideas through the interpretation of creative practice. Additionally, I present Stein's empathy as an applicable methodology to creative practitioners who may choose to adopt and incorporate it into their own work.

The majority of writers, academics, and visual practitioners that I have examined and built knowledge from are female. This has been an important consideration for two reasons. Firstly, I consider Stein's theory lends itself suitably to the canon of feminist scholarship as her empathy is concerned with connection through a recognition and inclusion of difference without appropriation. Stein wrote a great deal on feminism and advocated especially for the participation of women in higher education.³²⁸ One element of feminist scholarship is driven by the desire to examine and redefine culture from the perspective of women through the retrieval and inclusion of women's work, stories, and artefacts. Therefore, examination of Stein's early theoretical writing helps, in some small part, to address the misogyny and antisemitism she faced both professionally and personally.

³²² Meneses, R. (2011). *Experiences of Empathy*. PhD thesis. University of Birmingham.

³²³ Moran, D. & Magri, E. (eds.) (2017). *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*. Cham: Springer Verlag.

³²⁴ Haney, K. (2009). *Empathy and Otherness*. *Journal of Philosophy: A Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry* 4 (8):11-19.

³²⁵ Zahavi, D. (2010) *Empathy, Embodiment and Interpersonal Understanding: From Lipps to Schutz*, *Inquiry*, 53:3, 285-306, DOI: [10.1080/00201741003784663](https://doi.org/10.1080/00201741003784663)

³²⁶ Meneses, R. & Larkin, M. (2012). *Edith Stein and the Contemporary Psychological Study of Empathy*. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*. 43. 151-184. [10.1163/15691624-12341234](https://doi.org/10.1163/15691624-12341234).

³²⁷ Svenaneus, F. (2018) *Edith Stein's phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy*. *Phenom Cogn Sci* 17, 741-760 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9544-9>

³²⁸ Stein, E. (1986) *Life in a Jewish Family 1891-1916. An Autobiography*. The Collected Works of Edith Stein Vol. 1. Washington, DC: ICS Publications.

and Stein, E. (1996). *Essays on woman*, 2nd edn., transl. F. M. Oben, ICS Publications, Washington.

Secondly, my empathic encounters experienced over the course of the research are always inherently viewed through a feminist lens. As the predominant case study of the thesis is a qualitative critical reflection and analysis of my own subjective experience during the making of illustration, it is inevitable that my positionality and politics will shape the thesis accordingly. Hirsch aptly asks:

“How does the role of the female witness or agent of transmission differ from that of her male counterpart? How do feminist theories of empathy and intersubjectivity, of space, of solidarity, of the body and bodily memory, indeed of photographic representation itself, inflect our reading of the image?”³²⁹

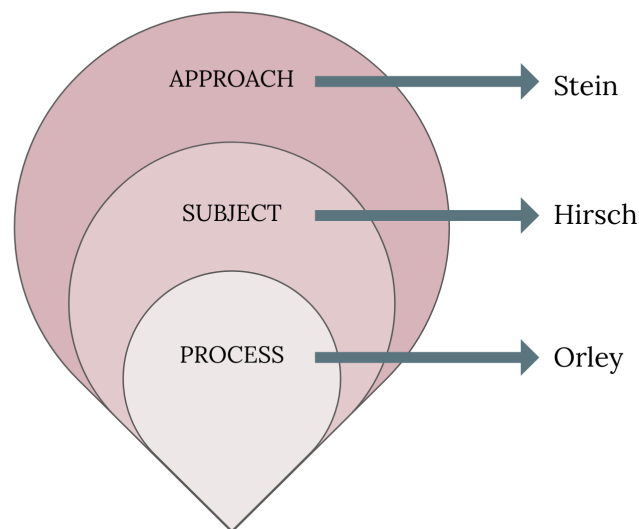
I consider this question through the role of the granddaughter-illustrator; a figure I have defined as a third-generation performative agent. This role characterises the illustration practice I have made during this study and my analysis of Hoven and Krug’s graphic memoirs.

The main outcome of my practice-led research is a creative articulation of Stein’s empathy process through a hybrid illustration act. I claim that incorporating and interpreting her philosophical methodology is an ethical other way of knowing familial relationships to the past. As Stein’s empathy is characterised by an attempt at knowing, or coming-to-know, another’s experience rather than an appropriative assumption of full knowledge, it has scope as a methodology to be used by practitioners who wish to affectively engage with specific people in specific places of the past.

³²⁹ Hirsch, M. & Smith, V. (eds.) (2002) *Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction*, *Signs*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Gender and Cultural Memory, The University of Chicago Press, p.2

Methodology reflection

The chronology of this study demonstrates how my practice has led the research. The practice was systematic through the deliberate application of particular divisions. Firstly, the walks were conducted followed by the production of illustration work. I selected the destinations according to specific reasoning and each walk was of similar journey time. Lastly, each of the walks were documented, on site, purely through the camera lens of an iPhone. However, alongside such ordering, the practice-led research was driven, in part, by intuitive decision-making. This inevitably generated swings of confidence between an innate trust that certain things would come together, make sense, and be resolved at some point in the future, to anxiety of the efficacy of what I was doing. This movement back and forth of clarity and confusion is typical of my own and doubtless others creative practice, but the pressure of a PhD framework exemplified it so that I often questioned where my contributions to knowledge were for fear that my research was obscure, irrelevant or indulgent. Using practice to lead research at times feels like a journey in the dark; it requires trust despite the presence of doubt that is always accompanying. The theoretical texts I collected along the way (by Stein, Hirsch and Orley) illuminated the route I had already taken and provided tools to analyse it retrospectively.



Orley's creative mode of encounter consists of an initial, direct experience during which an enhanced awareness or lively alertness is employed to examine the subject's embodied and embedded emplacement within a location followed by a non-primordial, reflective working-through of the primary experience. Orley's approach was not something that I was aware of during the production of practice but was utilised later in the analysis of my methodology. It was useful in clarifying the process I had performed and provided examples of practitioners with similar methodologies thereby showing that it was a proven, constructive way of working.

Hirsch's concept of postmemory and its corresponding extensive writing proved vital in untangling and defining the subject of my research; the attempt of coming-to-know the experience of an absent other. Close reading of postmemory research, written by Hirsch and others, helped me to examine my positionality and vulnerabilities within my research which led to a more honest and nuanced study. At times, this was uncomfortable as I felt a need to maintain distancing measures in order to survive the rigours of an academic context and yet, I believe the moments within the research and analysis of practice that were most connected to myself (the researcher, the illustrator, the granddaughter) are where the thesis is most grounded. The translation of intuited or felt-knowing into considered, articulated-knowing was a challenging but invaluable task; it illuminated why I felt the need to examine my relationship with an absent other and why I conducted my research via the process I had utilised. This translation also performed the third, or recognising, stage of Stein's empathy.

The use of empathy as a philosophical framework was applied after the production of practice and afforded me the opportunity to examine in detail how I had conducted the practice and to what end. Initially, in preparation for the confirmation of route, I read memory scholar Silke Arnold-de Simone's book on the interface between memory and museum studies, 'Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia'. She writes that:

Discourses around empathy are crucial for theories concerned with the passing on of memories such as Hirsch's 'postmemory', La Capra's 'secondary-witnessing', or Landberg's 'prosthetic memory': the understanding is that the memories are transmitted through empathy or actually create it. Empathy is seen either as a prerequisite or an outcome of this process.³³⁰

Arnold-de Simone defines empathy in late capitalist society as a skill of reading somebody else's feelings accurately and being able to genuinely feel for them. "This is considered part of the all-important emotional intelligence which is a key qualification in the modern service industry, fostered and encouraged not least to enhance people's economic efficiency."³³¹ She critiques the concept that empathy permits people to bridge across divides of religion, race, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as the assumption that it generates ethical behaviour, tolerance, and a deeper knowledge of contemporary challenges. This critique of the efficacy and ethicality of empathy as a connective practice with people from the past presented a dilemma of knowledge and knowing. The pursuit of attempting to know the experience of my grandfather walking the city as a young man was fundamentally an impossible task and yet the postmemorial drive to do so withheld.

Further examination of empathy and ethics led me to Rowan Williams' 2014 Tanner lecture 'The Paradoxes of Empathy' in which he presented Edith Stein's philosophy of empathy as a paradigm that is grounded in humility. Quoting Stein, Williams said that, "the empathic position is one in which we know that we *are not* the other."³³² Empathy, Williams carefully states, is not knowledge of the other, i.e. 'I know how you feel', as this is a colonising mindset that too readily collapses the distance between one's self and another. Instead, empathy is stating that 'I have no idea how you feel', with the proffered gesture of listening and accompanying the other. Williams presented Stein's empathy as a habit or disposition that requires work, thought and intention.

³³⁰ Arnold-de-Simine, S. (2013) *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia*. United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, p.44

³³¹ *Ibid.* p.45

³³² Williams, (2014)

Williams' dissemination and delivery of Stein's empathy was an accessible entry into complex phenomenological philosophy for an outsider of the discourse. Stein's theory seemed to resolve my dilemma of attempting to *know* another past person's experience but to incorporate it required subsequent study of research on Stein and her philosophy written alongside close-reading of Stein's text. Stein's writing, typical of early twentieth century Germanic prose, is at times dense and difficult and so repeated and adjacent reading was needed to understand her paradigm and use it as a retrospective theoretical framework.

Stein describes empathy as an original form of perception that deals with how we experience any being other than ourselves. This act is not built on imagining or reasoning but direct givenness of the other with its origin coming from the empathee rather than the empathiser who receives their subjectivity. This fundamental distinction generated a new dilemma in that my process was purely speculative as I could not directly witness my grandfather walking through Plymouth in 1939 or 1945 or ask him about those experiences. In the last chapter of her book Stein considers this problem; she writes that so far all her examples of empathy have been made through direct "sensually perceivable expression in countenances, ect. or in actions."³³³ Stein poses the question whether the ability to come-to-know the inner life of another person, what she describes as their spirit, is always necessarily tied to the presence of a physical body. She argues:

Of course, I know many individuals, living and dead, whom I have never seen. But I know this from others whom I see or through the medium of their works which I sensually perceive and which they have produced by virtue of their psycho-physical organization. We meet the spirit of the past in various forms but always bound to a physical body. This is the written or printed word or the word hewed into stone—the spatial form become stone or metal.³³⁴

³³³ Stein, (1989), p.117

³³⁴ Ibid.

What Stein is positing is that we can empathise with the dead but only through some proxy physical body which transmits their 'spirit'. However, I did not have a 'work' such as a written testimony or a photographic album made by my grandfather which articulated his experience of walking the pre- or post-Blitz city. I know of the unspeakability of that traumatic post-Blitz walk through others; a silence that had been transmitted through a matrilineal line.

Instead of a physical object or document through which "to meet the spirit of the past", I had the city itself as an altered connection and conduit. Empathy with a past other was attempted via utterance and emplacement. Similarly, my attempt to come-to-know the effect of the bombing upon the city was conducted through archival research but also through an empathic engagement with ceramic objects that had been damaged by the event. This exercise poses the question as to whether an individual can experience an empathic encounter with a place, or city. I think by referring to Orley's conception of place as a living, moving entity that is also capable of 'holding' memories it is possible to apply intersubjective philosophy when examining our engagement with it. And yet, this could be perceived as a human-centric approach and, as Stein considers, presupposes the other's givenness.

At a later point of my PhD I was asked whether I felt I *had* come-to-know my grandfather's experience of walking Plymouth, within this question is another implicit question of whether empathy with a past other *works*. I answered that truthfully I did not know his experience but that that is not the point; even if he was alive to ask him directly and if I had a wealth of documentation to support his testimony, I would never *fully* know his experience as I can never untether myself from my positionality. Stein asks her reader if the *knowing* of individuals that she has not seen "is genuine experience [...] or whether there is that unclarity about our own motives which we found in considering the 'idols of self knowledge'?"³³⁵ Stein concludes that such questioning is appropriate for the study of

³³⁵ Ibid. p.118

religious consciousness, which she would later undertake, and ends her examination of empathy by truthfully answering this problem with “it is not clear”.³³⁶

Such unclear experiential knowing aligns with Hirsch’s distinction between the original first-generation experience and the subsequent experiences of the second and third-generation; they are not the same experiences but they are connected through memory and engagement. Empathy is not resultative knowledge, it is not a noun. Instead it is a verb, an active gesture of coming-to-know, or knowing. Whether Stein would consider my attempt of empathy through postmemorial illustration practice as fitting within her paradigm of phenomenological theory I answer ‘it is not clear’. And yet, I argue that lack of clarity does not evidence redundancy of an empathic approach to practice-led research, but is addition of greater complexity and vulnerability that brings forth a generative value for further explication.

As I have retrospectively applied Stein’s empathy as a theoretical framework for my practice-led methodology, it is inevitable that some misalignments are present. There are points where the practice overlaps into each of the empathic stages despite my separation of them into each chapter. For instance, the practice concerned with the tram conductor was made in connection to the first investigative walk to Millbay and yet I have positioned my analysis of it into Chapter Two which features the investigative walk to Tinside. While this may seem to be an incongruous placement, this example of illustration practice corresponds with the theoretical research on postmemory and intergenerational encountering as well as Stein’s discussion of the processes involved in the second stage of empathy. All of the practice from each of the three walks can be used to demonstrate each of the empathic stages as the production of making has spanned each of these stages; receptivity, feeling-into, recognising. I do not claim that my illustration practice is a perfect articulation of Stein’s empathy but it is a starting point, an initial converging of two disciplines in the attempt of understanding them both concurrently. Such speculative

³³⁶ Ibid.

alignment can be further honed through ongoing practice-led research projects developed by myself and others.

Briefly, in section two of Chapter One, I acknowledge a connection between my grandfather as a young man and myself at the same age. While he was serving as an engineer in the RAF, many of his friends who were pilots, navigators, and gunners died in active service. According to my mother, when looking at a group photograph from my grandfather and grandmother's wedding he would point to the numerous people pictured who had died. His own death occurred between the sudden, unexpected deaths of two of my close friends when I was nineteen. These events of loss at a formative age, his and mine, are adjacent but not equivalent; there are numerous differences in context and circumstance. However, it is through a shared experience of grief that I was able to experience empathic resonance for a person in time who is fundamentally unknowable to me.

Empathic or 'limbic resonance' is a psychological term describing the ability to share intense emotional experiences that emerge from the limbic system; an area of the brain which deals with behavioural and emotional response.³³⁷ This form of resonance has been linked to mood or emotional 'contagion' where emotional convergence can occur and spread from one person to another, or in a larger group.³³⁸ However, I do not believe that emotional contagion was involved in my empathic investigation for two reasons. I was not directly facing the other in a *lived* encounter. Also, the degree of differences between myself as empathiser and the empathee, an unknowable other, largely prevented illusions of slipped positionality. This may well have been different if the subject of the empathic examination had, beyond a familial connection, commonalities with me such as gender, age, or even profession. And yet, if such contagion had occurred it would not constitute as Steinian empathy as she categorically refutes this along with Lipps' definition of empathy as

³³⁷ Lewis, T., Amini, F., Lannon, R. (2007). *A General Theory of Love*. United Kingdom: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

³³⁸ Barsade, S. G. (2002). *The Ripple Effect: Emotional Contagion and its Influence on Group Behavior*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(4), 644–675. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3094912>

'oneness'. My ability to reflectively consider the grief of my grandfather as a young man could only be made through my own experiences of grief and it is within this receptive context I attempted to come-to-know how he felt, all the while acknowledging that such speculation would always be flawed, incomplete, and vulnerable.

Although the practice-led and theoretical research of this PhD is conducted and analysed by one person, I maintain that it is (appropriately for a study of empathy) resultative of collaboration in several ways. It is an intergenerational collaboration between my grandfather's original experience and my own, third-generation postmemory experience. Secondly, it is a collaboration between a masculine silence and a feminine lineage of utterance. My incorporation of Stein's empathy into a speculative practice-led methodology is also a collaborative undertaking; my practice assisted in my understanding of her philosophy and conversely Stein's writing provided a greater understanding of my own practice. Poignantly, the English translation of Stein's book is also a third-generation collaboration as it was conducted by Stein's grand-niece. Lastly, I regard the inclusion of other theorists and practitioners within the written component of the thesis as a form of collaboration towards a coherent argument; no study exists in isolation but is always built upon existing work.

Contextual placement

The three most important papers that relate to this thesis are Edith Stein's *On the Problem of Empathy*, Marianne Hirsch's *The Generation of Postmemory*, and Emily Orley's *Places Remember Events*. Stein's book forms the framework of this thesis; I have built upon her systematic investigation of *how* the experience of empathy phenomenologically operates in order to examine illustration as an act.

Hirsch's book explores the transmission of traumatic experience via familial relationships with an emphasis on the role of gender and its effect upon such inherited intergenerational

complexities. I have built upon Hirsch's writing to explore *who* the empathic process happens between and *why* it has been initiated. I claim that the role of the granddaughter-illustrator as enacted by myself, Hoven, and Krug can be adapted to fit other third-generation practitioners.

Lastly, I have utilised Orley's writing to examine *where* my empathic encounters have taken place and how they are entangled within the Blitzed-city that they occur. Orley suggests that the mode of the encounter has two stages, or rather it is a direct encounter and then a creative and ethical response. Drawing from Massey and Lippard, Orley suggests that as the creative practitioner unearths particular stories through their engagement with place, further stories are generated so that it remains multiple and unfixed. She writes that "whether we encounter place directly (by passing through it for example) or through an artwork, if our response to it can be creative, it is also ethical."³³⁹ The ethics of such encounters lies in the empathic attention wrought upon the object of focus, be it a city or a ceramic. Additionally, it also allows other, potentially overlooked, narratives to emerge into focus as subjects worthy of engagement.

Three published papers share similar overlapping aspects of research undertaken in this thesis. Gary Spicer's article for Intellect's Journal of Arts Writing, *Necessitating my alliance: A meditation on the Płaszów concentration camp*, explores his creative practice of subjective writing and drawing as a method of critical inquiry (see p.33). Spicer's practice-led research is characterised by Hirsch's theory of postmemory in that it attempts to 're-invoke' something that can no longer be seen and in that it shares similarities to this study as both use creative practice as a means of encountering specific locations with traumatic pasts. However, as a site of genocide, Płaszów is a place of memorial and commemoration, the landscape is stained by the atrocity that occurred there with sparsely wooded hills and fields being the only instances of change. Blitzed-cities such as Plymouth, whereas, are porous and mutable but also capable of retaining the residual remains of past events

³³⁹ Orley, E., 2012. Places remember events: Towards an ethics of encounter in Liminal Landscapes. London: Routledge. p.46

activated by those who pass through them. The palimpsestic nature of a city includes and highlights the differences of my direct experience with what I imagine my grandfather may have had walking the same roads. I have positioned postmemory arts practice as a way of looking at a traumatic past and through its application, the practitioner performs Stein's empathy as a way of coming-to-know it.

Simon Woolham's 2016 thesis *In Search of the Shortcuts: Walking and narrative in physical, virtual and psychological space* is also a practice-led research project from a visual artist's perspective that explores the ways in which narratives of the past are generated. Woolham engages in a practical and theoretical analysis of how walking and narrative intersect in the definition of space; environments are shared and walked through to become "simultaneously, vistas of history; that are interpreted and spoken through them."³⁴⁰ Drawing from Doreen Massey, Woolham's collaborative *Wythy Walks* emphasise that the chosen suburban locations are not hindered by static and linear conceptions of space and time, but act as a methodological process through which shared engagement of physical, virtual and psychological space evoke dialogue and interpretation.

Both Woolham's and my research position walking as an effective tool for reflecting on personal embeddedness within place and is used to bring forth tacit understandings of it. While Woolham's *Wythy Walks* were a 'relational process' of collaboration, engagement and exploration between himself and his fellow walker, my walks were undertaken alone as the fellow walker whose cityscape I shared was long dead. The relational process that my research displays is an interrogation of how I, as a granddaughter-illustrator, relate with the present city directly while walking; how I connected to a past city via archives and creative imagining; and how I could relate, empathically, to a past person.

Lastly, Rachel Emily Taylor's thesis *Heritage as Process: Constructing the Historical Child's Voice Through Art Practice* explores, through the facilitation of creative workshops with

³⁴⁰ Woolham, S. (2016) *IN SEARCH OF THE SHORTCUTS: Walking and narrative in physical, virtual and psychological space*. Doctoral thesis. Manchester Metropolitan University. p.2

contemporary children, their empathic engagement with the historical voiceless children represented in London's Foundling Museum. Taylor argues that when empathy is employed with a self-awareness of contrast and difference, to avoid over-identification or appropriative oneness, it may enable a critical state of emotional understanding. Following Nowak, Taylor emphasises the impossibility of reproducing or fully knowing the past and so endeavours to create a "state of [empathic] unsettlement" for the participants in her workshops. Taylor outlined that the different understandings or approaches to empathy can allow the perceiver of artworks to "(metaphorically) feel *into* or feel *onto* another. By using empathy to feel *onto* another, one erases them, replacing their experience with one's own."³⁴¹ I maintain that the hindrances or risks of what Paul Bloom terms 'emotional empathy' are ethically negotiated by Stein who rejects Lipps' notions of oneness. Taylor discusses the empathy experienced by others: firstly of the children participating in creative practices in her workshops; and secondly by visitors viewing the resulting artworks within a gallery space. Taylor facilitates the conditions for empathic responses, observes and analyses them. In contrast, I examine my own subjective and affective experience of attempting to understand an other through empathy.

Contributions to knowledge and future directions

This thesis uniquely examines Stein's phenomenological theory of empathy in relation to illustration practice while also adding to the relatively young field of critical illustration writing. Stein's theory has been developed into a methodological framework to investigate new insights of both illustration and postmemory and have been shared through the production, documentation, and written dissemination of creative practice. A phenomenological examination of empathy as a way of systematically unfolding the operations at work during the production of illustration practice has not been made before and responds to the second of my research aims: *to incorporate and test Stein's theoretical methodology within illustration research.*

³⁴¹ Taylor, (2019) p.158

Contributions to knowledge have also been made of empathy by examining it alongside the writings of scholars such as Hirsch, Butler, Massey, Meier, and Orley in order to unfold the ways in which Stein's model operates at each stage. This responds to the first of my research aims: *to use illustration practice for the visual articulation of a phenomenological act*. This research reflects upon and recognises the significance of engaging with the multiplicity of cityscapes or objects that have been transfigured by traumatic events. This attention is a part of an empathic process of encountering that has potential to be utilised in object-oriented museum and heritage studies. Likewise, as a subjective and affective methodology, there is the capacity for the embodied act of walking to highlight heterogeneous spaces and the constellation of interactions that manifest within them. There is critical assessment of the emplacement and interpretation of a third-generation practitioner within a Blitzed city. In this manner, this research builds from the feminist spatial theories of Doreen Massey and Judith Butler who both unfold the complexities and entanglements of space and our engagements with them.

Developing from Marianne Hirsch's research of postmemory, this thesis introduces the granddaughter-illustrator as a role that encompasses a creative critical engagement of third-generation retrospective witnessing. I examine postmemory as a way of looking at the past through practice-led research alongside contemporary illustrators who I maintain have similarly taken on this specific familial role within their illustration practice. I position Stein's definition of empathy as characteristic of postmemory practice and I claim that creative processes made at the confluence of these theories generate outcomes that communicate what I term 'vulnerable knowledge'.

Illustration as an outcome can be described as a way of telling in that it articulates (typically visually) an idea, message or narrative to elucidate or enable understanding. However, I situate an act or process of illustration as a way of asking in that it is an ethical investigative tool that can be employed to come-to-know the experience of the other. The multimodal praxis that I use in this study encompasses walking, image and object making, looking and writing to enact a subjective and qualitative examination of a past person's

relationship to a city. The practice of illustration is a way of articulating or asking unspeakable questions to an absent figure and thereby resolves the third of my research aims: *to use illustration practice to gain insights from a familial connection within place.*

I believe that I have fulfilled each of my research aims within the parameters of a doctoral study. However, the practice-led research methodology I have developed is young and deserves continued examination in order to robustly withstand development for publication. I would like to create further empathic ‘case studies’ with other familial postmemory connections and facilitate this creative methodology for other practitioners.

I believe that the original contributions to knowledge that have been developed in this thesis have scope to be continued and extended by future researchers and practitioners. Firstly, critical writing of illustration is still relatively young and so this philosophically focused practice-led thesis, and the illustration practice made, will add to an expanding and wide-ranging bank of discourse on the discipline.

Secondly, in recent years there has been traction in bringing Edith Stein’s philosophical outputs into greater prominence, as evidenced by the increase of academic publications discussing her phenomenological work. This thesis adds to this overdue upshift in critical engagement and uniquely does so through an illustration perspective and practice. Lastly, I have adapted Stein’s dissemination of empathy into a creative methodology to explore and articulate experiences that are inherently unknowable: a past person’s experience of walking through their home city both directly before and directly after it was heavily bombed. As the Second World War is rapidly leaving direct living memory, such creative methodologies are both practical and ethical ways for third and subsequent generations to encounter traumatic pasts.

Additionally, as Hirsch has stated, postmemory has moved beyond the Holocaust and the Second World War and as such, it is prudent and necessary to develop modes of empathic

engagement for people who have been affected directly, and later intergenerationally, by traumas occurring in contemporary society such as the ongoing conflict in Syria, the war in Ukraine, the refugee crisis, and the Coronavirus pandemic. If we are to attempt to understand the experience of those who have been touched by such traumas I position Stein's theory of empathy as an appropriate mode to do so and that illustration is an effective process of both performing and articulating this attempt.

My understanding of Stein's empathy is framed within my reflective examination of my, and others', practice. Conversely, the research undertaken in this study on Stein's empathy has provided a nuanced and revelatory understanding of my own creative practice, both for this PhD and for previous projects. Despite differences in medium and subject, I recognise that the way in which I undertake my practice is characterised by a sense of investigation that is inherently empathic. I have no doubt that this will continue beyond the PhD; with greater awareness of empathy I can continue to undertake illustration practice as an act of asking.

I hope to continue to develop the practical aspects of this methodology through investigating other case studies within artist residency programmes and self-initiated projects. I intend to create an adapted format that can be delivered in my undergraduate teaching to encourage a synthesis of theoretical and practice-led analysis. Lastly, I would like to develop this thesis into an interdisciplinary collaborative research project with a focus on creative practices of empathy to foster understanding and connection after past societal traumas. I can see how further investigation and practical action, through shared and relevant research could develop the ethical and social applications of this study beyond the parameters of what was initially anticipated.

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Appendices

List of Appendices

Appendix 1

poster and photographs from residency at Old Bank Studios, Penryn, 2018

Appendix 2

poster and photographs from exhibition at Devonport Guildhall, Plymouth, 2019

Appendix 3

peer-reviewed paper for Journal of Illustration, 6.1, 2019

Appendix 4

poster presentation, 11th Illustration Research Symposium 'Education and Illustration', 2021

Appendix 1.

Louise Bell
Old Bank Studios Residency

You are invited
to the open studio of 'an
attempt at revealing a place through
walking' Sunday 5th August 2018, 12am-1pm,
at Old Bank Studios, 33 Higher Market St., Penryn.

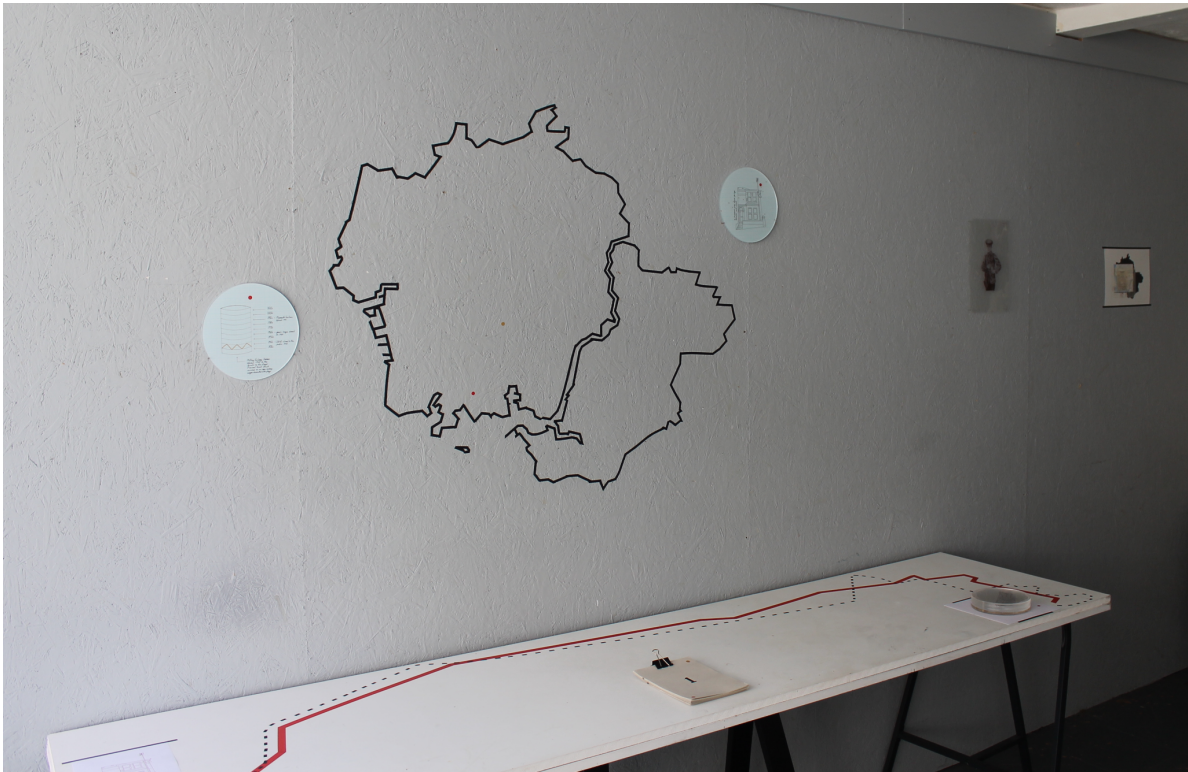
My PhD research (*Hidden Fractures: Plymouth illustrated
within its repairs*) aims to explore instances of repair within a
cityscape and how they behave as illustration in our reading of
place. These repairs are inscribed testimony of the trauma that
necessitated them. *Fractures* communicate damage but are often
disguised or *hidden*.

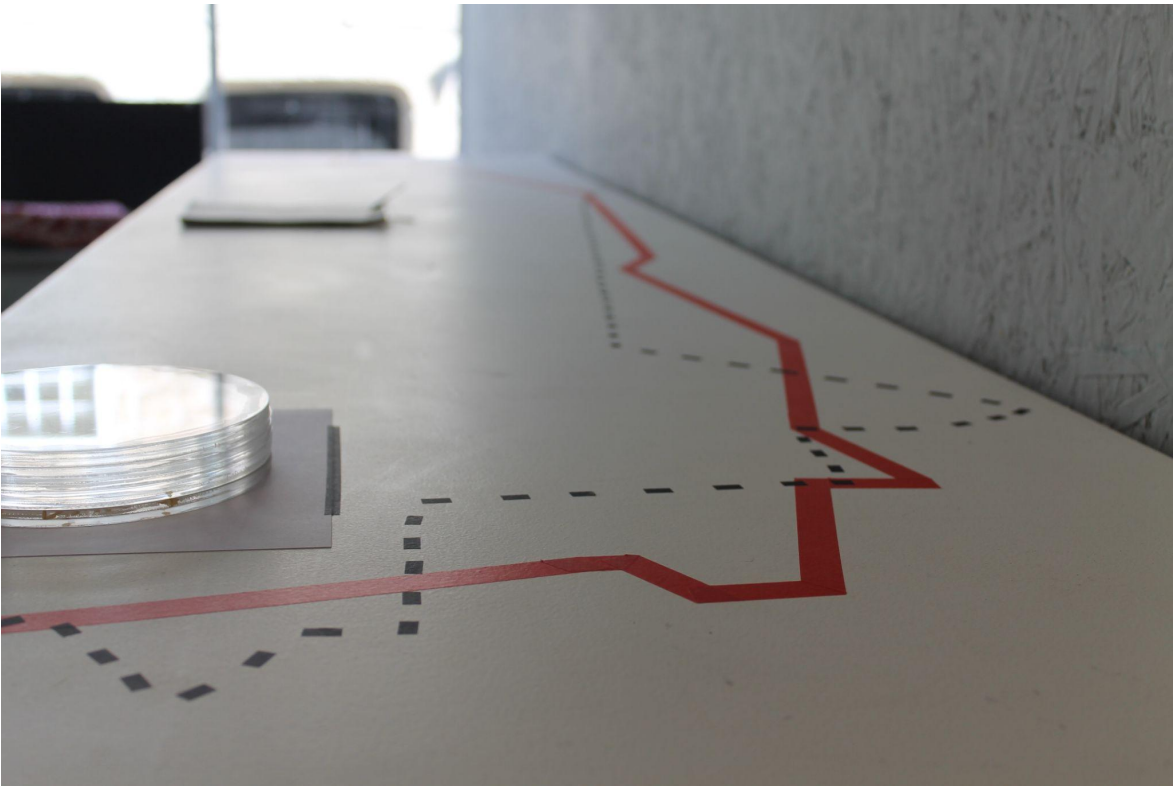
I am walking to 6 pre-blitz sites that have altered or disappeared.
Walking is a means of provoking hidden fractures into visibility; the
disjuncture between past and present Plymouth will arise and initiate
illustration practice. Each walk will be plotted in image and text
producing an alternative archive; the creative practice eventually
informing the construction and content of the written thesis.

During the residency, I plan to curate collected fragments
(photographs and drawings) from my first walk (to what
was Millbay station). I will explore through practice, the
temporally layered aspect of walking in a city. The
hope is that through illustration, I can repair
a fracture in memory; highlighting
the overlooked.

Invitation

5th August
12 - 4 pm









***AN ATTEMPT AT
REVEALING A PLACE
THROUGH WALKING***

*an exhibition of
practice-based PhD
research by Louise Bell*

—

*Exhibition:
13th - 29th March*

—

*Preview Evening:
15th March 6-8pm*

—

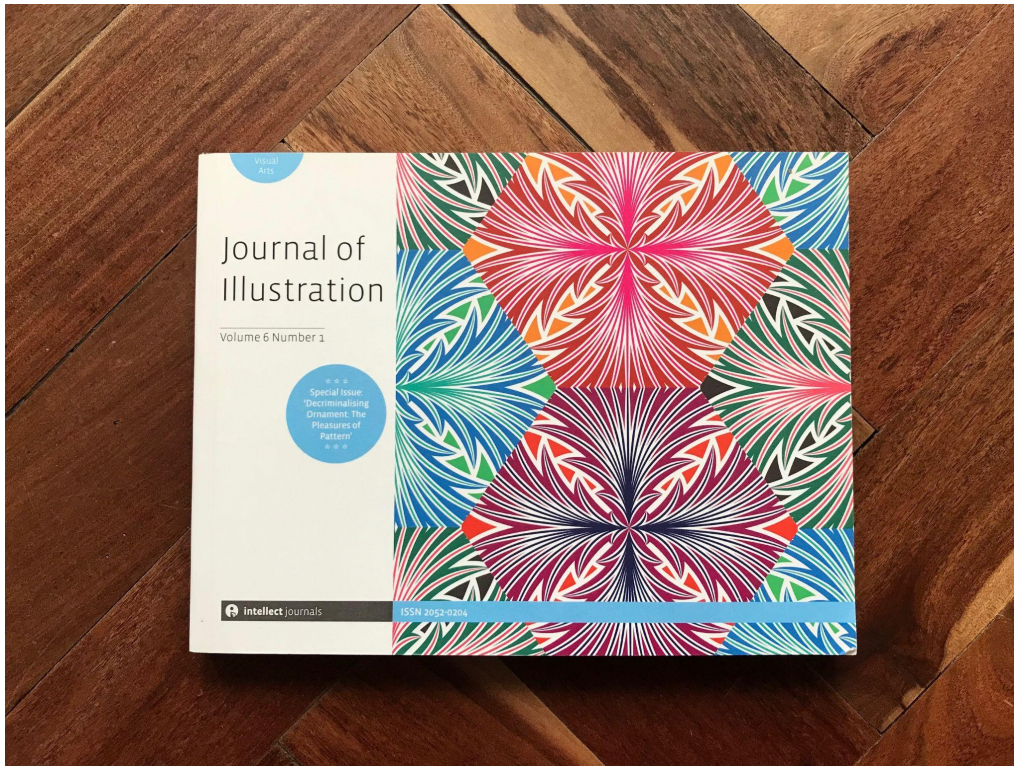
*Devonport Guildhall,
Ker St, Plymouth
PL1 4EL*







Appendix 3.





Empathic attention: illustration as an affective space for encounter

Edith Stein was a realist phenomenologist and assistant to Edmund Husserl. Her doctoral thesis, later published as “on the problem of empathy” addressed the gap present within Husserl’s work. Stein presents empathy as an active phenomenological process of coming-to-know another person’s feeling-based experience. In my own doctoral thesis, I align the act of illustration with Stein’s paradigm of empathy.

Empathy occurs, according to Stein, through a three-step process (direct perception, experiential projection, interpretative mentalisation) on two interrelated levels: sensual and emotional.

When we empathise we enact a process which attempts to gain a ‘vivid sensory impression’ of the subject’s experience; we imagine what we may feel in the subject’s place.

And yet, we remain aware or recognise that our imagined experience is partial and coloured by our own subjectivities. This alignment or accompaniment of experience is not to be confused with a feeling of oneness or mutual experience nor sympathy, where the empathiser experiences pity for the subject.

Empathy requires that we focus on the subjectivity of the other as well as our intersubjective engagement with them. It describes the experience of something from another’s viewpoint, without confusion between self and other:



Stein’s empathy is not a simple matter of identification with others’ emotions, but the capacity to apprehend, or feel-into, an environment through a perspective that isn’t our own. For Deleuze, affect or emotion is an effective catalyst for critical thinking due to the manner in which it propels engagement. What is important is the feeling or affective moment that leads to thought; impressions, encounters and expressions that force us to look, interpret and think. Such feeling-based knowledge is an essential aspect of conceiving objects: it creates an enriched awareness of an external environment and also an indirect sense of some of what it might be like to experience that environment from a standpoint that is not our own. In my research-practice I use illustration as a multimodal historiographic arts practice as a means of affectively engaging with place and initiating critical examination.

However, the paradox of perspective-taking in empathy is that to situate ourselves in another’s position suggests that we already know something of that position. That knowledge is always incomplete and often simplistic. Empathy is not the knowing of another’s experience as the empathiser and the subject are always inherently separate. Similarly, when creating a description, or depiction, (which amounts to the same process) of a vivid sensory impression, it must include a necessary demarcation between the observer and the observed.

Moreover, even if some of what we think we know is accurate, it is always only one element of many. It also has the potential to disregard the uniqueness of the other person’s experience if we assume to know it, and there is potential for appropriation or colonisation of experience. However, without the capacity to imagine experience from another person’s point of view, society and community fractures into individualism. Rather than transforming a lack of knowledge of another’s experience into an absolute understanding empathy is far more ethical in its vulnerability:

It is an active process borne of acknowledged unknowns, a means of partial understanding through an offer of accompaniment.

Such an offer opens an inter-subjective affective space that is wholly necessary for creating connections with studied perception and description as means of making sense.

Art theorist Jill Bennett suggests that visual arts have the capacity to communicate insights of experience intersubjectively: “...art is a vehicle for the interpersonal transmission of experience.” Illustration’s ability to visually communicate can enable understanding beyond that which words may only indicate.

An image, particularly a drawn image, can transmit meaning in a manner that is immediate and intimate.

Because of this, there is potential to generate empathy in the observer thereby offering an other, affective way of knowing beyond empirical learning frameworks.

Illustration is an active process comprised of perception and gesture, an oscillation between looking and mark-making. This act, though predominantly descriptive, also enables the illustrator to investigate the subject’s positioning or embeddedness within its environment. There is a slowness or deepness to this looking; it is invested with intentional attention. The key to empathic attention is time, and how much we intentionally invest for such intuitive understanding. This invested attention makes space for unassuming and interesting things or moments to emerge that would have otherwise been overlooked. By pausing, and remaining, the illustrator also forms deeper understandings of the subject. Not only do these details feed into decisions of what is included and what is omitted, but the illustrator can also examine the subject’s relationality through composition and context. The illustrator’s skills of investigation mirror the active engagement and interpretation required by the process of empathy.



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