

**Collective Memory in a Post-Apocalyptic World:  
Reading Alden Bell's *The Reapers Are the Angels***

Heidi Toikkonen  
University of Tampere  
School of Language, Translation and Literary Studies  
English Philology  
Pro Gradu Thesis  
May 2014

Tampereen yliopisto  
Englantilainen filologia  
Kieli-, käännös- ja kirjallisuustieteiden yksikkö

TOIKKONEN, HEIDI: Collective Memory in a Post-Apocalyptic World: Reading Alden Bell's  
*The Reapers Are the Angels*

Pro gradu -tutkielma, 71 sivua  
toukokuu 2014

---

Tutkielmassani tarkastelen Alden Bellin romaania *The Reapers Are the Angels* (2010) kollektiivisen muistin näkökulmasta. Bellin romaani sijoittuu zombiruton kurittamiin Yhdysvaltain etelävaltioihin ja se on luonteeltaan post-apokalyptinen, eli kuvaa elämää maailmanlopun jälkeen. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että lähes kaikki yhteiskunnalliset rakenteet ovat romaanin maailmassa romahtaneet ja harvat selviytyjät elävät enimmäkseen pienissä yhteisöissä tai yksinäisinä vaeltajina: ihmisten elämästä on tullut hyvin eristäytynyttä ja monet sosiaaliset sidokset ovat kadonneet. Kollektiivinen muisti on kuitenkin riippuvainen näistä sidoksista, ja juuri siksi se nouseekin mielenkiintoni keskiöön tässä tutkielmassa.

Teorianäkökulmakseni olen valinnut Maurice Halbwachsin ajatukset kollektiivisesta muistista ja sen sosiaalisista viitekehyksistä: hänen mukaansa yksilö ei oikeastaan edes kykene muistamaan ilman ryhmän tukea. Halbwachsin teoria on jo melko vanha, mutta vaikutusvaltaisuutensa takia siihen viitataan edelleen aina kollektiivisesta muistista puhuttaessa. Otan huomioon myös uudempia kollektiiviseen muistiin liittyviä kehityssuuntia, kuten Jan Assmanin kulttuurisen muistin. Lisäksi teorialuvussa esittelen identiteetin ja trauman käsitteet muistin näkökulmasta, koska ne mahdollistavat romaanin päähenkilön, Templen, maailmankuvan ja persoonan ymmärtämisen ja analysoinnin. Templen muistot erityisesti hänen pikkuveljestään Malcolmista muodostavat tärkeän rinnakkaistarinan romaanissa.

Templen ohella keskityn analyysissäni yleisemmin romaanissa kuvattuun maailmaan ja siinä näkyviin jälkiin menneisyydestä. Varsinkin zombit näyttävät olentoina, jotka muistattavat ihmisiä sekä menneisyydestä että nykytilanteesta, ja niillä jopa vihjaillaan itselläänkin olevan kyky muistaa jotakin. Vaikka yhteiskuntaa ei Bellin romaanissa enää käytännössä ole olemassa, elää sen maailmassa silti perheitä, jotka vievät sukupolvien välistä kollektiivista muistia eteenpäin: annan tutkielmassani kaksi esimerkkiä tällaisista perheistä, joilla on hyvin erilaiset tavat selvitä maailmanlopun haasteista. Kuitenkin väitän, että muistaminen on vahvasti läsnä molempien ryhmien elämässä, kuten se on koko romaanissa yleensäkin. Maailmanloppu on koetellut ja muuttanut kollektiivista muistia, mutta kokonaan kadonnut se ei ole.

Asiasanat: kollektiivinen muisti, maailmanloppu, sukupolvet, identiteetti, zombit

## **Table of Contents**

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Collective Memory .....	6
3. Memory and Society .....	21
3.1. Traces of the Past .....	21
3.2. The Chain between Generations .....	31
4. Memory and the Individual: The Case of Temple .....	42
4.1. Born into this World .....	42
4.2. The Story of Malcolm .....	53
5. Conclusion .....	65
Works Cited .....	69

## 1. Introduction

The apocalypse, then, is The End, or resembles the end, or explains the end. But nearly every apocalyptic text presents the same paradox. The end is never the end. The apocalyptic text announces and describes the end of the world, but then the text does not end, nor does the world represented in the text, and neither does the world itself. In nearly every apocalyptic presentation, something remains *after the end*. (Berger 1999, 5-6, emphasis original)

As Berger notes, the existence of the literary genre that is post-apocalyptic fiction is indisputably paradoxical. This is because an apocalypse is supposed to be the end of the world, which would certainly also entail the end of stories. Evidently, however, this is not the case: almost invariably, something is spared from destruction, and that something then becomes the root of a post-apocalyptic text. Also, because the apocalypse resembles the end in that it often includes the wrecking of many of the foundations human society is built upon, the world after can evolve to be quite different from what it used to be – or, it can be filled with the eerie ghosts of the past, or anything in between. It would seem reasonable to suggest that what the world after an apocalypse becomes is, to a large extent, dependent on what is remembered of the old one.

In this thesis, I will study Alden Bell's<sup>1</sup> post-apocalyptic novel *The Reapers Are the Angels* (2010) from the point of view of collective memory. It can be debated whether this is a novel for young adults or adults: the protagonist is a teenager struggling with her identity, which would point towards young adult fiction. However, the graphic violence that is occasionally depicted as well as, for example, the unexpectedly hopeless ending would seem more at home in a novel aimed at the adult market. Perhaps it is for each reader to decide where they would place this work on that particular continuum. To my knowledge, *The Reapers Are the Angels* has not received any academic attention thus far, which makes studying it both challenging and exciting. The sequel to the novel, published in 2012 and named *Exit Kingdom*, will not be discussed in this thesis, because it presents a separate story from the first book even though some of the characters are the same. A third novel is

---

1 Alden Bell is actually a pseudonym for Joshua Gaylord.

also planned for the series, but the date of its publication has not yet been announced. It is my understanding that this third book, similarly to the second one, will have a separate plotline from the previous ones although it may contain some familiar elements, the most notable of which is the post-apocalyptic setting.

At the time that *The Reapers Are the Angels* takes place, it has been a quarter of a century since people began turning into zombies. Consequently, society has crumpled to mere pockets of survivor groups here and there. Temple, a 15-year-old illiterate orphan girl, has never experienced the world before the apocalyptic infestation of the living dead. At the beginning of the book, she is living alone on an island somewhere off the coast of Florida: however, she has to leave because her home is becoming unsafe. She finds a place with a large group of other people and considers staying with them, but her plans are crushed when she accidentally kills a man whose brother, Moses Todd, wants revenge. She flees from the compound and keeps running away, but Moses seems to follow her wherever she goes.

During her flight that takes her through the ravaged U.S. South all the way to Texas, Temple meets people from many walks of life: friendly travellers, a family who attempt to live like the apocalypse never happened, rueful refugees, and people who have mutated themselves into monsters. Her path also crosses with that of Maury, a mentally handicapped man who never speaks, and they become travelling companions. It becomes Temple's mission to deliver Maury to his relatives, provided they are still alive. Nevertheless, there is a parallel story line evident in the novel which consists of Temple's memories. As the story progresses, the ghosts of Temple's past are slowly revealed to the reader as well: what happened to the boy named Malcolm who may have been Temple's brother, and why Temple now regards herself as evil.

My aim is to show that memory and remembering are central themes in the novel for a multitude of reasons: not only are there traces of the past detectable everywhere in the landscape and in the people because of the post-apocalyptic situation, but the journey Temple is on for the duration

of the story is at least as much down memory lane as it is across state lines. The topic of memory has been very popular in the last two or three decades, and Erll suggests that this is largely due to its applicability in a wide range of academic as well as popular discourses (2011, 1). She states that “the focus of memory studies rests . . . not on the 'past as it really was' but on the 'past as a human construct’” (ibid., 5). This resonates with the main theoretical angle I employ in this thesis, which is Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. Essentially, Halbwachs argues that we remember only as members of groups and within the social frameworks provided by those groups (1992, 43). He also maintains that what is remembered is influenced by the social needs currently arising from the aforementioned groups (ibid., 49), which means that we do not always remember things as they were, but as what best serves the present. Arguably, this is exactly what Erll considers the focus of memory studies, whereas the 'past as it really was' is reserved for historical research. Apart from Halbwachs and Erll, I will utilise the thoughts and works on memory of, to name a few, David Lowenthal, Jan Assman, Barbara Misztal and Anne Whitehead, in order to gain a more comprehensive as well as a more current basis for my analysis of *The Reapers Are the Angels*.

In comparison with the academic popularity of the topic of memory, post-apocalyptic fiction has been nothing short of a phenomenon in recent years. The genre has stepped out of the nerdy science fiction niche with works such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008). Moreover, zombies in particular have also gained a formidable audience, especially since the graphic novel series *The Walking Dead* was converted into television format (2010-): this horror drama has been renewed for a fifth season and has enjoyed the attention of millions of viewers every episode. Other popular zombie fictions include Carrie Ryan's *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* (2009) and Max Brooks' *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* (2006), which was recently made into a film. Taking all this into account, I argue that *The Reapers Are the Angels* is a part of a phenomenon that should be researched more because of its influence on the popular consciousness.

Many of the existing studies of post-apocalyptic fiction are concerned with environmental destruction and the aspect of human guilt, whereas zombies specifically have been seen as, for example, a metaphor for mindless consumption (Boluk and Lenz 2011, 7) or as symbols of internal fears and threats since they splay destruction by turning others into what they are (Paffenroth 2011, 18-19). Linking the post-apocalyptic and memory is by no means a completely unique idea either: particularly the already mentioned novel *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy has been the subject of a couple of such academic studies.<sup>2</sup> However, when we take into account the fact that post-apocalyptic worlds often consist mostly of the ruins of the past, and that the role of the few survivors frequently is to serve as guardians, to a greater or lesser extent, of what is left of civilisation, it is somewhat surprising how little research there is on memory and post-apocalyptic fiction. It is also notable that even if memory has not been a central concern in academic studies of this genre, it certainly is a prolific fascination in less formal sources that talk about the post-apocalyptic.<sup>3</sup> It seems that the so-called fandom is ahead of academic interest in this field.

This thesis is divided into three major sections, in the first of which I will outline my theoretical framework. It is there that I will introduce Halbwachs' collective memory in detail, offer some criticisms against it and bring newer developments to the discussion, as well as go deeper into such facets of memory studies that have to do with identity and trauma, because those will be of critical importance for my analysis. The two analysis chapters are each further divided into two subchapters, and I approach the novel by moving from the more general to the more specific: I start by discussing the physical environment and traces of the (social) past that characterise the setting of *The Reapers Are the Angels* in 3.1., and then introduce two different families with intergenerational ties as examples of post-apocalyptic communities in 3.2. Chapter 4 will be entirely about Temple: in 4.1., I will talk about her identity as someone who has grown up in a post-apocalyptic world and what

---

2 See Godfrey, Laura Gruber. 2011. "The World He'd Lost": Geography and 'Green' Memory in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*". *Critique* 52, 2: 163-175.

3 See Campbell, Josie. 2014. Snyder Steers "The Wake" into its Apocalyptic Future. [Internet] Available from <http://www.comicbookresources.com/?page=article&id=51229>. [Accessed 4 May 2014]

that means from the point of view of collective memory. I conclude my analysis by delving into her traumatic memory of Malcolm in 4.2., arguing that the fact that she has not shared it collectively has been a hindrance for her healing from that incident. It is my hope that applying the theory of collective memory to a fictional text describing a world in which collective memory is under threat will render it tangible in a new way and be of help in developing the theories on memory further.



## 2. Collective Memory

We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left. - Pierre Nora

The above citation (quoted in Erll 2011, 23) is a somewhat famous characterization of the circumstances that led to the so-called boom in memory studies that started in the 1980s and that is still ongoing. Ironically, it appears in Nora's introductory essay for *Realms of Memory (Les Lieux de Mémoire 1984-1992)*, which is a seven-part book series Nora edited and which focuses solely on the memory and history of the French nation, never mind the rest of the world. However, I did not mention this particular quote to dispute it, but because it works as a perfect justification for the current thesis: why study collective memory in a post-apocalyptic setting? Because an apocalypse represents a break in memory as societies collapse, means of communication are severed, archives fall to destruction, and people die or lose contact with one another. Therefore, it becomes interesting to study what is left of memory after, and how that remainder has changed.

In this section, I will outline the theoretical framework for my analysis of the importance of memory in Bell's *The Reapers Are the Angels*. I will start with Maurice Halbwachs' collective memory and the central concepts related to it, such as social frameworks of memory, intergenerational memory and shared versions of the past. I then move onto criticism directed at Halbwachs' theory and introduce Jan Assman's cultural memory as a necessary extension to it. After thus defining collective memory and explaining it in detail, I will discuss it in relation to such matters as identity and trauma which will be fundamental for my reading of *The Reapers Are the Angels*. Here I will also explain how and why forgetting is as important for collective memory as remembering is. I will conclude the chapter with some remarks on the practice of commemoration which will help explain the behaviour of certain characters in the novel further on. All in all, I have chosen these facets of collective memory to scrutinise because I think that they are the most helpful and appropriate tools for me to use in my analysis and that by utilising them I will be able to prove my argument of memory's centrality in the novel.

According to Whitehead, the concept of memory was first distinctly defined in Platonic philosophy, even though practical knowledge of memory is certainly older (2009, 4-5). It is in the texts of the ancient Greeks that we can also find the earliest notions of the memory of groups (Russell 2006, 792). Since then, the theme of memory has recurred in Western thought through the centuries again and again, sometimes changing shape but retaining much of the same fascinations, such as inscription and spatial metaphors (Whitehead 2009, 9). What are meant by these is, for example, how writing something down affects memory and also how spaces, real or imagined, can act as aids or triggers for memory. This recurrence of ideas can hardly be considered surprising, since memory is "fundamental to our ability to conceive the world" (Miszta 2003, 1), and as such has attracted the attention of several academic disciplines. These include such diverse fields of study as, to name a few, psychology, sociology, anthropology, neurology, (oral) history, and literature and cultural studies, of which this thesis is a part.

The multidisciplinary nature of memory studies is also one reason for the vast quantities of research conducted on it, especially over the last three decades. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into most of this research, so I have narrowed my theoretical framework down to mainly include research that has been done on collective memory specifically, and further to Halbwachs and his legacy. The reason for choosing his work over others' is that, in my understanding, the concept of collective memory would not exist as it is known today without Halbwachs' ideas on the subject, such as his denial of there being any actual individual memory (Halbwachs 1992, 43). Additionally, his ideas have been both criticised and used as a basis for new theories of memory numerous times, creating a promising pool of research. In this way, his theory, while quite old, has seen many revivals in other people's hands.

Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) was a French philosopher and sociologist. As Whitehead tells us, Halbwachs embarked on his career under Henri Bergson whose philosophy emphasizes individualism (2009, 125). However, he later rejected Bergson's focus on the individual and became

a student of Émile Durkheim, a social psychologist (ibid.). Halbwachs published his first book on collective memory, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (*The Social Frameworks of Memory*), in 1925. It was met with thorough criticism from his colleagues (Erll 2011, 14), which led him start writing another book in response, namely *La mémoire collective* (*The Collective Memory*). However, he died before he could finish the book, and it was published five years after his death, incomplete. These two books, as well as his related study on biblical places of memory (*La Topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte* [1941], *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land*) were left wholly untranslated into English for several decades, and are still only partly available in English. Because of this, Halbwachs was nearly forgotten as a scholar of memory.

Today, however, one would be hard-pressed trying to find a book, study or an article about memory that did not mention Halbwachs at least in passing: such has been his influence. What then were the ideas that proved to be so strong that they are still in circulation? In my opinion, Erll (2011) offers the best summary of Halbwachs' most important notions on collective memory. She argues that Halbwachs directs the study of collective memory to three directions: the memory of the individual being dependent on social frameworks, intergenerational memory and, last but not least, the ways in which cultures and traditions are created and transmitted via collective memory (Erll 2011, 14-15). This, according to Erll, leads to the conclusion that Halbwachs is working with two differing concepts of collective memory: it can be described as both the memory of an individual embedded in social frameworks and the way in which social groups, big or small, create shared versions of their past (ibid.).

In other words, Halbwachs' theory about collective memory includes possibilities to approach memory both from the perspective of a group as well as an individual, even if his position is that individual memory per se does not exist (Halbwachs 1992, 43). In my analysis of *The Reapers Are the Angels*, I intend to utilize these perspectives by first focusing on the point of view of the group and discussing the post-apocalyptic society and environment that is littered with mementos of the

past, as well as generations as they are represented by the Griersons and the mutant rural folk, then moving on to the individual level with the case of the protagonist Temple, her troubles as someone lacking in group memory experiences and finally her traumatic memory of Malcolm. By applying the theory of collective memory to this novel I will be able to examine the post-apocalyptic world represented in it in a way that illuminates the importance of memory for society in general as well as analyse Temple in particular as a character who is simultaneously filled with and empty of memory.

To go deeper into Halbwachs' ideas, I think it is essential to first define what he means when he talks about the "social frameworks for memory" (Halbwachs 1992, 38). The simplest explanation would probably be that these frameworks are just other people (Erll 2011, 15). However, this is not enough to clarify their importance for memory. According to Halbwachs, people are only capable of remembering as members of groups, because those groups provide the social frameworks necessary for an individual to reconstruct and interpret memories (1992, 38). In other words, we always remember as participants of one group or another, from the perspective of that specific group: in fact, we remain and behave like group members even if we are completely separated from all of them in a test situation (Halbwachs 1939, 812) This leads Erll to postulate that, for Halbwachs, the only thing that is individual in remembering and separates people from each other in this respect is that they belong, at least in part, to different groups (2011, 16): we are all members of several social groups so while there is some overlap, it is unlikely that two people share all their group allegiances.

Social group in itself is a very vague concept: Halbwachs himself focuses on family, social class and religious groups, but one might as well talk about a circle of friends, work colleagues, members of a subculture, or perhaps even the citizens of a nation. It is also obvious that we do not have the same kind of bond to all of the groups that we belong to. It is therefore fair to assume that the nature of the group and the kind of relationship that we have with it will affect the nature of the collective memory we have that is bound to it. However, what all groups have in common is that they

are a part of society and, if we accept Halbwachs' theory, "remembering can never be performed outside of a social context" (Keightley 2008, 178).

It follows that our memories do not stay the same, meaning that often we remember something slightly different than what actually took place. In Halbwachs' words, we should "not forget that even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu" (1992, 49), which means that how and what we remember of the past is necessarily formulated with the needs of the present and the future in mind (Jedlowski 2001, 30). However, as Weissberg writes, this works the other way around also, so that collective memory affects the way we think in the present (1999, 15). Both of these relate to our ways of creating a sense of belonging to a group and its stability.

As mentioned earlier, the second Halbwachsian concept of collective memory is groups creating shared versions of their past. Whitehead states that "collective memory represents the group's most stable and permanent element" (2009, 129). This is because its core is composed of those memories that are shared by most members of the group, which makes collective memory general enough to survive some changes in membership (*ibid.*). However, it is not just the fact that group members share the same memories of events that make those memories important for the group, but also that the memories in question are recalled in a way that upholds the group's sense of a shared past: as Keightley argues, by remembering in a fashion that is considered socially desirable, people simultaneously strengthen the conventions that govern the process of remembering (2008, 176). Consequently, the recall of memories is made easier, or altogether even possible, by our connection to the group (Halbwachs 1992, 52).

Typically, the group of which a child first becomes a member is his or her immediate family. This is probably also where we learn the concepts of time and memory. One of Halbwachs' most compelling examples of how collective memory works is to argue that many of the things we believe to remember from our own childhood experiences are actually constructed from stories that the

members of our family have told us later (1980, 35-36). Presumably it is similarly possible to assimilate all kinds of remembrances into our understanding of how something happened, especially if there are powerful social motives involved. This works during adulthood as well, because even though we might remember more of our later years on this earth than of the few first, we still cannot hold all the details in our grasp forever. Remembering with others helps us with the recall, but in the process we may actually remember something together that no one person would have remembered by themselves (Middleton and Edwards 1990, 7-8).

Does this mean our memories are false? Or, perhaps more to the point, is it necessary to assign some kind of truth-value to them? Halbwachs argues that it does not so much matter if our memories are true, but whether they serve a purpose in the present:

Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess. (Halbwachs 1992, 51)

He considers objective facts the job of historical research, not collective memory (Halbwachs 1980, 52-53). Halbwachs' presentism is fundamental to the concept of collective memory and group stability: in Weissberg's words, "memory seems to answer expectations and is already framed by the answers it seeks" (1999, 14). This has intriguing political implications, because it provides an opportunity for especially privileged groups in society to influence what is remembered or forgotten according to their present interests (Rimstead 2003, 2). However, people's memories more often adjust to the present in far less sinister circumstances: consider how someone might conveniently remember only good things about the world before the apocalypse since a constant zombie threat eclipses the hazards of yesterday.

Family is also the most obvious setting for transmitting intergenerational memory, although of course people from different generations communicate in other environments as well, for example at the workplace or through media. Halbwachs talks about living history that is transferred and renewed through time (1980, 64-65). His example of the relations between children and their

grandparents points towards a peculiar familial and intergenerational bond in this process, although it must be taken into consideration that, at the time that Halbwachs was forming his theories, the role of the family in society was not quite the same as it is today. However, the cycle of life still continues: the fact that people die and others are born means that it becomes necessary to forward information so as not to invent the wheel again (Mannheim 1952/2011, 92). This holds true for less concrete things as well, such as beliefs, norms and points of view, which are not created out of thin air by each generation either (Misztal 2003, 90): we are all are burdened with what other people have thought and done in the past, and what differs is only the extent of our concern. All in all, this is how a sense of history and tradition is formed.

For progress to be possible, however, at least some aspects of the practices and beliefs of the previous generations have to be subjected to criticism, altered, or sometimes even just forgotten. Mannheim asserts that the world does not stay the same so it is fortunate that young people are often inexperienced enough concerning the old ways that they are able to adapt to new ones instead (1952/2011, 94-95). Thus, it seems that there is a delicate balance between remembering and forgetting within the realm of collective memory which, if disrupted in some way, will lead to cultural stagnation or its severe distortion. In my opinion, both of these processes are exemplified in *The Reapers Are the Angels*.

A weakness that marks most of Halbwachs' writings on collective memory is that his theory is limited to remembering in an everyday context with personal contact between people as its medium (Erll 2011, 18). This, according to Erll, means that most of the memories transmitted are autobiographical in nature (ibid.) and therefore can reach back only so many decades. She does acknowledge, however, that in Halbwachs' work on the gospels in the Holy Land this time frame is extended to thousands of years, broadening the scope of his theory to also include the creation and transmission of traditions (ibid.). Still, some have felt that because of Halbwachs' focus on living memory in the present, his theory does not suit many quite influential, even institutionalised forms of

collective remembering taking place in societies, such as the rites or ceremonial practices, both religious and secular, commemorating some important events from the past. Assman (1995) presents that a distinction should be made between what he calls "communicative" memory and "cultural" memory in order to clarify the situation.

For Assman, communicative memory is essentially the same as Halbwachs' collective memory: it is a socially conveyed and group-related form of memory, the foundation of which lies in everyday communication (Assman 1995, 126-127). Its "limited temporal horizon" (127) corresponds with Halbwachs' views as well, excluding the exceptional work on the gospels in the Holy Land. The limitation in question is also one of the most important factors separating communicative and cultural memory:

This horizon shifts in direct relation to the passing of time. The communicative memory offers no fixed point which would bind it to the ever expanding past in the passing of time. Such fixity can only be achieved through a cultural formation and therefore lies outside of informal everyday memory. (Assman 1995, 127)

Assman argues that Halbwachs did not go further in this respect because he thought that beyond everyday, living communication, group relationships and the past's connection to the present disappear and that this would mean the end of memory and the beginning of history (ibid., 128). In contrast, Assman maintains that groups use memory resources that go beyond this contemporary association, that are organised and ceremonialised, to maintain their identity in a more formal and fixed, yet similar way to communicative memory (ibid.). Therefore, he introduces cultural memory as the second facet of collective memory.

The theory of cultural memory is an attempt to bring together memory, culture and the group (ibid., 129). Assman presents six characteristics of cultural memory as especially important: its relation to group identity, power to reconstruct the past, institutionalisation or formalisation, organised forms of practice, providing a system of values for cultural knowledge, and reflexivity toward its practices, self and image of the self (ibid., 130-132). What is essential about Assman's theory, however, is that it extends collective memory to include such things as monuments and



ceremonies which commemorate some fixed, significant event, person, etc., in the past and bring it to the present in a formalised manner. In the context of this thesis, cultural memory will be understood as a particularly prominent extension of collective memory, and I will refer to Assman specifically when appropriate. Nevertheless, I do not think it necessary to strictly separate the two concepts because they compliment each other and, especially in an eccentric situation such as post-apocalypse, it is not always easy or fruitful to make such a division.

Another point of criticism related to time in Halbwachs' theory is his absolutism about the image of the past as always being filtered through the needs of the present. According to Schwartz, if this approach is taken to the literal extreme, it would mean that “our conception of the past is entirely at the mercy of current conditions, that there is no objectivity in events, nothing in history which transcends the peculiarities of the present” (1982, 376). He rejects this drastic viewpoint and suggests that, instead, if something is commemorated it has to have been important in a factual sense as well, even if the selection itself is mainly supported by present needs (ibid., 396). In other words, out of the several memories which support the demands of the present and that could be brought to the surface, it is likely that the one which is evaluated as significant in an objective, historical sense is chosen. Schwartz supports his claims with a detailed analysis of the imagery on display in the Capitol Building of the United States. Social reasons are important but they are not the only factors affecting the forming of collective memory.

Bartlett, an experimental psychologist, commented on Halbwachs' theory in his book *Remembering* (1932). His objection lies with whether or not social groups can be said to actually have a memory of their own, outside or above the memories of individual members (Bartlett 1932/2011, 117). He suggests that even when it seems like that is the case, perhaps it is so that the most influential members of the group are actually manipulating the situation (ibid., 120). However, Bartlett does believe in the importance of a social context for remembering, and even admits that “it is not theoretically impossible that the organisation of individuals into a group should literally produce a

new mental unit which perhaps feels, knows and remembers in its own right” (ibid.), thus conceding that his own argument is inadequate to completely disqualify Halbwachs' collective memory. Still, his thoughts have been echoed in later research on memory which often only speaks of the social *context* for individual remembering rather than actual collective memory (Middleton and Edwards 1990, 1).

In this thesis, it is not my intention to focus on the complexities of whether or not groups have a memory that is independent of the individuals that form the group since that is not centrally relevant to my reading of *The Reapers Are the Angels*. Nevertheless, I do think that it is important to be aware of this issue in order to assess and utilise the idea of collective memory in a mindful manner, understanding that it is by no means a perfect or an unproblematic concept. On the contrary, already some of Halbwachs' contemporaries opposed it on the exact basis of its overt focus on the group over the individual (Erl1 2011, 14). Consequently, Halbwachs was driven to work even further on his theory.

The matter of identity and memory is, instead, crucial for this thesis. Misztal argues that whereas identity in bygone eras was more often assigned to rather than chosen by the individual, today's post-modern, fragmented and individualistic concept of the self means that the relationship identity has with memory becomes highlighted in an unprecedented way (2003, 134). This is because contemporary (post-modern) identities, which are understood as unstable, require the legitimisation that arises from the memory of the past (ibid.). For example, think of how a soldier might recount the battles he or she has fought in, or his or her ancestors have fought in, and, in remembering them, fortify the identity he or she has of being a patriotic hero. Similar logic could of course be extended to negative ideas of the self as well, such as remembering instances of fleeing difficult situations for someone who believes to be a coward.

The above examples are rather simplistic and cannot even begin to grasp the complexities of people's identities. I merely wanted to demonstrate that memory is always there, as an integral part

of the process of identity formation: Halbwachs wrote that “we preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated” (1992, 47). Rimstead states that collective memory does not only affect our identities as individuals, but as “families, ethnic groups, nations, classes, and genders” (2003, 1). In effect, this takes us to the territory of social identity, in other words identity as it relates to the membership of groups (Misztal 2003, 133): it could be argued that the soldier mentioned above would have his or her memory grow stronger in the presence of other soldiers who form a group sharing a common past and identity.

Memory is important for identity because remembering makes it possible to form an enduring and stable idea of who a person is and who they have always been through time (ibid.). This applies to both groups and individuals: if memory did not exist, it would be impossible to verify whether a person is today at all who and what they were yesterday, making identity a rather silly, fleeting concept. This should be compared with the post-modern idea of the instability of identities which was mentioned above. Furthermore, as well as what you are, identity is also constituted by defining what you are *not*. In other words, difference plays a part in forming an identity. However, Reyes states that especially in theories about intersubjective (i.e. group) identities, “difference is conceptualized as an obstacle to be overcome rather than a valuable component of collective identity” (2010, 223), meaning that similarities are valued over differences when considering how group identities come about. This is problematic from the point of view of memory, because it encourages people to forget their differences to form a coherent collective identity, suppressing diversity (ibid., 243). According to Reyes, difference should be seen in a much more positive light and its importance for identity researched together with memory (ibid., 244).

The post-apocalyptic world of *The Reapers Are the Angels* is a place where people are constantly pushed to their limits, and this has inevitable consequences for how they view themselves. For example, trauma, as an extreme experience, can become a part of someone's identity. Collective

trauma has been researched especially in connection with the Holocaust (Misztal 2003, 142), but other atrocities have not been forgotten either: Kenny (1999), for example, introduces in his article the cases of Australian Aboriginals and the native peoples of Canada. The contemporary interest in and work on trauma, however, owes much to psychoanalysis and Freud's other ideas (Misztal 2003, 139-140). Freud believed that people intentionally repress memories of trauma, but that this is dangerous because repressed memories are not really forgotten and, consequently, can have an impact on the person carrying them, possibly leading to mental disorders (ibid., 140). Logically remembering then becomes a cure for the symptoms that repressed memories cause, which is a position that has been repeated over and over again since Freud:

Unresolved trauma occurs when a child or adult is not given the opportunity to release emotions or when emotions are blocked. Trauma cannot be laid to rest until the trauma has been addressed mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually, which is to say seen for what it was and openly acknowledged. (Kenny 1999, 433)

Nevertheless, Freud insisted that those memories do not come back exactly as they objectively were, but rather as the kind of interpretations that serve the needs of the present (Misztal 2003, 140). It should be noted that this is strikingly in accord with Halbwachs' presentism, which I have already discussed above.

Kenny discusses William Niederland's theory of "the survivor syndrome" from the 1960s as "a model for interpreting the generic long-term psychological consequences of trauma" (1999, 427). I introduce it here because of its connection with memory studies and, more importantly, because it is useful in understanding Temple's struggle with herself and her memories in *The Reapers Are the Angels*. I will discuss this further in chapter 4.2. Niederland argues, echoing Freud, that the problem with many people's symptoms of trauma is that they may surface even after a long period of time has already passed from the actual incidence and, depending on the form they take (guilt, anxiety, trouble sleeping, etc.), could be mistaken for a completely unrelated mental illness (ibid., 428). "The survivor syndrome" works as a link between the traumatic past and the situation of the survivor today (ibid.), meaning that the victim's symptoms are considered in a way that does not play down their past

experiences. Niederland, similarly to Freud, advocated remembering as the way to move forward from trauma (ibid., 428-429).

Interestingly, studies of trauma and memory have made a connection between remembering and the body “by focusing on the experience of pain” (Misztal 2003, 141). Thus memory is lifted from the the realm of the mind to that of the corporeal world. In fact, traumatic memories are especially susceptible to cues from the senses (ibid., 142), meaning that a specific smell, for example, might easily bring back things otherwise forgotten. It has even been stated that bodily memories in any case endure longer than other ones (ibid.). It is my understanding that the pain we are talking about here does not have to come from a physical source (although that might of course also be the case), it just has to be *experienced* physically. Imagine the pain of grieving for a dead loved one: the heartache is real enough to burn a mark in you forever. I mention bodily cues for memory here because of the vivid descriptions of such experiences in *The Reapers Are the Angels* which will be taken up in the analysis.

Among other things, the fact that remembering is so often suggested as a cure for the symptoms of trauma raises questions about the significance of forgetting: is it always the negative side of remembering? Quite on the contrary, Lowenthal argues that forgetting is essential if memory is to hold any meaning (1985, 204). If we remembered everything, our memories would be a chaotic, ever-expanding mess: forgetting allows us to recognise patterns and not waste time on everything that could be included (ibid., 205). Rimstead remarks that “remembering and forgetting are not mutually exclusive but intertwined, if not inseparable” (2003, 3). Erll holds a similar view, comparing the processes of remembering and forgetting to the two sides of the same coin (2011, 8). She also asserts that if memory was all-encompassing, that would ironically only lead to total forgetting (ibid.), presumably because, as Lowenthal too wrote, memory would then be overloaded with unnecessary information and its organising function would be lost.

In Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, forgetting is often the result of groups disbanding, which leaves the individual without the social framework that those memories previously belonged to (1980, 25-26). This means that even if someone recounts a past event to someone who definitely participated in it, that someone might not remember it at all or only have a vague recollection of being there because they have since ceased to be a member of the group with which that event was associated with in their memory. Losing this contact means that the individual also loses the ability to find meaning in the memory narrative (Rimstead 2003, 4). If we were to take this to the extreme and picture a person who is at once or gradually separated from all social groups, it would certainly be a disorientating and crippling experience and, as such, likely to cause many kinds of problems. Such a scenario is of course highly unlikely in the real world but, as a theory, somewhat applicable to Temple in *The Reapers Are the Angels*.

People are necessarily forgetful, but some things are deemed too important to be allowed to fade from memory even after long periods of time. Those things become the objects for commemorative practices: “people recall and celebrate events and persons that are part of their jointly acknowledged generational and cultural identity and common understanding” (Middleton and Edwards 1990, 8), which highlights the collective, participatory nature of commemoration. Apart from rituals and traditions, museums, statues and other sort of monuments serve as forms of commemoration because memory “transforms objects into symbols” (Ben-Amos 1999, 298): in other words, tangible things become invested with a particular meaning which connects them to the past. Lowenthal even claims that “the relics we see need not be historically true or accurate; they need only convince us that we are connected with something that really did happen in the past” (1975, 12). This can be quite arbitrary, such as erecting an abstract piece of art to serve as a reminder of a battle that took place in the same area. The act of commemoration elevates the past to a different realm from that of normal daily life (Ben-Amos 1999, 297), which is reminiscent of Assman's previously mentioned theory of cultural memory in conflict with communicative memory.

In the following chapters of analysis, I will employ the theoretical viewpoints discussed above in order to show that *The Reapers Are the Angels* is a novel that is centrally concerned with memory, not only because it is structured around Temple's flashbacks of Malcolm, but also because it presents the post-apocalyptic world as a puzzle of the old and the new, the past and the present. Collective memory can be looked at from both a group and individual point of view: therefore, sections 3.1. and 3.2. will be mainly concerned with the former and sections 4.1. and 4.2. with the latter. This will bring forth a multi-faceted understanding of the novel's characters, narrative and setting from this particular point of view. It is my hope that this thesis will not only offer a plausible reading of the book, but that it would also add to the wider discussion on collective memory. It is after all my belief that there is quite a lot of memory left on the post-apocalyptic Earth of *The Reapers Are the Angels*.

### 3. Memory and Society

I start my analysis of collective memory in *The Reapers Are the Angels* from the perspective of society, and move onto smaller groups, especially families, which ultimately constitute it, bringing about new generations to carry on the traditions and to invent new ones. The flow of collective memory runs both ways: families are influenced by larger currents of collective memory present on a societal level (Halbwachs 1992, 83), but society's collective memory is, after all, a bundle of collective memories from the groups that form it. It is of interest to me how this is discernible in the post-apocalyptic world of the novel when so much of what used to be has been wiped out and the remaining groups have considerably fewer opportunities of contact with each other. Likewise, the physical reminders of the past are something inescapable in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, which is why I will start my discussion with them. In this section, I argue that collective memory is vital to the reading and understanding of both the social and the tangible aspects of the world depicted in the novel.

#### 3.1. Traces of the Past

She [Temple] finds a jewellery shop and stands for a long time staring in the window. There are dusty baubles hung around artificial velvet necks and rings set deep in cute little boxes. Meaningless. These objects once took the measure of value in a gone epoch. She has known people in her past who have collected such things, hoarding them against a future restored to the glory of trinket economy. They collected them in small boxes contained within larger boxes contained within larger boxes still, and they brooded atop them like envious royalty. (Bell 2011, 27)

The quotation above is a good example of the way in which Bell's post-apocalyptic world of *The Reapers Are the Angels* is juxtaposed with the real, contemporary world, or, in other words, the world with which the reader is probably the most familiar with: as Berger claims about post-apocalyptic fiction, “the writer and reader must be both places at once, imagining the post-apocalyptic world and then paradoxically 'remembering' the world as it was, as it is” (1999, 6). Temple, on the other hand, has never experienced the world before the apocalypse, yet she does seem to know quite a lot about



it – indeed, enough to judge it in comparison with her own reality. This is because the apocalypse may have changed the world forever, but it did not obliterate all the traces of what it used to be like. The old world is still to be found everywhere; in the people, in the buildings, in the mountains of objects that have been left to gather dust because they no longer hold the value they once possessed, and in the belongings of people now gone.

In this section, I will focus on these traces of the past as they are described in *The Reapers Are the Angels*. It is my argument that they are one window to the perpetual, omnipresent collective memory as it appears in the novel. I will mainly discuss parts of the physical environment from this point of view in this section, because I think that it is a solid starting point to understanding the ways in which memory is addressed in *The Reapers Are the Angels* and because, as Radley asserts, “remembering is something which occurs in a world of things, as well as words, and . . . artefacts play a central role in the memories of cultures and individuals” (1990, 57). However, besides the objects, structures and landscapes, I will also talk about the zombies here because, in my opinion, the undead are the ultimate reminder and mark of the past in the novel. The intriguing question is whether the zombies can be considered as mere physical reminders themselves, doomed to wander the Earth, or if they also have some peculiar capability to remember.

“The study of post-apocalypse is a study of what disappears and what remains, and of how the remainder has been transformed”, argues Berger (1999, 7). In the quotation at the beginning of this section, Temple observes that pieces of jewellery have persevered after the devastation. However, they have been transformed in the sense that they are now covered with dust, which is actually a sign of a bigger change: they are no longer valuable, because the previous value systems of society, such as consumerism and social status, which could have been signalled by the donning of expensive jewellery, have collapsed, and hence the gems have been left uncared for. This notion is amplified by the use of the phrase “trinket economy”, which signifies that, at least in Temple's opinion, the jewels should not have been very precious in the first place, presumably because they cannot be used to

solve any practical problems. She ridicules the people who collect them because they have not accepted the reality of the apocalypse and cling to the silly things of the past, perhaps even hoping for the return of the old order. Still, she does desire to take one object from the window: a ruby that catches her eye specifically because it is shaped like the island where she used to live (Bell 2011, 27). This is contradictory to the idea that she would be any less prone to nostalgia than others.

Another time, Temple seeks shelter from the rain and enters what used to be an enormous toy shop in a mall. To her, “the colourful sign over the glass doors with all the letters still intact” is “a sign of good things” (Bell 2011, 57), because it means that the place has remained untouched by what has been taking place outside. She walks along the aisles observing the various toys, imagining what a child's room filled with them might have been like. But yet again there is criticism for the “silly, . . . casual and disposable fantasy of such objects” (ibid.): they belong to a world that is quite different from the one prevailing now. Children might still play with them, of course, but no-one is likely to venture out just to bring back toys, so they stay on the shelves gathering dust instead of being quibbled over by siblings. However, Temple does find a miniature fighter jet which reminds her of a conversation with Malcolm about how aeroplanes stay in the air. The toy is still in her hand when she is attacked by a zombie, and later she “gets into the car and tosses the die-cast jet into the glove compartment” (ibid., 60). Her gesture seems haphazard, but the fact that she did not leave the toy behind suggests that the memory it evoked is an important one. It also makes her uncomfortable since once in the car, she drugs herself with a pill that she does not recognise, because “she just wants to feel different than she does right now and it doesn't really matter which direction that different might be” (ibid.). Temple's memories of Malcolm are the main focus of section 4.2.

Often objects do not remind us of something only coincidentally, but because we, in a way, choose to be reminded by them: “the use of objects for remembering is both intended and has unintended features” (Radley 1990, 54). Temple sees her island in the ruby she discovers in the window of the jewellery shop because she wants to remember her former abode. Radley also claims

that the intended parts of this process of memory are socially determined (ibid.), meaning that we are reminded by objects in ways that are accepted and reinforced in our cultural groupings. This implies that objects can indeed be a part of Halbwachs' collective memory as it was described in section 2 of this thesis. However, I do think that Halbwachs himself would also include the unintended recollections as influenced by social frameworks, because his primary premise is that we are only capable of remembering because of our participation in them (Halbwachs 1992, 38). Perhaps it can be said instead that some instances of recollection are more easily retraced to groups than others.

The most obvious instance of item collection that is both social and related to memory is probably a museum. Why a particular object ends up in a museum has to do with displacement from its time and/or purpose (Radley 1990, 52): it is no longer used in daily life and therefore has become an artefact of memory with the purpose of evoking a sense of the past in the viewer. In the case of contemporary items viewable in a museum, they have still been displaced from their purpose even if the aspect of time does not strictly apply to them. In *The Reapers Are the Angels*, Temple and Maury stumble into an art museum by accident. Because of the apocalypse, the works of art hanging on the walls are now similarly displaced as the objects in a history museum had been before: they are from a different time. However, when Temple finds her friend with his palm on one of the paintings, she scolds him: “This is *art*, Maury. You just can't touch it like that. These things have gotta last a million years so people in the future know about us. So they can look and see what we knew about beauty” (Bell 2011, 154, emphasis original). It is curious that she talks about us instead of them, meaning the people who lived before the apocalypse. This indicates that she does identify with the pre-apocalyptic collective thought that is behind the paintings, their selection, their value, and the idea of beauty that the art works represent.

Nevertheless, Temple is uncomfortable in the museum because of its labyrinth-like layout, which prevents her from seeing possible danger and planning escape routes. She also contradicts herself right after lecturing Maury:

Now you and me, we ain't connoisseurs of nothin. Most of these we may not understand because they weren't painted for the likes of us. But sooner or later someone's gonna come along who knows how to read these things – and it'll be like a message from another civilization. That's how it works, you see? That's how people talk to each other across time. It puts you on a wonder, doesn't it? (Bell 2011, 154)

Only a moment before she had included them in a group that knows something about beauty, yet now she is saying that the paintings are above their understanding. It is like a rift that she can see over but not quite jump across. She also seems to believe in the possibility of broadening their minds because, when entering the place, she says “let's edify ourselves” (ibid., 153). She might be stating this sarcastically, but that would not fit with her later comments. It is noteworthy though that she acknowledges the function of the museum as a place of memory that allows people to converse with past generations, sharing collective knowledge. Arguably a museum with its institutional background represents Assman's cultural memory, a typical attribute of which is that it stands apart from everyday life (1995, 129). Assman also notes that cultural memory can convey meaning “across millennia” (ibid.), which is basically the same thing that Temple is talking about concerning the paintings.

Another example of objects which carry with them meanings from the world before the apocalypse are books, magazines and newspapers. Words may remain a mystery to illiterate Temple but she looks at the glossy pictures and contrasts them with the images in her own mind:

They evoke places she has never been – crowds of the sharply dressed hailing the arrival of someone in a long black car, people in white suits reclining on couches in homes where there's no blood crusted on the walls, women in undergarments on backdrops of seamless white. Abstract heaven, that white – where could such a white exist? If she had all the white paint left in the world, what would go untouched by her brush? She closes her eyes and thinks about it. (Bell 2011, 5)

The reader recognises that Temple is probably looking at a celebrity gossip magazine of some kind because of the limousine scene, and the underwear photos suggest a fashion entry or advertisement of some kind. However, these are not the most well regarded publications by no means and some may wish for their total disappearance from the world even now, yet here they are presented as notable relics that enable Temple to reach out to the past and express wonder at its peculiarities. We may wish that if our civilisation was erased from the world, what would be left to find by the future generations

would be the plays of Shakespeare or other such works of merit that have achieved canonical status, but the truth is that it is mostly out of our hands. When the memory of society is severed in such a forceful way as an apocalypse, happenstance determines what perseveres and what is lost forever from collective memory. This results in a fragmented picture of the past.

What is also remarkable about the passage above is Temple's fascination with the colour white and painting over the world with it. To her, white is “abstract heaven”, in other words, something that only exists as a wonderful idea. She is so used to dirt, grime and blood covering everything that a simple white wall would be held in awe. Covering everything with white paint would erase it all, both the remnants of the old world and the horrors of the new. It would mean the end of the world on a completely different level from even the apocalypse and the complete end of collective memory as well, because all would be blank as a fresh canvas. Something about this thought of a new beginning is clearly comforting to Temple, even though she knows it to be impossible.

In addition to the world of objects, the reader is invited to witness several scenes of post-apocalyptic devastation throughout the novel through Temple's eyes:

The night comes, and when the sun rises again it rises over a motionless desert, over streets full of rusty, broken down automobiles, over tumbleweed towns filled with derelict buildings, signposts twisted and bent so that arrows become nonsensical, pointing into the dirt or up into the sky, billboards whose sunny images and colourful words flap unglued in the breeze, shop windows caked with the grime of decades, bicycles with flat tyres abandoned in the middle of intersections, their wheels turning slowly like impotent tin windmills, some buildings charred and burned out, others half fallen down, multi-storey tenements split down the middle, standing like shoebox dioramas, pictures still hanging on the upright walls, televisions still in place on their stands teetering over the gaping edge of the floor where the rest of the living room has collapsed to the ground in great mountains of concrete and dust and girder like the abandoned toys of a giant child. (Bell 2011, 231)

The world is littered with things of the past, yet they have become useless, twisted and haunting: in other words, they have remained but have been transformed and displaced from their former state of being. Lowenthal states that decay is most often metaphorically associated with human mortality, that is to say the temporary nature of our lives (1985, 175). Yet, decay also means that something is left to imagine and remember the lives of the lost people by. I think this is beautifully illustrated with the

quote above: the bent signposts are now nonsensical, but they used to point people to places they wanted to go, and the fact that the bicycles have been “abandoned” means that someone must have left them there intentionally. In order to see that something has changed one needs to, in their mind's eye, envisage that something as it must have been before. Collective memory is used by the observer to fill the gaps in the story embedded in the scenery.

Lowenthal writes that “decay is most dreadful when it seems our fault” (1985, 147). A common theme in post-apocalyptic fiction in general is that the catastrophe that ended the world was the consequence of human greed, violence and stupidity. Even though the reasons for the apocalypse are not explained in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, given the genre background it is easy to assume that humans were not innocent in its conception. When reading such depictions as the one above, it feels as though the humans still wandering that world must have been left to suffer their perdition, that they see the wrecked land and must question whether they deserve to live in this way, whether they are somehow responsible, or at least someone just like them. The disintegrating billboards seem to allude to the end of dreams and the collapsed homes to a lost sense of security. Ironically though, the same sun still rises over and over again to shine its light on this world as it did on the one that came before.

An apocalypse can come in many guises: economic, pandemic, nuclear, etc. That the disaster in *The Reapers Are the Angels* came in the form of people turning into zombies when they die and also when they are bitten by someone who already is a zombie is significant for this thesis in the sense that it means that dead, and by extension forgotten, things do not stay buried in such a world. A burial is an important rite of commemoration that not only establishes a connection between the living and the dead but also between people and place (Harrison 2001, 398). Place, on the other hand, must be connected with time (i.e. memory) in order to be separated from the surrounding space, and a grave serves as a marker for this (ibid.). Interestingly, Harrison argues that cultural memory is endangered by the fact that people no longer know for certain where they will be buried (ibid., 403). In other words, contemporary people are losing their connection with their ancestors. Keeping this sentiment

in mind, how then would the fact that the dead rise from their graves (if they were ever buried at all) and roam the land affect collective memory?

In the theory section, I explained how forgetting is necessary because without it, memory loses its function as an organising and categorising process, leading to complete amnesia. Zombies can be understood as vehicles for this kind of scenario if we read them, as Austin does, as “pure walking memory, memory that refuses to stay dead and buried, refuses to rot away. . . . memory run amok, made flesh and turned loose upon the world” (2011, 151). In other words, the existence of zombies denies people the necessary forgetting of the past which ironically leads to an even more absolute state of forgetting. In *The Reapers Are the Angels*, for example, several survivors harbour nostalgic visions of the gone era that clearly portray the world in a more positive light than would be realistic, meaning that they have forgotten the dark sides of that reality, because their new one is worse in so many ways, the most obvious one being the flesh-craving undead. I will provide further examples of these kinds of idealisations of the past in section 4.1.

On the other hand, Temple has been dealing with zombies her whole life. She refers to them as “slugs” or “meatskins”: the first name obviously comes from their slow, sluggish style of moving and the latter probably has to do with their appearance, with their “meat” hanging out because of rips and tears in their skin. In fact, the word “zombie” is scarcely mentioned in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, but the creatures are still instantly recognisable as zombies. The situation is similar to *The Walking Dead* in which zombies are called mostly “walkers” or “biters”, yet none of the other characters (or readers/viewers) is confused as to what they are. A grasp of what zombies are is not only a part of collective knowledge and memory in the world of fiction in question, but also in the reality the reader or viewer inhabits. It is common to understand zombies as horrific and evil monsters (Paffenroth 2011, 18), but Temple is of a different opinion: “Them meatskins are just animals is all. Evil's a thing of the mind. We humans got the full measure of it ourselves” (Bell 2011, 103). She makes a crucial separation between humans and zombies that allows her to consider them more

rationality, because a great deal of the terror that zombies evoke is directly connected to them being dead people (Boluk and Lenz 2011, 13). Equating them with animals not only absolves zombies of blame for their behaviour, but it also allows people to kill them without it being murder, which solves what would otherwise be a serious moral problem.

Nevertheless, Temple's seemingly sagacious attitude does not make her oblivious to the abysmal scenes she is confronted with as she travels from one place to another. One overrun city in particular is so full of heinous sights that she comments on it that "it's been a long time since I been reminded so of the end of things" (Bell 2011, 84). Many of the zombies are dressed and act in ways which are reminders of their human origins:

They walk, some of them, in twos and threes, sometimes even hand in hand like lovers, lumbering along, slow and thick, blood crusted down their fronts, stumbling over the bony remains of consumed corpses. Their gestures are meaningless, but they hearken back with primitive instinct to life before. A slug dressed in black with a white preacher's collar lifts his hands towards the sky as if calling upon the god of dead things, while a rotting woman in a wedding dress sits open-legged against a wall, rubbing the lace hem against her cheek. (Bell 2011, 82)

The first part of this quote juxtaposes the way the zombies act as if they were friends and lovers, forming groups and showing affection quite like people, with the grotesque reality being that they have been madly feeding on flesh. It is clearly stated that they have some kind of memory, at least a bodily one, and this idea is reinforced on the next page with a description of zombies that have managed to climb onto a merry-go-round: they are "dazed to imbecility by gut memories of speed and human ingenuity" (ibid., 83). The above portrayal of the preacher is especially compelling with its suggestion that he has kept his profession but now prays to a god more appropriate to his position.

Taking all this into account, it seems that the zombies in *The Reapers Are the Angels* are curious creatures indeed when one compares them to the usual portrayal of zombies, which is that their only faculty is hunger. There is no clear-cut answer in the novel as to what they are capable of remembering from their human lives and what is left in the shadows. Feeding should be their first priority, yet the woman in the wedding dress acts as though all else is unimportant except the feel of



the fabric on her cheek. It is a bizarre scene not unlike the one Temple faces when she meets Randolph Grierson, a zombie kept locked up in the basement by his family because they have not been able to dispose of him. Temple contemplates that he “has a look she's never seen in a meatskin before” (Bell 2011, 118), which is a wonder in itself because Temple has been around a lot of zombies all her life. She realises that the difference between Randolph and all the others she has seen is that this zombie has never met another of its kind, leading to him not knowing what he is: “He knows somethin's crooked . . . but he don't know what. Like he's done something wrong he don't know how to pay for” (ibid. 118-119).

In a way, Randolph is a zombie with an identity crisis. In the theory section, I explained how important memory is to the existence and stability of identities. This usually concerns humans of course, but I think that in this case it fits very well with Temple's understanding of Randolph Grierson: because he has not been around other zombies while he has been one himself too, he has not been able to gather impressions and memories (however primitive) that would help him understand what he has become – his new identity as a member of that group. He is much like a feral child that has been reared by wolves: however, instead, he is a zombie with only humans for company. On the other hand, his family has been unable to let go of him: as Temple aptly remarks, Randolph has “one generation on either side that can't bear either to look at [him] or forget [him]” (Bell 2011, 139). This has left the situation in an unresolved state, which Temple resolves by killing Randolph on James' request. The reactions of the rest of the family remain unknown since Temple leaves before her actions are uncovered. I will discuss the Grierson<sup>4</sup> family more in depth in section 3.2., which will be about generational memory.

The post-apocalyptic world of *The Reapers Are the Angels* is in many ways a wasteland, but it also bears the memory of the civilisation that populated it before. This memory is present not only in the landscape, objects as well as the literally walking memories that zombies represent but also in

---

4 The name “Grierson” pays homage to William Faulkner's short story “A Rose for Emily” (1930) in which, quite like Randolph here, a corpse is kept hidden in the home for sentimental reasons.

the people: it has only been a couple of decades since the devastation struck, so there are still survivors who have personal recollections of the time before it. However, the priorities of everyone have had to change, which is reflected in the relative value placed on objects, skills and all the other things. This is bound to change the content of collective memory shared and passed on in groups, but it has not erased its essential nature to human interaction: on the contrary, sharing knowledge when resources are sparse is key to survival, as is bonding within groups, because the more dangerous the world becomes, the more valuable the trust between people is. In accordance with this, establishing a collectively shared vision of the past is essential to group cohesion (Halbwachs 1980, 32). This will be demonstrated with the help of two very different families in the following subchapter.

### **3.2. The Chain between Generations**

Generation is an old concept which can be traced back to such texts as the Old Testament in the Bible (Miszta 2003, 83). This is understandable considering that it is a fundamental fact of human life that people are born, become older and eventually die, and that all the while people are surrounded by others in different points of this cycle of existence: the concept of a generation is a way to describe people who are "similarly located" in it, which means that they also possess many of the same collective memories (Mannheim 1952/2011, 95). There are two major ways in which generations and memory are studied together: *intergenerational* and *intragenerational* (Erl 2011, 56). Intergenerational research means studying the relations between two or more different generations, whereas intragenerational approach is one which focuses on what unites a single generation (ibid.). In this section, I am most interested in the aspects of *The Reapers Are the Angels* that concern intergenerational memory, and I will examine them particularly in connection with two kinship groups: the nostalgic Griersons and the rural people Temple runs into who have turned themselves into monsters. I will return to intragenerational matters in subchapter 4.1., in which I will, among other things, compare Temple with other survivors who belong to the same generation as her.

The relationships between generations do not stay constant but differ depending on the point of view they are perceived from. Halbwachs explains how, as a child grows, he or she first thinks that his or her parents and grandparents are very different from each other, but later on realises the things that they have in common:

Our grandparents leave their stamp on our parents. We were not aware of it in the past because we were much more sensitive then to what distinguished generations. Our parents marched in front of us and guided us into the future. The moment comes when they stop and we pass them by. Then we must turn back to see them, and now they seem in the grip of the past and woven into the shadows of bygone times. (Halbwachs 1980, 67)

Essentially, both the differences and similarities between generations can be exaggerated because of circumstances affecting people throughout their lives (ibid., 68). As was discussed in section 2 of this thesis, it is necessary for people to convey knowledge to the next generation so that they would not have to start from scratch. However, young people's ability to adapt to new situations, ones that were never faced by their seniors and as such cannot be solved by their methods, also enables progress: “while the generational gap is perceived as providing a basis for changing the present, generational continuity is regarded as a source of stability and legitimacy” (Miztal 2003, 84). This explains why young people would be especially prone to noticing the differences between generations: they are creating something new out of their own. However, as they become older, they will notice how much they actually owe to their elders.

The family is an important social framework of memory that guides our notion of the past with its collective influence, enabling us to go beyond individual memories (Halbwachs 1992, 61). As is apparent given the previous example of parents and grandparents, it is also a primary environment for intergenerational contact. Benjamin argues that “memory creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation” (1969/2011, 102), referring to stories based on memories that are told and shared by people and thus remembered through time. This transmittance in turn allows the continuity of society (Miztal 2003, 84). According to Halbwachs, any traditions a family might have are derived from the larger society and operate in relation to it, but

in their small differences also bring the family together as a distinct group (1992, 83). Hence traditions unite groups both big and small because they work on multiple levels of social frameworks of memory.

But what if the chain of tradition is somehow disrupted? In *The Reapers Are the Angels*, most of the population has turned into zombies and the rest are scattered over long distances of ravaged land. Some families have gathered into bigger communities, while others live fenced off and mostly isolated from other human contact. There are some who travel between different places, but that is always a dangerous undertaking: one never knows whether they will reach their destination, never mind being able to return home some day. It is likely that many traditions are forgotten as well as die with their carriers in the madness as survival takes precedence over everything else. Likewise, bringing children into the world and ensuring that they live to adulthood, thus forming the next generation, is compromised. In one larger city community that Temple lives in for a duration she wonders at how few children there are, and the answer she receives is that “It's hard for people to have children here. We have a doctor, but our medical facilities are limited. But also, it's just hard for people to be . . . optimistic” (Bell 2011, 34). Children are literally the future, and the fact that even a community that is so fortunate as to have a doctor at hand is not deemed safe enough to have babies in tells of an extreme loss of faith in the continuity of life, and hence also tradition.

However, there is also another extreme approach concerning tradition evident in the novel: retreating to the memories of a happier time and closing off the rest of the world from this fantasy. This is especially distinct at Belle Isle, the Grierson estate:

The place seems untouched by the mass walking death everywhere else in the world. She [Temple] looks for the stand of guns by the door, but instead she finds a rack for coats and umbrellas, a closet for muddy boots. There are no boards nailed across the windows, instead there are layers of lace and muslin tied open with thick burgundy ropes that have large toylike tassels on the ends. There is no blood crusted brown on the walls and the floors. No lookout stations. No gunner nests. It is as though she has entered a different era entirely. (Bell 2011, 89-90)

In the previous section, I already mentioned Randolph Grierson, the zombie who does not seem to know what he is. His blight is very much a consequence of his family's secluded life. Temple is only allowed to enter once she appeals to their sense of decency by saying that surely they would not leave a young girl like her in danger (Bell 2011, 84). Even though Temple is aware that the property is surrounded by an electric fence, she is still surprised at how little effect the apocalypse has had on it. It is as if this house and the piece of land around it are in a different time zone from the rest of the world and she has now gone through the looking glass: on this side of the barrier, there is no need to prepare for the threats faced by the people outside, as is suggested by the lack of weapons and lookout stations. The absence of spattered blood signifies to Temple that no battles with the zombies have been fought here. It is quite a contrast to most places she has been to during her post-apocalyptic life.

Temple discovers that Belle Isle is the home of six people: Mrs Grierson, who is an elderly lady, her son Randolph and grandsons James and Richard, as well as their two servants, Johns [sic] and Maisie. The property has belonged to the family for generations: Temple notices a portrait of a couple with the flag of “the South of the olden days” (Bell 2011, 90) as its backdrop hanging on the wall and Johns tells her that the people depicted are Mrs Grierson's great-great grandparents. Clearly kinship and tradition are revered in this household, which might also be one reason for their bizarre treatment of Randolph. At first Temple is told that he is grievously ill, which explains his absence from company; however, soon James reveals Randolph's true affliction to her, but none of the others ever talk about it. James even speculates that perhaps they are planning to feed Temple to him since he has been unwilling to eat any other meat they have tried to offer, leaving him weakened, and Temple is a stranger after all.

Unlike his brother and grandmother, James Grierson is generally very cynical of his family's legacy and traditional ways. He sarcastically exclaims to Temple that “the Grierson dynasty holds fast to its glorious history. It closes its eyes to modernity in all its forms” (Bell 2011, 104). His exceptionally strong feelings are probably mostly due to the fact that he served in the army when it

was still in operation and has seen the devastation that zombies leave in their wake at a scale that the other members of his family cannot even imagine. Taking this into consideration, it is rather startling that he also contends that “I’ve been around more living dead in that house than I was when I was piling them up in a bonfire two stories high” (ibid.). It is one thing to point out that your kin are stuck in time, but comparing them to the scourge of zombies is something else entirely: it shows uttermost contempt for their behaviour. So how exactly do Mrs Grierson and Richard act to generate such an opinion?

In Temple's words, “to wake up in this house . . . you might never guess the world's got half eat up” (Bell 2011, 94). Everything is clean, polished and charming in an old-fashioned way, meaning both the house and the people who live there. The food is also luxurious, better than any Temple has tasted before. When she first lays her eyes on Mrs Grierson, she is “wearing a gown like Temple's never seen before in real life, full of shimmer and rustle” (ibid., 91), and the older woman's almost immediate reaction to having a girl as a visitor is to ask her to try on a bunch of dresses she has collected. Being in her presence has an effect on Temple and she “makes a special effort to be cordial and ladylike” (ibid., 92) instead of her usual, always ready for action self which might serve her better outside but seems almost an insult at Belle Isle. Temple listens with amusement to Mrs Grierson's stories while they play dress-up, thinking that “the danger of her youth was probably in coming home late or getting caught sneaking some whisky from the family bar, or kissing one boy by the arbor while another one waited for you on the porch swing out front” (ibid., 96). Grandmother Grierson even corrects Temple's poor grammar at times, which is something Temple does not seem to have encountered before: perfect language is perhaps usually not very high on a list of priorities which includes things such as staying alive.

As is discernible from the examples above, Mrs Grierson has chosen to live her life in a way that is almost extinct elsewhere in the world. This is quite understandable if viewed against Mannheim's argument that “even if the rest of one's life consisted in one long process of negation and

destruction of the natural world view acquired in youth, the determining influence of these early impressions would still be predominant” (1952/2011, 96). With this “natural world view”, Mannheim simply means ways of thinking a person has grown accustomed to. Mrs Grierson is in her seventies, meaning that she lived about five decades, or two thirds of her life, before the apocalypse, and so her world view is controlled by impulses from that time. Apart from this, the wealth of her family has also aided in keeping the world afar. However, Mannheim's thesis does not explain why young Richard, who has been born after the apocalypse, is so very much like his grandmother. I believe this is where collective memory has distinctively played its part: because Richard has lived tucked away at the estate, he has been exclusively part of only one social group, namely his family. His grandmother, being the head of the household, has been his main source of information about the world and, as was discussed above, her memories are focused on the time before the apocalypse. Sharing these memories creates a strong sense of unity within the family as well, which is another reason why they have persisted relatively unscathed.

Nevertheless, James is the challenger of tradition in the Grierson family. The following conversation between him, Temple, Mrs Grierson and Richard is a good example of this:

It must be horrible out there, Richard interjects. For a girl your age to be exposed to such monstrosity. Those *things*.  
 He shudders.  
 They ain't so bad, she says. They just doin what they supposed to do. Like we all are, I guess.  
 Are they supposed to eviscerate children? James asks suddenly. Are they supposed to play tug of war with the intestines of God-fearing men?  
 James! Mrs Grierson says, I'll not tell you again-  
 Are they supposed to *digest* entire populations?  
 James, that's enough! I refuse to hear such horrible things at my table!  
 You refuse, James chuckles, looking at his grandmother. You refuse.  
 Then he pushes back his chair and tosses his napkin onto the plate and marches from the room.  
 Mrs Grierson watches him go and collects herself and then smiles in a dignified way at Temple.  
 I apologize for my grandson's behaviour, she says.  
 Ain't no problem, Temple says. Sometimes you gotta bust apart to get yourself put back together.  
 Life's been hard on him, Mrs Grierson says.  
 He was in the army, Richard adds. (Bell 2011, 98-99, emphases original)

James is attempting to bring his thoughts and memories to the discussion but they are rejected by his grandmother as too vulgar and explicit, which he finds insulting, leading him to exit the room – but also amusing, as his chuckle proves. He received exactly the response he expected and the predictability of Mrs Grierson is what he considers funny. At the end, Mrs Grierson and Richard offer their insight as to why James shuns their ways of approaching things: he has had it tough, especially as a soldier. Perhaps he used to be more like Richard, but because he has been away from Belle Isle and forged bonds with other social groups, such as with the people in the army, and thus become a party to other collective memories, his relationship with the collective memory and tradition of his family has changed. As was discussed in chapter 2, what is truly individual about a person's memory is the unique blend of collective memories of different groups it contains. His newly gained perspective is what fuels James' frustration with his brother and grandmother.

It is noteworthy that Mrs Grierson belongs to a different generation than her grandsons but that it seems as if the intergenerational gap exists between her and James but not so much between her and Richard. For the progression of society, it is necessary that new generations establish differences between themselves and those that came before, while still keeping some of their traditions (Misztal 2003, 84). Apparently this is failing with both James and Richard, but in opposite ways. However, James' resistance is a more typical reaction for young people in general and it is possible that he will yet come to appreciate his grandmother's sentiments as well: after all, he did return to his family when the fight became senseless and chooses to stay with them. Richard, on the other hand, displays signs of completely retreating into the supposed safety of the past, guided by Mrs Grierson. I will discuss Richard further in section 4.1. in which I will compare him to Temple. It is my reading that especially his limited exposure to collective memories is an example of how an apocalypse has disrupted the natural chain of intergenerational relationships, leading him to copy his grandmother instead of questioning her and finding his own path. If widespread, this phenomenon would lead to the stagnation of society and, in this case, not adapting to the realities of the post-



apocalypse threatens the whole human existence, because even places like Belle Isle are unlikely to remain impenetrable forever.

Temple's stay at the Grierson estate is disrupted when her chaser, Moses, finds her there. She escapes once again but soon ends up at the hands of another family, this time unwillingly. Her captors' family name is never mentioned, but, instead, Temple observes that “used to be they were just hillbillies. Now they're the inheritors of the earth” (Bell 2011, 188). This establishes a distinction of social class between them and the Griersons as well. I will refer to them as the inheritors for short, although this is certainly an ironic name for them as will become clear. What is special about them is that they are people who have essentially mutated themselves into monstrous hybrid creatures by injecting their brains with a substance that Temple later finds out is harvested from the zombies. This drug-like liquid which also seems to have intoxicating effects has made them grow larger, which has meant that their skin has been torn in places, exposing muscle beneath. They are also growing bone on the surface, like armour. Strangely, their bodies seem to be decaying and becoming stronger at the same time: the inheritors are not turning into zombies but developing a defence against them.

There are a little over twenty people in the inheritors' family, and at least one of them is a child: a girl called Millie who is estimated to be seven or eight years old. The zombie fluid injections seem to have had a detrimental effect on her speech development, as is evident from this conversation when she first encounters Temple:

I'm gon kill you, the girl repeats.  
 What you wanna kill me for?  
 Y'ain't no kin-mind.  
 Kin-mind? What you saying?  
 Y'ain't no kinnamind.  
 Kin of mine? You sayin I ain't no kin of yours?  
 I'm gon kill you. (Bell 2011, 163-164)

The fact that she is threatening to kill Temple because she is not related to her is especially odd coming from the mouth of someone as young as Millie. However, it is reminiscent of what James Grierson suspected of his own family: that they might be willing to feed Temple to Randolph because she is

not one of them. The difference is that this time it is not mere speculation since Millie is actually brandishing a knife. What kind of a family atmosphere would breed this kind of hostility towards someone who just stumbled upon the village and has done nothing to harm the group?

The inheritors' leader is called Mama, and “Temple wonders how many of them she is actual mother to”, concluding that it might be all of them (Bell 2011, 184). This would of course point to rather extensive inbreeding. Mama is also the one whose body has thus far been altered the most by the substance that the inheritors inject themselves with regularly: she is approximately ten feet tall and the bony growths on her body are so extensive that she no longer wears clothing. She is indeed so grotesquely transformed that it is hard to think of her as human at all, but she tenaciously calls their discovery “the family blessing”, saying that the inheritors are “nourished on the blood of God and the foolishness of the past” (Bell 2011, 187-188), meaning that she believes that the zombie fluid is something bestowed upon them now by God because they are exceptional among humans. She further clarifies this by stating that the reason for the zombie plague is to “sweep away the mess of commonness”, and that it spares “those Americans who keep America stored up in their blood lineage” (ibid., 186).

Overall, Mama is very opinionated about matters of blood and lineage, and she is convinced of her own family's superiority:

We got something unique. You wanna know what it is? We got loyal blood. We watch out for each other. That's how we come to survive so long. My family, it's the oldest family in the county. Hell, I guess by now we's the oldest family in the state. That's what I mean, survivors. See, long before this plaque of foolishness descended on the world, we was living apart – up in the woods where there was no one to bother us. We had our land. We made our food. We was one family, and we stayed one family for six generations. Blood is holy blood. It's God's gift, and it ain't to be watered down. My children is the gift of the spirit, and let them be legion. (Bell 2011, 185-186)

Suddenly Millie's reaction to Temple's presence does not seem so extreme after all, considering that this is what she has been taught all her life: outsiders threaten the purity of the community. Mama's passionate monologue also provides many clues that again give reason to assume that the inheritors

are rather more closely related to each other than would perhaps be healthy. This is insinuated especially when she says that blood should not be “watered down”, which I take to mean that it should not be mixed with the blood of outsiders who are considered inferior. One can question how much of the inheritors' current condition is the consequence of keeping to themselves in this way for generations. However, if we take a step back from the physical reality of their situation, it becomes possible to compare their obsession with blood relations to the keeping of traditions and preserving collective memory. Mama speaks of having land, procuring food and surviving as a family, and these things are not just matters of blood: they require a common way of life and memories that unite the group. The inheritors have built a belief in their own greatness and it has become a part of their collective memory and shared history.

Although the inheritors do draw from the past in this way, they are not quite like the Griersons who, at least in the cases of Mrs Grierson and Richard, live like it was still yesterday. The inheritors have changed themselves for the brave new world, but their blessing is also their weakness. They may “grow as giants on the earth” (Bell 2011, 187), but in their monstrosity they are still human: Temple notes about Mama's appearance that “there are sockets for her eyes and mouth in the the scabby bone plates covering her face, and she has painted them with lipstick and eyeshadow in clownish imitation of of generations gone” (ibid., 184). Even though she is now supposed to be something above and beyond other people, she still paints her face as if she was a regular, still fully human woman: it is like an act of commemoration. The effect is counterproductive to her message of resisting the folly of the past. Also, unless the inheritors eventually become immortal, it is unlikely that they can only keep to themselves and produce healthy enough offspring (and who knows how the zombie fluid affects this) to continue the traditions of the family. But in their mutated state, who would join them? It seems that instead of inheriting the earth, they are likely to face extinction.

In the end, both the Griersons and the inheritors think and act in ways detrimental to the continuity of society. They live isolated lives that close them off from the possibility of a new

beginning of history for the human kind. Their dependence on the past, on one hand, and extreme change from it in the case of the inheritors, on the other, all seem like reactions to the apocalypse, the disruption of tradition and shattering of collective memory. Unfortunately, they are ultimately dysfunctional responses to these things and will only lead to further problems, especially if they are merely examples of an array of similar communities desperate to survive in a hostile world. The question then becomes whether the new generation, born into a post-apocalyptic world, will be able to resist the influences from their predecessors – influences that need to be resisted in order to continue living at all. In the next section, I will focus on the person who most prolifically exemplifies this new generation in *The Reapers Are the Angels*: the protagonist Temple.

#### 4. Memory and the Individual: The Case of Temple

After previously discussing the ways in which the post-apocalyptic world of *The Reapers Are the Angels* is connected to the past as well as how the groups left living in it try to preserve their legacy with the help of collective memory, I now turn my gaze to the individual level. In this second and final analysis chapter of this thesis, I will focus on the protagonist Temple. Her situation is peculiar from the point of view of collective memory, because her connections to any social groups have been rather fleeting. This also makes her a specimen of a category of people likely to multiply as the post-apocalyptic chaos persists, which poses a challenge for the continuation of collective memory and the preservation of knowledge of, and from, the time before the apocalypse. Moreover, I argue that she has suffered a trauma in her past, which deeply affects the way she views herself and her reactions to remembering. The unravelling of the traumatic memory is a continuous theme in the novel and, consequently, it will be the focus of section 4.2. Firstly, however, I will more generally analyse her identity from the point of view of memory in order to shed light on why she thinks and acts in the ways that she does, which will illuminate her response to the trauma as well.

##### 4.1. Born into this World

And you could say the world has gone to black damnation, and you could say the children of Cain are holding sway over the good and the righteous – but here's what Temple knows: she knows that whatever hell the world went to, and whatever evil she's perpetrated her own self, and whatever series of cursed misfortunes brought her down here to this island to be harboured away from the order of mankind, well, all those things are what put her there that night to stand amid the Daylight Moon and the Miracle of the Fish, which she wouldn't of got to see otherwise.

See, God is a slick god. He makes it so you don't miss out on nothing you're supposed to witness first-hand. (Bell 2011, 4)

Already at the very beginning of *The Reapers Are the Angels*, we meet Temple, a young girl living alone on a Florida island with a deserted lighthouse for a shelter. Nevertheless, what the reader's attention is drawn to first is a display of natural beauty that Temple is experiencing as she stands in the shallow water near the beach and a school of fish come and swim around her ankles, their scales

reflecting the moonlight. This scene will be referred to as the “Miracle of the Fish” throughout the novel, as Temple shares the memory with others in exchange for their experiences.<sup>5</sup> It is a “crackerjack miracle” (ibid., 3), or essentially an example of an event that reminds Temple of the good and wonderful things that are still to be found in the world: “it has become something to her, that memory – something she can take out in dismal times and stare into like a crystal ball disclosing not presages but reminders” (ibid., 191). Also, as is clearly stated in the above quote, she believes that God put her there to see the miracle for a reason, even if that reason is not clear to her at that exact moment. This reveals that a collective system of belief has become a part of her life at some point in the past.

I already mentioned Temple several times in chapter 3 when discussing various parts of the novel. This has been inevitable because she is the main focaliser character in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, meaning that the events taking place in the story are filtered through her consciousness. However, in this subsection I will bring her to the forefront of my analysis in an effort to explain her thinking and actions in the novel by viewing her as a product of post-apocalypse and its shattered collective memory. I will be centrally concerned with her identity and view of the world. I will examine these things by contrasting Temple with a few other characters, some of whom have also been born after the apocalypse like she has but who differ from her in numerous ways. Additionally, there are some older characters in particular who manage to offer insight into Temple's mind. A prime example here is Moses, the man who chases Temple from one state to the next, supposedly because she killed his brother. I will also discuss how the fact that Temple is uneducated and illiterate affects her thoughts, memories and interactions with the world.

The connection between identity and memory was already introduced in the theory section of this thesis. Essentially, memories are needed in the construction of one's identity because they offer

---

5 When Temple later meets a group of hunters who have travelled even more than she has, they tell her about Niagara Falls and other wonders they have seen. She offers the tale of the Miracle of the Fish as a kind of a token story in exchange for theirs (Bell 2011, 63). This is an example of how collective memory is passed on in post-apocalyptic times, and also how stories build trust among strangers on the road.

a way to verify the persistent nature of the self or, in other words, its stability through time. Without memory, the whole concept of identity would be meaningless. Also, because Halbwachs' collective memory ties our very capacity to remember with social groups in the first place (1992, 38), consequently our identities are also formed in connection with the groups that we are members of. This is significant when considering the differences between Temple and other young people born after the apocalypse. I will discuss two specific characters who fit this qualification, namely Richard Grierson, who was already introduced in subchapter 3.2., and Dirk, a 16-year-old boy who lives in Longview, a Texas town that is an important safe zone because it has been barricaded against the zombies. This will reveal the breaking down of intragenerational connections after the apocalypse: these two young men should be at roughly the same phase as Temple in their lives (Mannheim 1952/2011, 95), yet it becomes clear that they have little in common.

Previously, I argued that Richard had adopted his grandmother's old-fashioned view of the world so completely that he seems to repeat it unquestioningly. I also suggested that the reason for this is that he has not really been a member of any other groups in his life other than his family, which has led to him, in effect, only having the collective memory of that one group in his repertoire.<sup>6</sup> He has precious little to compare it with so his options regarding his thinking are limited, even if he does not register that himself. Richard's older brother James, a former soldier, has been a questioning force since his return to the family, but that seems to have had little effect on the younger man. When Temple first meets Richard after coming to Belle Isle, he says to her that “you shouldn't be travelling by yourself” (Bell 2011, 93) and invites her to stay, presumably forever. He is trying to be convincing and serious but “he has a child's voice, despite his age, and when he uses it to sound authoritative it trips over itself” (ibid.). Temple thanks him for his advice so as to be polite towards her new hosts but quickly changes the subject. Clearly Temple thinks that Richard means well but, considering his opinions, he is overly naïve and child-like, and this is reflected in his tone of voice. What makes this

---

<sup>6</sup> Of course the Griersons' collective memory contains echoes of the collective memories of other groups, but even those are filtered through the family memory.

assessment remarkable of course is that Temple is only fifteen herself. My argument is that the differences between her experiences and Richard's, and therefore also their memories, are what separate them so drastically.

The most telling encounter between the two of them takes place when Temple finds a room in the mansion that turns out to be Richard's workshop where he builds miniature ships and where “the walls are covered with world maps, and there are places marked on them with red Xs, and dotted lines – travelling routes – drawn across the wide blue oceans” (Bell 2011, 120). Richard is quite cross at first when he finds Temple in what appears to be his private space, and again his immaturity is noted: “He is five years her senior, but he's one of those young men who hasn't got fully shut of his boy self” (ibid.). However, Richard's anger quickly dissipates once Temple expresses her admiration for his work: indeed, when they start talking about the maps “his face brightens, and he comes to stand beside her and pulls some books off a low shelf” (ibid., 121). His expression and the lowering of his guard as he approaches her suggest that they are engaging in a topic that he is very excited about.

Richard reveals to Temple that the markings on the maps, one of which is placed on Greenland, signify “the places I'm going to go when everything is back to normal” (ibid.). What he means by normal is when the zombies have disappeared and people are safe to move around again. Manjikian argues that every individual has their own “normal” level of danger that is based on “culture and historic experience” (2012, 49) or, in other words, collective memory. Obviously this level is very different between Richard and Temple, because she contests him by pointing out that “Greenland ain't coming to you. What you waiting for?” (ibid., 122). Richard is flabbergasted by this, insisting that that is impossible before the world is “back to the way it's supposed to be” (ibid.). Temple's response is equally adamant: “What you know about the way it's supposed to be? You ain't that much older than me. You were born into the same world I was” (ibid.). Richard's answer is predictable: “But I've read about it . . . I know what it was like – what it's going to be like again.



Grandmother says it's only a matter of time" (ibid.). He relies completely on the family library and Mrs Grierson as the most reliable sources of information about the world, because his whole existence has been restricted to Belle Isle.

However, for someone unable to read like Temple, books do not come across nearly as enticing as they do for house-bound Richard. In fact, from her point of view, the whole situation is somehow pitiful:

Richard Grierson smiles, but it's an inward-pointing smile, a smile of someone folding himself back up for storage in the colourful corners of his own crayon fantasies. She looks at the books, their titles hazy with a thin film of sawdust, and she looks at the toy ships built for imaginary journeys along the red dotted lines of a child's map, and she looks at the exotic pictures in the books still open flat before her, and she understands that these places are just places of the mind, and she wants to be able to exalt his wild dreams and imaginings along with her own, but there's something about them that make them the saddest thing she's ever seen. (Bell 2011, 122-123)

Temple has always not only dreamed about travelling, but done it, as can be deduced from the journey she is on in the novel as well as what is told about her past. To her, staying in one place for long is almost distressing: she thinks of the Griersons and "wonders how people can live this kind of life, trapped inside a house with windows everywhere showing you where else you could be" (ibid., 115). Richard's "inward-pointing smile" is only another symptom of the general tendency of his family to curl up into themselves rather than reach out to the world. The regretful quality of this comes from the fact that his true situation is not clear to Richard himself: instead, he thinks that he is quite the man of the world with his map routes and knowledge of different locations. Temple, on the other hand, recognises that Richard is not willing to actually carry out any of his plans, and that, from her point of view, he uses the post-apocalyptic situation as an excuse not to do so. Consequently, the destinations in the books remain "just places of the mind", or unfulfilled fantasies. However, the reader is able to recognise that perhaps the current state of the world is the reason for Richard being the way that he is in the first place, instead of just an excuse to cower.

Clearly, books are very important to Richard. In literate cultures, books and other textual records work as substitutes for memory (Goody 1998/2011, 322): essentially, there is no need to remember when a written source of the necessary knowledge is readily available. However, it is also true that the skill of remembering things verbatim, or word for word, is valued more in literate cultures than in oral ones, because it develops with schooling (ibid.): for example, in an oral culture it could be important to remember the plot of a story, but not necessarily the exact words that were used when it was told previously. Conversely, a literate person can read a story over and over until he or she is able to repeat it exactly as it is printed on paper, and that is often considered something to be praised. Perhaps it is not quite the case that Temple belongs to an actual oral culture whereas Richard is part of a literate one, but because Temple has not learned to read or write, many aspects of the textual world are lost on her. Goody states that generally writing promotes diversity because it allows the accumulation of different kinds of information, but that a book is also basically unchangeable (ibid., 323): arguably this, compounded with verbatim recall without comprehension, is a recipe for conformity (ibid.). Richard's attachment to the old world that he has read about and his absolute belief that things will be like that again are an example of the power of the written word: he trusts what he reads, even if reality directs him towards a different conclusion. Ironically, his literacy has both widened his view of the world and blinded him from seeing that the changes in it are probably quite permanent. Still, the fact that he, as well as many others, can read is essential for there to be a continuum of collective memory from the pre-apocalyptic times.

Goody concludes that “it is dangerous to speak of a collective memory in oral cultures”<sup>7</sup> (ibid., 324). This is because when things are not written down, memories vary according to experiences, and bits and pieces of what could be a collective memory are held by different people (ibid.). This reflects the future of the post-apocalyptic world in *The Reapers Are the Angels* where the systems of mass education have broken down. Soon, people like Richard will be an anomaly, whereas Temple will

---

7 I understand this to mean that the definition of what constitutes a collective memory cannot be exactly the same in a literate versus an oral culture, and that the application of the term should therefore be carefully considered.

represent the majority: people will rely on what they learn from each other and what they experience for themselves, not on what has been written down. The flow of information will be much less consistent than it is in literate cultures and social ties will weaken, meaning that people who happen to meet on the road are likely to have less in common than they would if they had grown up perusing the same cultural products. This is already visible between Richard and Temple, and it has only been a quarter of a century since the apocalypse.

Later on in the novel, after Temple has escaped from the inheritors, she hitches a train ride to Longview, Texas. Her reaction to the refugee town is dubious:

She stands in the middle of the street for a while, not sure what to do with herself. Her place, it's been proven over and over, is out there with the meatskins and the brutishness, not here within the confines of a pretty little peppertown. She tried that before, and it didn't work out. What she really wants is to feel that gorkha knife solid in her hand, her palm is sweating for it but she keeps it sheathed so as not to frighten the children. (Bell 2011, 234)

She is restless and uncomfortable, wishing for something concrete to do, because the sudden safety of the haven that Longview is seems too much for her after what she has experienced, especially as a prisoner of the inheritors. Also, she does not feel like she deserves the sense of security after all the bad things that she has done before; these will be discussed in detail in the next subchapter. She wants to hold the knife, because it has been the one stable thing that she has been able to trust along her journey to protect her and, ironically, she feels threatened by the town's peaceful atmosphere. A possible reason for this is that she remembers that whenever she has felt safe before, something has happened to drive her away.

When a 16-year-old boy named Dirk approaches Temple and soon asks her to go on a date with him, she only agrees because he promises her a Coke with ice, a weakness of hers. He has a lot of questions for Temple, but even more things to tell about himself: he says that he likes to listen to classical music, composers such as Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Smetana, or, in his words, “the music for people who are really civilized” (Bell 2011, 237). Dirk's voice echoes in Temple's ears while she drinks her soda:

He continues to speak of things mostly foreign to Temple, but she sips her Coke and fishes ice cubes out of her glass with a spoon and crushes them between her teeth, and the world he tells her about seems like a very nice one, a very quaint one, but also one that doesn't quite accord with the things she's seen and the people she's known. Still, she likes his big visions and his grand tomorrows, and she wouldn't spoil them for anything. (Bell 2011, 237)

Similarly to Richard, Dirk has lived his life in one place: "I was born here, and I haven't been anywhere else except for Dallas once on the train. It isn't safe [sic] other places" (ibid., 235). Temple's response to this is that "safe ain't something I'm used to" (ibid.). Startlingly, Dirk's reaction to the fact that Temple, a girl his age, has scarcely known safety is not one of pity. Instead, he totally disregards her whole statement and only corrects her speech: she should not say "ain't", because "it's poor grammar . . . It speaks to a lack of sophistication" (ibid.). This is reminiscent of Mrs Grierson's earlier comments regarding Temple's grammar and choice of words, which were mentioned in section 3.2.

All in all, Dirk comes across as more than a little snobby and conceited. It is then not surprising that his and Temple's thoughts do not merge well, as is evident from how Temple thinks that the things Dirk talks about do not correspond with what she has experienced. There is an interesting contrast between how she crushes the ice between her teeth and her sentiment of not wanting to spoil Dirk's "big visions" because, in her head, she is virtually already crushing them like the ice in her mouth. She may be too polite to voice her opinions, but soon Dirk's coddling attitude begins to irritate her. He asks her what she likes to do, and gives examples of things he likes himself, such as playing the guitar. Temple cannot think of any fitting answer: "most things she likes to do are related to the project of staying alive in the world, and those things don't seem to be on the same level as playing a guitar" (Bell 2011, 239). She ends up saying that she likes the same things as Dirk, which fuels his belief that they have a lot in common. The awkward date ends with a fittingly sloppy kiss.

Because Dirk has had the privilege to grow up in a place that is relatively safe, he is much more like the average pre-apocalyptic teenager than Temple is: they do not seem to belong to the same generation. In fact, he seems considerably younger than Temple, quite like Richard Grierson, who is repeatedly described as childish. The difference between the two is that Dirk does not cling to

the old world like Richard does, but has grand aspirations for the broadening of the safe zones instead. However, his plans are perhaps slightly too optimistic for Temple to believe in. Her sense of self and both her hopes and her fears are deeply rooted in the grim post-apocalyptic reality of decay and zombie infestation. She has had to grow up fast and, as an orphan, take responsibility for her own survival at a very young age. This means that when she meets people like Richard and Dirk, who have been able to be and act like the children and teenagers that they were and are, there is a lack of common ground between them – in other words, a lack of a shared intragenerational collective memory. Halbwachs argues that when an individual is severed from social contact with a group, he or she will later face difficulty trying to remember and make sense of the things associated with the group that he or she was a member of (1992, 37-38). Temple has not only lost some connections like this, especially her family, but has spent long periods of time completely alone. Consequently, her sense of any collective memory is certainly broken.

Jedlowski claims that “identity is the selecting mechanism by which an individual privileges certain memories over others” (2001, 36), meaning that a person remembers primarily things that legitimise the notion that they already have of their identity. This was already discussed in section 2 as well. Temple's identity is built upon being a survivor and also someone who belongs to the kind of post-apocalyptic world that prevails in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, whereas many of the other people she meets are trying to distance themselves from it somehow. This creates friction between Temple and them. Interestingly from the point of view of identity, Temple often gives a false name when asked, using “Sarah Mary Williams”<sup>8</sup> as her pseudonym. This is strange, because what harm could giving her real name cause in a world devoid of mass communications and Internet search engines? It would not help anyone, for example, to locate her. Instead, perhaps she can imagine herself as somebody else when using a different name. My conclusion is that she considers her name to be personal information, and that giving it out would be an act of trust, or perhaps even intimacy.

---

8 A reference to Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).

However, the one person with whom she could paradoxically be said to have the most intimate relationship in the book, Moses Todd, never learns her real name.

Moses is a big, surly and serious kind of man in his forties, and Temple immediately thinks that “she's seen men like him before, dangerous because they've already come back from places . . . other, convivial men have never been” (Bell 2011, 40). However, they happen to meet alone and, while watching a city sprawl out under them from a broken window of a skyscraper, they have a conversation that proves they are alike in many ways: Moses states that he is “a traveller by nature. I been lots of places. The provender of the earth's good enough for my kind” (ibid., 44). This is exactly what Temple thinks of herself as well. How their discourse ends sets the tone for their interactions throughout the rest of the novel:

She points through the hole into the dark throat of the diseased landscape.  
I think you're more dangerous than what's out there.  
Well, little girl, he says, that's a funny thing you just uttered. Because I was just now  
thinkin the same thing about you. (Bell 2011, 45)

Moses calling Temple a “little girl” may be appropriate considering the difference in both their age and size, but it also exposes an almost fatherly attitude towards her. Likewise, it is reminiscent of Uncle Jackson, another father figure of Temple's (who will be discussed in the next subchapter), who often called her “little bit”. Ironically, Moses still calls her by that pet name when he is chasing her down to kill her.

The reason for the chase is vengeance: Temple kills Moses' brother Abraham early on in the novel, albeit accidentally. Moses only later finds out that Abraham was trying to rape Temple, although it does not surprise him. However, it does not change his mind about killing her either:

But the fact is, you and me, we ain't in control of the fates remitted us. We just got to discharge them the best way we can, according to whatever frail laws we got. Who made Abraham Todd my brother? Who delivered you into his mitts? It ain't me, and it ain't you, girl. That boy was flesh and blood, idiot or no. Yeah, he wasn't a good man. But that don't make no difference. And you know it. . . . Yeah, I can see you do. You got a sense of these things, same as me. You understand there's an order to the world – a set of rules, same for men and gods. See, a lot of people think the planet's out of whack because of the creepers – they think everything's up for grabs, blood and mind and soul. You and me, we dwell on the land, not just behind the

walls. You know the look of God is still on us. I respect you for havin such clear vision, just bein a girl and all. (Bell 2011, 131-132)

Here, Moses explains that he has to go after Temple because that is the right thing to do and, also, his fate. By extension, Temple's fate then becomes to be killed by him. Moses acknowledges that he and Temple are kindred spirits who understand the world similarly, and he respects her for that. His statement that “we dwell on the land, not just behind walls” suggests that the reason for their likeness is, in his mind, first and foremost their desire to be on the move, and that because of this they have learned the laws that determine what is good and right in the world. Also, they share a faith, as is clear from “the look of God” that Moses mentions and Temple's recurrent references to God being “a slick god”, an example of which was given at the beginning of this subchapter. Both their common experiences and religious backgrounds bind them together with collective memory.

Even if there are only “frail laws” to abide by, Temple agrees with Moses' judgement – however, she is not willing to simply succumb to him. She believes that she is “always either being chased or chasin somebody” (ibid., 67), and that is as much a fate as being the prey of a vengeful older brother is. It seems that chasing is a part of Temple's identity in a repetitive, long-term manner. When it comes to memory, “she doesn't want her secrets to be his secrets” (ibid., 133), meaning that, despite agreeing with Moses regarding many things and speaking with him at length, she is not willing to share her story with him. Of course, the fact that he has vowed to kill her is not exactly a recipe for trust either. However, after Moses encountering Temple several times, yet not succeeding to kill her, and Temple not killing him even though she has more than one clear chance to do so, and spending day after day in adjacent cells when captured by the inheritors, they can be said to have quite a thorough understanding of each other: “their eyes meet, and it is possible that what they see in each other is the eerie inversion of themselves – like coming face to face with some bent-up carnival mirror” (ibid., 205).

Often Moses puts to words what Temple only unconsciously knows about herself: “You're a book I know how to read, little girl. . . . You're just angry. Just grievin like everybody else. Only you don't like to admit it to yourself. It ain't so complicated” (Bell 2011, 278). This has a “sting of truth” (ibid.) to it, as Temple too realises. She is a survivor, strong and bold – but, at least inside her own mind, she is also a pariah, twisted and corrupt, someone who belongs in the violent world that she was born into and inhabits:

But the truth is – the truth is I don't know where I got off on the wrong track. Moses, he says I ain't evil, but then if I ain't evil... If I ain't evil, then what am I? Cause my hands, see, they ain't seem to got no purpose except when they're bashin in a skull or slittin a throat. That's the whole, all around truth of the matter. (Bell 2011, 211)

But Moses is right: Temple is not evil, she is angry and sad. I claim that these feelings are crushing down on her so devastatingly, because she has kept her most painful memories to herself instead of sharing them, bringing them to the collective and, consequently, dealing with them appropriately. Alone, she has piled up all her negative memories into an incomprehensible mess that she derives her “evil” identity from. Next, I will analyse Temple's memories of little Malcolm and how she failed to save him. I will also discuss how she is attempting to redeem herself through helping Maury, the man who, without words, teaches her a lesson of companionship.

#### **4.2. The Story of Malcolm**

She [Temple] remembers the lighthouse, her magazines, pulling in the nets in the morning, circling the island like it was the perimeter of everything. And then her mind crowds with other things – a noisy parade of memories that frustrate her because of the way they play themselves out. These memories – it feels like she's back there, like she has the moment to do over and make different choices. But she can't, because they're just memories, set down permanent as if they were chiselled in marble, and so she has to just watch herself do the same things over and over, and it's a condemnation if it's anything. (Bell 2011, 155-156)

The above quotation is one example of the many instances in *The Reapers Are the Angels* that showcase Temple's preoccupation with memories and her past. It starts with simple, positive images of her time in the lighthouse – during her stay there, she kept the world at a distance, making the



island "the perimeter of everything". But what she cannot distance herself from are the memories of certain events that she would rather forget, because she regrets what she did or was not able to do. These memories are a "noisy parade", because they catch up with her in times of quiet reflection and overshadow other, perhaps more welcome recollections. The memories have a feel of reality to them, but she can never do anything to change what inevitably happens, because all of it is already in the past. This only adds to her pain – however, she believes that she deserves it.

In this subchapter, I will discuss the darkest sides of Temple. I have already hinted at her belief in her own wickedness several times in the previous sections, and now I will finally analyse the reasons for those feelings. Most of all, I will talk about Temple's memories of Malcolm, a young boy who died in the hands of zombies when Temple was distracted by some old blueprints inside a factory warehouse. I argue that, amongst all her unpleasant experiences living in a post-apocalyptic world, this was the event that scarred her the deepest and resulted in trauma: it changed her as a person. I also claim that, because she since disengaged from most human contact and did not tell anyone what had happened, she effectively denied herself the possibility to heal by gaining any new perspective on the memory via collective thought. However, there is some progress in this respect during the novel: especially the relationship she develops with Maury, an unspeaking simpleton, is of aid in the unravelling of the story of Malcolm.

Throughout *The Reapers Are the Angels*, the reader is given glimpses of Temple's earlier years and childhood, either as actual flashbacks or simply as her recounting her memories. These are not presented in a completely chronological manner, so the reader has to collect the pieces to form a logical account of what has happened to Temple. It emerges that, when she was very young, she lived in an orphanage that was destroyed in a fire, and that Malcolm was with her there already. She is not entirely sure whether they were actual siblings: "It could of been he was my brother but all the papers in the orphanage got burned" (Bell 2011, 106). This exemplifies how the severing of blood ties has become common in the post-apocalyptic era, which also means that intergenerational memory can no

longer be easily passed on. However, new ties will be formed as well: the children were later found “holed up in a storm drain, living off squirrels and berries” (ibid., 75) by a man they would eventually start calling Uncle Jackson. Temple was hostile towards him at first, “snarling at him, baring her teeth like a beast of the earth” (ibid.), probably in an attempt to protect her little brother. But Uncle Jackson saw through her defences and invited her and Malcolm to come to his cabin “when you're tired of the drainpipe” (ibid.). The three of them formed the closest thing to a family in Temple's experience before or since.

Uncle Jackson taught Temple “how to shoot, how to hold your breath when you are aiming at a distance, how to drive a car and how to start one without a key” (ibid.): in other words, everyday necessary skills and collective knowledge for a post-apocalyptic world infested with the undead. However, what she probably appreciated the most was the Nepalese gorkha knife he gave her, which she still carries around as the weapon of choice and, without a doubt, as a memento of their time together as a family:

She remembers . . . Malcolm, just a couple of years younger than she, asleep on a mound of blankets in the corner, Uncle Jackson's snoring from the other side of the room, the light from the remaining embers of the fire casting a pale glow through the cabin – and her turning the blade over and over in her hands, her eyes closed, feeling the weight of it and the balance, getting to know it, putting it against the skin of her face and her lips. (Bell 2011, 76)

The scene is rather homely and warm with the dimming firelight and the two sleepers dreaming away. Somehow, even the fact that young Temple is intimately caressing a sharp blade does not disrupt the effect of peacefulness – after all, “it was the first gift anybody had given her since she could remember” (ibid.), and her gestures suggest that she is making friends with what is to become a trusted ally in the battle against the zombies. Already in section 4.1., I mentioned Temple wanting to feel the gorkha knife in her hands when she is in an unfamiliar situation, because it gives her a sense of security.

But the quaint family life will not last: Uncle Jackson is bitten by a zombie in the forearm as he is out hunting, and when he stumbles home he asks Temple to use her knife to cut off his arm.

Temple is only thirteen, but she does as he says in an effort to stop Uncle Jackson from turning into a meatskin. However, it is too late, or perhaps it was futile all along. The man can feel the change coming, so he sends Temple away with her little brother: “Now you take the guns and put them in the trunk of the car, and you take Malcolm, and the two of you drive away from here and don't come back. You got it? You listening to me?” (Bell 2011, 108). Temple shakes her head in denial as her eyes fill with tears, but Uncle Jackson is adamant: “Now you've got bigger things to think about, little bit. You've made a home out of this world somehow, I don't know how you did it, but you did. And that means you can go anywhere in it. . . . Never let anyone tell you you don't belong where you're at” (ibid., 109). With these words of encouragement, the siblings are sent to survive alone in the world once again.

Being forced to sever the arm of a man who has become a father figure and then leaving him to die would arguably be traumatic for anyone to experience. However, Temple is a tough girl who is accustomed to the harshness of the post-apocalyptic reality, as Uncle Jackson clearly discerns when he says that she has made a home of it. She understands that bad things and fatal accidents sometimes happen in such a world. Also, the fact that she did everything she could to try and save him means that Uncle Jackson's death does not haunt her the way Malcolm's does. I would claim as well that because she still had Malcolm with her at the time, the two of them were able to deal with the loss and their memories of it together, collectively.

Temple has some good times after this, travelling around with her little brother. However, the reader already knows that something horrible must have happened to the boy, because whenever Temple remembers even these better instances, she seems distraught. An example of this was given in section 3.1., when Temple visits the toy store and afterwards drugs herself to feel different, because a toy plane reminded her of Malcolm asking about how aeroplanes stay in the air. Evidently this innocent memory was guiding her mind down a dark path. In chapter 2, I talked about bodily memories and the experience of pain. These things play a part in Temple's process of remembering

Malcolm, because after one such instance, it is said that “there are some things she doesn't like to think about because thinking about them takes up every part of her mind and body” (Bell 2011, 112).

In other words, she feels the memories both mentally and physically, and her reactions to them are strong enough to compel her to distract herself from them in some way, be it drugs or something else.

In an effort to escape her memories, Temple is prone to violent outbursts as well. A particularly powerful example of this comes when she is held prisoner by the inheritors (as was discussed in section 3.2.) with her friend Maury, and they threaten to inject the simpleton with the zombie fluid they have used to mutate themselves. Temple “can feel the panic blooming in her like something that had been planted a long time ago. She feels it blooming in her stomach and chest, and there ain't nothing that ever bloomed so fast and so forceful” (ibid., 193). The reason for her panic is that, once again, someone in her care is in danger. Notably, this is a typical plot element of American fiction in general. She tries to calm herself by repeating “he ain't mine to save” (ibid., 196-197) over and over again, but her anger at what is happening is “like an ember or a burning acid swallowing up all her knotted viscera” (ibid.). The present moment blurs as she is taken back to the memory she regrets:

But she hears none of this, because the rain in her ears is coming down too hard, and the iron man, symbol of progress and strength, is towering over her, and she is kneeling by the shape of a small boy, holding it to her. And what she is saying to this shape of a boy that is no longer a boy is this: Malcolm I'm sorry Malcolm Malcolm I'm sorry the planes are flying Malcolm I'm sorry Malcolm look at the giant Malcolm look at the planes Malcolm don't go away you can't go away. (Bell 2011, 197)

She is not only asking for forgiveness for what happened to Malcolm, but also for what she is about to do now: “she sees herself move, as if from a distance” (ibid., 198), and in this trance-like state she attacks her captors, single-handedly slaughtering the three inheritors present in a brutal fashion. Even if killing the men is justified because they are hostile towards Temple and Maury, the force Temple uses in doing so is superfluous: it is almost as if she has gained supernatural powers.

In this way, Temple saves herself and Maury from their predicament. However, violence was not the path Temple wanted to go down on: “She has been there before. She promised never to go there again. God heard the promise. He showed her the island and the vast sea and the peacefulness that was so pure and lonesome it was wider than anything” (ibid., 196-197). Here it becomes clear that one reason for Temple's previous withdrawal from the world to the island was to prevent her from committing further acts of violence. But now, inadvertently, the memory of Malcolm comes to the forefront, as is evidenced by the fact that she hears nothing of what is going on around her, and the feeling of desperation takes over. It is too painful to bear, but to vanquish it, she has to rely on an even stronger emotion: rage. As she is hacking away at the enemy, her mind goes blank of memory because she focuses solely on destroying them. For her, this is better than what she feels when she is remembering Malcolm.

But who exactly is Maury, and why is his fate so tightly linked with Malcolm's in Temple's mind? I have already talked about the two of them visiting a museum in section 3.1., but by that time, they have already been travelling together for a while. Temple actually comes across Maury in a suburban area that she is passing through while running away from Moses Todd. Maury (whose name is not known at this time) is carrying a dead older woman in his arms and trying to flee from a group of zombies that are trailing behind him. Temple attempts to talk some sense into him because the chase is clearly wearing him down, but she soon realises that the man is somehow mentally disabled and, for one thing, cannot speak at all himself. She helps him by killing the zombies and assisting in the burial of the woman, who she suspects to have been his grandmother and caretaker. She then tries to leave, but the man follows him:

What you doin, dummy? You can't come with me. I ain't the one to take care of you. I ain't a kind and gentle creature. You understand me? Look here, you got the wrong girl. I'll feed you to them meatskins just as soon as look at you. I don't need no halfwit to have to worry about. . . . Your livin and dyin ain't on me. It can't be.  
(Bell 2011, 74)

Subsequently, Temple drives away alone. However, when she stops for food and gas a little while later, she remembers Malcolm and Uncle Jackson and the life they had together. Afterwards, she drives back and picks up Maury from where she left him earlier, and that is the beginning of their journey together, in the spirit of archetypal “buddies on the road” narratives.

Temple's speech to Maury about how he cannot come with her suggests that she does not want to take the responsibility for his care. One particular reason that she gives for this is that she is “the wrong girl” to do it, that she is not “kind and gentle”: these qualities are obviously not in particularly high demand in the rough post-apocalyptic world, but the actual motive for her statement is that she is afraid of failing the task. That is also the first thing that connects Maury and Malcolm in Temple's thoughts, because she has already failed with the other. The connection is amplified by her saying that she is not accountable for Maury's “livin and dyin”, which is the opposite of how she felt, and still feels, about Malcolm. However, despite her strong refusal at first, she returns and takes Maury with her. It is significant that she does this after explicitly reminiscing about her past family, because that means that she sees in Maury a chance to do something good, to save a life in return for the ones lost, and perhaps even the possibility of redemption for herself.

Although Maury never speaks, Temple talks to him all the time: this is also how the reader becomes more aware of her past and her thoughts, which means that Maury's presence has a clear narrative purpose. Temple seems to have a tremendous need to explain herself and tell her story, and Maury is a safe person to convey all of it to because he truly can keep a secret. He does not judge Temple, but neither can he impart much forgiveness for her. Interestingly, when Temple finally reveals the full memory of what happened to Malcolm, she does not merely tell it to Maury (even though he is present), but to another person who cannot really answer her: an old Spanish-speaking woman she has just met who lives on an old carnival site. The way the solitary woman is described is like she could almost be a mythical creature of some kind, the keeper of time and memories: “. . .the woman takes an impossibly long scarf from a wooden chest and begins knitting with two needles at

one end of it. The scarf snakes away, dusty from being dragged along the ground, patchy with a harlequin assortment of yarns, its tail end buried somewhere in that trunk behind her” (Bell 2011, 246-247). The scarf is like a metaphor for someone's life: the patches represent different experiences and phases, the dustiness forgetting and times of being trampled underfoot, and the hidden tail end the early years that cannot be remembered. The woman will keep knitting the scarf until the end of that particular life, meaning the person's death.

Temple watches the woman knit, and soon begins to recount her life: where she has travelled, what she has seen along the way, the people she has killed, the zombies she has destroyed, the Miracle of the Fish – everything. It is like her own scarf is now unravelling and revealing all its colours. But she focuses most of all on the the day Malcolm died: she tells “how it happened at the feet of an iron giant because God wanted to remind her of her smallness” (Bell 2011, 248), the “iron giant” being a large statue. She had told Malcolm to wait for her outside while she went exploring into an old factory, but she was so dazzled by the things she found inside, by the beautiful blueprints, that time flew by. After realising how long she had been in the warehouse, she ran outside, panicked, but it was too late: there was “a whole cluster of meatskins” (ibid., 249), and one of them had already reached Malcolm. This is the first time Temple is taken over by the rage that was discussed above: she attacks the zombies and “while she was doing it her blood went crazy – the blood in all her veins boiled and beat like a drum and made her see black hell everywhere she looked, made her monstrous with the sin of vanity, the sin of thinking herself immortal like the iron giant” (ibid.). She describes it as having a “demon in her” (ibid., 250).

But when her rampage comes to an end, she must “open her eyes full to the stinging, punishing orange light of the failing day” (ibid.) and face the reality of Malcolm's death:

She tells the old woman how she held the body of the boy, rocking it and trying to close with gory fingers the zipper seam down his middle. She tells how she sat so long with the boy in her arms that the sky rained down its tears and baptized him and washed him clean for the grave, and how she dug the grave with her hands in the mud at the base of the iron giant and laid him in it, and how she prepared him for heaven by cutting off his head with the gorkha knife so that he wouldn't get lost and

wander back to the surface of the earth like so many had done – and how the brutal task caused her no suffering because she knew by then there was evil in her and that no action, however grotesque or unholy, could be ill-suited for the thing she had become. (Bell 2011, 250)

Here we see how Temple at first refuses to accept that Malcolm is gone, as evidenced by the futile gesture of attempting to mend the fatal wound he has suffered. She appears to be in shock. Moreover, she sits with the body for a long time before doing anything else: it is as though only after the whole world, symbolised by the rain, has mourned him that she can see that he will not wake up again, at least not as a boy. Finally, she is forced to behead him to keep him from turning into a zombie. Although she claims that doing so “caused her no suffering”, I am sceptical of such a statement and, instead, argue that she was traumatised by it as well as everything else that happened that day. This is because she justifies her tranquillity at the scene by her innate evilness which, as I aim to prove, is first and foremost an excuse to escape and bury her anger and grief, and therefore inevitably a false belief about herself.

In their article, Ducharme and Fine talk about the creation of villains in a society, claiming that “most villains are known for a single highly condemned act” (1995/2011, 298). They describe how, in order to be recognised as an evil individual, the “ambiguities of [the person's] moral character are erased” to the point that they are “seen as fully, intensely, and quintessentially evil” (ibid.). They call this the process of demonization (ibid.). On the other hand, any and all good qualities and actions of that person must be denied: this is referred to as “nonpersonhood”, because the person is thus reduced from a full human being to their “evil core” (ibid.). Such processes are necessary from the point of view of collective memory, because it “cannot permit a highly differentiated view of events and persons; complexity must be reduced for collective meaning” (ibid.). That is to say, some things must be forgotten in order to remember anything: a person is later portrayed as having been either wholly good or entirely evil, because the shades of grey become lost along the way with the passage of time.



Even though Ducharme and Fine discuss the creation of villains on the level of society, the logic of their argument is applicable to Temple's perception of herself. Essentially, because of the post-apocalyptic situation and her isolation, she is the society of her life and so, her memory is the collective memory. The "single highly condemned act" she has committed to be known as evil is, of course, failing to save Malcolm from the zombies: she views herself as his killer, because "it was as good as if her own vicious claws had done the ripping" (Bell 2011, 250). After this realisation of her own evilness, described in the quote above when she is burying Malcolm, every act of violence necessary to survive in the brutal world she lives in becomes proof of her rotten character: "she's done things that mark her for ever, as good as a brand on her forehead" (ibid., 134). Certainly this is a case of demonization. Moreover, she has an obvious tendency to ignore her own good qualities, which is the hallmark of creating a "nonperson". An example of this was given above when she first refuses to take Maury with her on the grounds that she is not the right kind of girl to take care of him, which is clearly false since she has already saved his life once even before claiming this, and saves it again when they are captured by the inheritors. She also repeatedly shows him kindness and consideration, which is contradictory to her being quintessentially evil. Even though Temple often seems like an adult already, perhaps the exaggerated misgivings she has about herself are a covert sign of immaturity.

In many ways, Temple's memory processes are broken because she has been without company for long periods of time, meaning that there have been no social frameworks present for her to rely on with remembering: as Halbwachs reminds us, people are "capable of the act of recollection" only "to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks" (1992, 38), meaning that there is no memory outside of social groups. So should Temple have suffered complete amnesia after Malcolm died? This would be too extreme: after all, she does carry the social groups she has been part of in the past, such as the family she had with Malcolm and Uncle Jackson, at least as ghosts on her shoulder. However, their physical absence means that the memories related to that social group

are more easily distorted or forgotten (Halbwachs 1980, 30). This is problematic if we consider Temple's traumatisation because, as was discussed in chapter 2, it is precisely remembering that is often advocated as a “cure” for trauma. Even Temple herself acknowledges that “sometimes it pays to take a deep look inside [your mind] even if you get queasy gazing into those dark corners” (Bell 2011, 13), meaning that it is best to remember even if it proves painful, because otherwise you cannot understand yourself.

As has been already pointed out, Temple struggles with her memories throughout *The Reapers Are the Angels* and often tries to flee them with drugs, violence or other kinds of distractions. This is also why the reader only gains a fragmented view of the traumatic events until quite late in the novel. To conclude my analysis, I argue that Temple's troubles with the memory of her past can be interpreted with the help of William Niederland's concept of “the survivor syndrome”. As was already explained in the theory section of this thesis, Niederland wanted to connect delayed symptoms, which are easily misdiagnosed as some other mental illness, to their actual cause: a past trauma (Kenny 1999, 428-429). The possible symptoms include “pathological guilt” as well as “delusions of persecution” (ibid.), both of which Temple exhibits to some degree:

She tells of moments when she would forget, when her own simmering evil would seem to dissipate and let through the clear spectacle of life. One had to be careful of those moments, because they were fleeting and intended not for her but instead for the delectation of other children of God. Or, if they were meant for her, they could break her heart as easily as mend it, because all that beauty in the suffered world was the same kind of beauty that had got her lost and made her forget her charge, and held up for her loathing gaze her own selfish soul. (Bell 2011, 251)

Here we see how Temple blames herself and her selfishness for Malcolm's death to the point that she feels that she does not deserve to witness anything beautiful in the world. Similar passages are abundant elsewhere in the novel as well, which showcases the pathological nature of her guilt. Moreover, she refers to God: it is him who persecutes her. Earlier “she tells . . . that she has done bad things – things God would not like – and sometimes she wonders if God could be angry at her” (ibid., 247). I have given examples of her religious belief several times and, evidently, she fears divine

punishment. However, the reader understands that what is in fact taking place is Temple projecting her own guilt onto a deity: there is no one who would judge her as harshly as she does herself.

Niederland proposes about the process of remembering a traumatic event that “. . . the whole traumatic sequence rarely emerges clearly. Denial and guilt feelings are constantly in operation, and what emerges is usually revealed in fits and starts, slowly and painfully” (quoted in Kenny 1999, 428). This is remarkably in accordance with the way in which Temple's past is slowly revealed to the reader in *The Reapers Are the Angels*, as well as with her noticeable unease after each flashback. Maury, as a kind of a second Malcolm, brings up in her emotions that she had hoped to have buried forever but, with his unspoken aid, she is also finally able to talk about what happened that day under the iron giant and bring that knowledge to the collective. She herself says of memories that “her mind feels almost filled up already, with people and sights and words and sins and redemptions” (Bell 2011, 247). She is only a teenager, so it is strange for her to feel this way. However, perhaps it is then only fitting that the novel should end in her death – the ultimate release from memories.

## 5. Conclusion

*The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;  
The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.  
As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.* (Bell 2011, 230)

These verses that have also inspired the name of Bell's novel are actually from the book of Matthew in the Bible. Fittingly, it is a passage about the end of the world, or the apocalypse. What remains unclear, however, is who are the good seed and who are the tares in the novel, as well as who is the devil and who are the angels. It would perhaps be satisfying to conclude that the tares are the zombies, and that the humans who are left are the good seed. One could also suggest that it is the people who are the angels, because they at least attempt to banish the zombies and burn them as tares. But what if the exact opposite is true: what if it is the zombies who are the children of the kingdom and also the ones who shall inherit the Earth after the people have perished? After all, the verses talk of the end of *this* world – but what about the next?

Throughout this thesis, it has been my aim to examine the ways in which memory, particularly the collective kind, is important and evident in *The Reapers Are the Angels*. I mainly employed Maurice Halbwachs' research on the social nature of memory, as well as newer developments that have emerged in the field of memory studies, as my theoretical framework. Because it is situated in a world after the apocalypse, Bell's novel offers an interesting glimpse into what could happen to collective memory if society were to fall apart in such a devastating manner: it mirrors contemporary anxieties. Moreover, the protagonist Temple's memories of her past constitute a parallel story beside the one that is unfolding in the here and now of the novel, which fortifies the reader's sense of the crucial role of memory in it.

The analysis part of the thesis was divided into two major chapters: the first one dealt with memory on the level of society and groups, whereas the second one focused more on the individual point of view to collective memory by discussing Temple's situation as an orphan and someone who

knows the world only in its post-apocalyptic state. By using this kind of division, I was able to approach the topic in a broad, clear manner and logically move from the more general observations about collective memory in a post-apocalyptic world to the more specific claims about Temple's identity as well as her traumatic past.

In section 3.1., I started my analysis by discussing the physical reminders or traces of the world before the apocalypse, such as derelict buildings, abandoned valuables and faded magazines. I concluded that they offer a rather fragmented and coincidental view of the past to those who did not know that world themselves (such as Temple). The way that people are separated from each other with no means of communication means that they no longer have a unified sense of collective memory on the level of society. Also, I noted that the relative value of many objects has dramatically changed because of the collapse of such societal systems as the economy and consumerism. In other words, survival is what matters now, not whether you have a more expensive necklace than the person fighting zombies next to you.

In the same subchapter, I also turned my gaze on how the actual zombies are portrayed in *The Reapers Are the Angels*. I argued that, despite all other traces of the past that litter the scenery, it is the undead that function as the most intense reminders of how things were. This is because it is not only obvious that they were once people themselves and lived human lives, but the sheer masses of them, spread everywhere, mean that the survivors can never forget the state of the world that they are living in at the moment. I also discussed how the zombies in the novel are depicted as having some sense of memory of their own, at least a very basic, primal one. This was exemplified by referring to Randolph Grierson, the zombie who had never met another one of its own kind and, consequently, seemed not to know how to be a “proper” zombie. In this way, the novel makes a statement about the necessity of contact with others and their collective memory in order to know yourself, a theme that resurfaced when I examined the character of Temple in chapter 4.

A society ultimately consists of many smaller groups, such as families, which is why I located the discussion on intergenerational memory under the headline of memory and society. In section 3.2., I introduced two distinct kinship groups, the Griersons and the inheritors, as examples of post-apocalyptic communities in *The Reapers Are the Angels*. Both families had mainly kept to themselves since the apocalypse, but they had employed very different methods to cope with it: the Griersons, particularly the lady of the house as well as her younger grandson, Richard, had retreated to living almost like there had been no drastic change in the world at all. Conversely, the inheritors had found a way to strengthen themselves and use the zombies in a way that benefits them. However, I claimed that because of the isolation both groups endure, and the way the collective memories of the new generation are limited to only those of their immediate family, they resist changes and innovations that may be vital to their existence in the long run.

I referred to Richard Grierson again in 4.1., in which I contrasted his longing for a gone world that he has never even been a part of with Temple's matter-of-fact attitude to the dangers of post-apocalypse. I noted that Temple's illiteracy is a significant reason for their disagreements, because Richard's fantasies are often based on what he has read in old books. I made a similar comparison between Temple and Dirk, a teenager who has had the privilege to grow up in a relatively safe place. Consequently, his experiences and memories are nothing like Temple's, who has travelled most of her life and has had to defend herself against both people and zombies countless times – they lack a shared sense of collective memory, and it is hard to believe that they belong to the same generation. I found that Temple actually has much more in common with Moses, an older man who is chasing her down to kill her. They share a “code” of sorts, or knowledge of the rules of the world. To me, this is just another expression for collective memory.

As was discussed especially in section 4.2. of this thesis, Temple thinks that she is evil – in other words, the kind of tare that is alluded to in the verses quoted above. Nevertheless, I argued that the reason she believes this is because she has been traumatised by little Malcolm's death. Can it then

be that the devil who has sowed this seed of wickedness in her is no other than memory? According to my findings, however, it is not simply the tragic memory that haunts her, but the fact that she has kept it to herself, letting the guilt and sorrow simmer beneath the surface, ready to burst violently. The beginning of her healing is when she meets Maury, who is almost like another Malcolm, and chooses to take care of him. Thus perhaps the true devils of the post-apocalyptic world of *The Reapers Are the Angels* are actually isolation and loneliness. Furthermore, they are also the ultimate enemies of collective memory.

In addition to collective memory, I think that there are several other interesting topics that could be studied in congruence with Bell's novel. *The Reapers Are the Angels* takes place in the "Bible Belt" states of Southern U.S., and religious allegories, symbols and metaphors are prolifically present in the story. Religion with its traditions is also part of collective memory in many ways, but I have only touched on the possibilities of that direction of study in this thesis. The reason for my decision not to dwell on those aspects is that they could easily constitute a thesis of their own and, therefore, were beyond my scope at this point. Additionally, the South of the United States has been quite a popular topic of regional and cultural studies, and I believe that this novel would have much to offer to that kind of research as well.

The future of collective memory remains uncertain at the end of *The Reapers Are the Angels*, but Temple's death certainly casts a shadow over it. Ironically, it is Moses, the man who wanted to kill her himself, who is left to bury and remember her. In his eyes, she transforms from a tare to an angel, a warrior angel who understood how things really work after an apocalypse. The world is a darker place without her, yet if she joins the ranks of the reapers, perhaps the harvest will be a good one. Moreover, even if people are few and scattered, most archives and museums destroyed, and the zombies roam ever wider, there will always be something left for memory because, in Temple's words, "there's more past than present in the world today. On the balance" (Bell 2011, 274).

## Works Cited

### Primary source:

Bell, Alden. 2011. *The Reapers Are the Angels*. London: Tor Books.

### Secondary sources:

Assman, Jan. 1995. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." Trans. John Czaplicka. *New German Critique* 65, Spring-Summer: 125-133.

Austin, Andrea. 2011. "Cyberpunk and the Living Dead." In *Generation Zombie: Essays on the Living Dead in Modern Culture*, ed. Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz, 147-155. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Bartlett, Frederic. 1932/2011. "From *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 116-121. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ben-Amos, Dan. 1999. "Afterword." In *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, 297-300. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1969/2011. "From the Storyteller." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 99-103. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, James. 1999. *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Boluk, Stephanie and Wylie Lenz. 2011. "Introduction: Generation Z, the Age of Apocalypse." In *Generation Zombie: Essays on the Living Dead in Modern Culture*, ed. Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz, 1-17. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Ducharme, Lori and Gary Alan Fine. 1995/2011. "From the Construction of Nonpersonhood and Demonization: Commemorating the 'Traitorous' Reputation of Benedict Arnold." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 296-299. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Erll, Astrid. 2011. *Memory in Culture*. Trans. Sara B. Young. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Goody, Jack. 1998/2011. "From Memory in Oral and Literate Traditions." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 321-324. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1939. "Individual Consciousness and Collective Mind." *American Journal of Sociology* 44, 6: 812-822.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1980. *The Collective Memory*. Trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter. New York: Harper Colophon.



- Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. *On Collective Memory*. Ed. and Trans. Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Harrison, Robert Pogue. 2001. "Hic Jacet." *Critical Inquiry* 27, 3: 393-407.
- Jedlowski, Paolo. 2001. "Memory and Sociology: Themes and Issues." *Time & Society* 10, 1: 29-44.
- Keightley, Emily. 2008. "Engaging with Memory." In *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, ed. Michael Pickering, 175-192. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Kenny, Michael G. 1999. "A Place for Memory: The Interface between Individual and Collective History." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, 3: 420-437.
- Lowenthal, David. 1975. "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory." *The Geographical Review* 65, 1: 1-36.
- Lowenthal, David. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mannheim, Karl. 1952/2011. "From the Sociological Problem of Generations." In *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 92-98. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Manjikian, Mary. 2012. *Apocalypse and Post-Politics: The Romance of the End*. Maryland: Lexington.
- Middleton, David and Derek Edwards. 1990. "Introduction." In *Collective Remembering*, ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards, 1-22. London: Sage.
- Misztal, Barbara A. 2003. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Paffenroth, Kim. 2011. "Zombies as Internal Fear or Threat." In *Generation Zombie: Essays on the Living Dead in Modern Culture*, ed. Stephanie Boluk and Wylie Lenz, 18-26. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Radley, Adam. 1990. "Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past." In *Collective Remembering*, ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards, 46-59. London: Sage.
- Reyes, G. Mitchell. 2010. "Memory and Alterity: The Case for an Analytic of Difference." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 43, 3: 222-252.
- Rimstead, Roxanne. 2003. "Introduction: Double Take: The Uses of Cultural Memory." *Cultural Memory and Social Identity* 80: 1-14.
- Russell, Nicolas. 2006. "Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs." *The French Review* 79, 4: 792-804.
- Schwartz, Barry. 1982. "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory." *Social Forces* 61, 2: 374-402.

Weissberg, Liliane. 1999. "Introduction." In *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, 7-26. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Whitehead, Anne. 2009. *Memory*. New York: Routledge.