History in the Making

How Long-form Journalism Frames Contemporary Histories, Building Mosaics Out of Ruins, Fragments and Ephemera

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An exegesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements
for a practice-based degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Victoria, Australia

January 2021

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Abstract

This exegesis for a professional practice PhD reflects on narrative theories influencing my long-form radio journalism on recent instabilities and disunity in Europe. Jürgen Habermas once explained[1] how the 'Fourth Estate' helped shape 'the public sphere (*die Öffentlichkeit*)', an idea that generations of journalists have worked by. To complement that insight, this exegesis combines self-reflection on my practice with studies of other instances, theories and practices of long-form narration. I also suggest how and why long-form journalism equates with the telling of contemporary history.

The initial 'news' prompts for the outputs occasioning this exegesis for a practice-based PhD were Europe's recent *crise de conscience*. The recent work discussed in this exegesis for a PhD continued my long-form journalistic examination of Europe over the past ten years. The work is aggregated on a website, *The Identity Papers*[2]—so called, because the radio material mulls over a region with an evolving identity crisis.

The European crisis 'news' prompts of this recent journalism are less central to this exegesis of a practice-based PhD than is my discussion of meaning-shaping forms and functions of long-form journalism itself. My approach is guided by the method and example of Walter Benjamin. The key agenda of this exegesis ponders the contexts and precedents, forms and practices of long-form journalism. By exploring narrative issues of efficacy, appropriateness and juxtaposition, I emphasise how long-form journalism is also a cross-disciplinary telling of contemporary histories.

The examination weighting of this PhD should lean more towards the theoretical—70% exegesis and 30% practice-based artefact.

[1] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019, Paperback), 181.
[2] Michael Shirrefs, 'The Identity Papers' [Website], (2011-2020), <https://www.theidentitypapers.com/>.

Statement of authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Michael Shirrefs

15 January 2021

General acknowledgements

This project was made possible through the support and intellectual generosity of my supervisors—Assoc. Prof. Dr Adrian Jones and Prof. Dr Lawrie Zion. I especially want to thank Dr Jones for his unwavering belief in the project, for opening up new ideas that elevated my work immensely, and Dr Zion for teaching me the importance of rigour. I must also acknowledge the early encouragement from Dr Catherine Padmore and Assoc. Prof. Dr Clare Wright, without whose advice and enthusiasm at the very outset, this project may never have materialised.

Many thanks to the La Trobe University History Department for welcoming me in and for all its ongoing support throughout this PhD, in particular for enabling me to travel when needed. My thanks go to staff across the campus, for their ready and kind assistance and advice, especially over the final stretch of 2020/2021, through the difficult time that COVID-19 presented for everyone.

I must acknowledge the Australian Broadcasting Corporation for giving me many years in the privileged position of being a radio program-maker and broadcaster. I particularly want to thank those that taught me my craft and gave me the opportunities to work in the specialised area of radio feature-making—Tony Macgregor, Cathy Peters, Michelle Rayner, and Claudia Taranto. In addition, I particularly want to thank two dear friends and colleagues—Amanda Smith, alongside whom I worked as a producer and learnt rigour as a program-maker; and Garry Havrillay, who was technical producer on many of my projects and remains an ongoing collaborator.

An unpayable debt of gratitude goes to my ABC work colleague and wife, Dr Lyn Gallacher, who has been my partner, supporter and co-conspirator in so many of my feature-making projects, as well my source of stability throughout this entire PhD.

There are innumerable people to thank for the support with the making of the European radio programs, but some must be mentioned. The European Union

Delegation to Australia provided enormous support, opening doors across Europe, and, in particular, I want to thank Nikki-Lynne Hunter and Jan Skorich. I must also acknowledge the support and encouragement of Amanda Crichton and Prof. Bruce Wilson, who ran the EU Centre at RMIT University in Melbourne. Similarly, the German focused programs were impossible without the support of the German Embassy in Australia and the Goethe-Institut. Other crucial allies for my work in Germany—Ariane Pauls; Dr Irina Herrschner; Hille and Uli Herrschner; Jasmin Singh; and Dr Martin Grabert—have helped me to maintain my connection to the region.

Much gratitude to Patrizia Bach in Berlin for her extraordinary scholarship and for allowing me to use one of her images. Also, many thanks to the Walter Benjamin Archiv at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin for making available pictures from their collection.

Many others have given enormous support along the way—Bill Kelly and Iratxe Momoitio Astorkia in Guernica (Gernika); Maris Hellrand in Tallinn; Peter Watts in London; and Søren Krogh in Copenhagen. Four other people have been invaluable in their keeping me on track, throughout this process—Assoc. Prof. Priscilla Robinson; Assoc. Prof. Andrew Dodd; Dr Greg Lehman; and Dr John Tebbutt.

Finally, my thanks go to all the countless people who, along the way, have taught me, guided me, encouraged me, and been generous in getting me to this point.

This work was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Research questions

The journalistic practice-based artefact of this PhD is not one radio program or feature-documentary. It is a series of related broadcast works and associated articles, made by this researcher, and aggregated on *The Identity Papers* website.[3] It is the cumulative effect of the narrative arc, produced by this set of works, that is discussed in this exegesis through the following questions:

- How does the building of a cumulative narratology work in the telling of contemporary histories?
- How do these discrete, but related, fragments work together in long-form journalism?
- How is this approach demonstrated through the work of Walter Benjamin and through the work of this researcher?

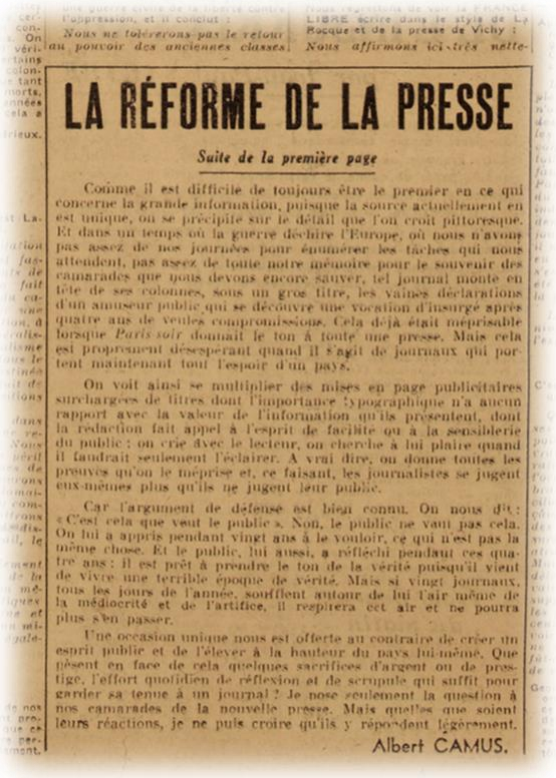
[3] Ibid.

Introduction

There is a line that has been quoted and misquoted, for many decades, that 'journalism is the first rough draft of history'. Although generally attributed to Philip L. Graham, the publisher and co-owner of the *Washington Post* in the post-war years, the line appeared somewhat earlier. One dogged researcher found a variation of the thought as far back as 1905—'The newspapers are making morning after morning the rough draft of history.'[4] The line persists, because the idea contains elements of truth.

The French writer and journalist Albert Camus was equally certain. Writing in the underground newspaper *Combat*, on the 1 September 1944,[5] just seven days after the liberation of Paris by Allied troops, but still eight months before the Allied victory in Europe, he tackled a subject that mattered to the French people—who had, for more than four years, suffered under the propaganda and violence of German occupation—the principle of press freedom and independence.

> What is a journalist? He is... an historian of the moment, and truth must be his primary concern.[6]



LA RÉFORME DE LA PRESSE

Suite de la première page

Comme il est difficile de toujours être le premier en ce qui concerne la grande information, puisque la source actuellement en est unique, on se précipite sur le détail que l'on croit pittoresque. Et dans un temps où la guerre déchire l'Europe, où nous n'avons pas assez de nos journées pour énumérer les tâches qui nous attendent, pas assez de toute notre mémoire pour le souvenir des camarades que nous devons encore sauver, tel journal monte en tête de ses colonnes, sous un gros titre, les vaines déclarations d'un amuseur public qui se découvre une vocation d'insurgé après quatre ans de veules compromissions. Cela déjà était méprisable lorsque *Paris soir* donnait le ton à toute une presse. Mais cela est proprement désespérant quand il s'agit de journaux qui portent maintenant tout l'espoir d'un pays.

On voit ainsi se multiplier des mises en page publicitaires surchargées de titres dont l'importance typographique n'a aucun rapport avec la valeur de l'information qu'ils présentent, dont la rédaction fait appel à l'esprit de facilité ou à la sensiblerie du public : on crie avec le lecteur, on cherche à lui plaire quand il faudrait seulement l'éclairer. A vrai dire, on donne toutes les preuves qu'on le méprise et, ce faisant, les journalistes se jugent eux-mêmes plus qu'ils ne jugent leur public.

Car l'argument de défense est bien connu. On nous dit : « C'est cela que veut le public ». Non, le public ne veut pas cela. On lui a appris pendant vingt ans à le vouloir, ce qui n'est pas la même chose. Et le public, lui aussi, a réfléchi pendant ces quatre ans : il est prêt à prendre le ton de la vérité puisqu'il vient de vivre une terrible époque de vérité. Mais si vingt journaux, tous les jours de l'année, soufflent autour de lui l'air même de la médiocrité et de l'artifice, il respirera cet air et ne pourra plus s'en passer.

Une occasion unique nous est offerte au contraire de créer un esprit public et de l'élever à la hauteur du pays lui-même. Que pèsent en face de cela quelques sacrifices d'argent ou de prestige, l'effort quotidien de réflexion et de scrupule qui suffit pour garder sa tenue à un journal ? Je pose seulement la question à nos camarades de la nouvelle presse. Mais quelles que soient leurs réactions, je ne puis croire qu'ils y répondent légèrement.

Albert CAMUS.

Fig. 1—Albert Camus' article in the French Resistance newspaper Combat—1 September 1944

Assess these words in context—the urgency, fear and losses that the French Resistance had endured. Fresh in Camus' mind was the execution on 13 June 1944, by the Gestapo, of one of the Resistance's most revered figures, a fellow writer, René

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[4] Tony Pettinato, 'Newspapers: "the rough draft of history"', *The Readex Blog* <https://www.readex.com/blog/newspapers-rough-draft-history>, 19.
[5] Albert Camus, 'La réforme de la presse', *Combat: Organe du mouvement de libération Française* (Paris, France), 1 September 1944, in Gallica [online database], <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4748570f/f1.item.double>, accessed 20 September 2020.
[6] Albert Camus, *Camus at Combat: Writing 1944-1947*, ed. Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 24.

Leynaud,[7] arrested in Lyon on 16 March 1944. Leynard was known simply as Clair.[8] Camus was not idly philosophising. He was pleading, under great duress, for the role of the journalist to be acknowledged and respected.

Journalism is the act of witnessing, communicating and contextualising contemporary events, for a wide audience, via a media outlet. This is usually our main window onto worlds of events we are unlikely to witness first-hand, but which, in an increasingly globalised world of complex mutual dependencies, may well have meaning for our lives, if not impacting directly on us personally. In the moment of telling of contemporary events, people rely on reportage and analysis, and this reliance must discipline the way we record and process these moments. If the daily delivery of short-form news gives us the scattered fragments of knowledge, then long-form journalism takes us further, in re-assembling and contextualising these fragments—against a wider panorama of events, and against a deeper framework of historical understanding.

The example presented, in this thesis, is of a body of broadcast radio documentaries and published articles examining fundamental changes in modern Europe and the European Union—a region increasingly conflicted and riven with existential questions, structural uncertainties and identity crises. The use of my own work is not intended to elevate it as an exemplar of 'great' journalism. Rather, my work is useful because it enables me to show strengths and limits of the form, and to demonstrate its relationship to history. Journalists can never be certain which fragments to pick up and which to discard. The job is to provide clear and independent witness, and immediate context. The rest is for the future.

> The chronicler who narrates events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accord with the following truth—nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost to history. [9]
>
> Walter Benjamin, On the concept of history

[7] Albert Camus, *Resistance, rebellion and death*, Hamish Hamilton paperbacks, tr. Justin O'Brien (London: H. Hamilton, 1964), 33.
[8] Ibid. 31.
[9] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, ed. Michael W Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003, H/B), 390.

This PhD is also predicated on an argument that the two realms of contemporary history and long-form journalism overlap significantly. It is, therefore, important at the outset to define my use of these terms. 'Contemporary history', in its most literal sense, means the documentation, analysis and contextualisation of events as they unfold—events contemporaneous to the historian. Scholars have long debated the use of the term, some suggesting it should denote fixed periods of history. For example, The Institute of Contemporary British History, founded in 1989, used 1945 as its notional starting point.[10] East Germany also took 1945, *Jahr Null*, as its basis for a Museum of German History, while 1792 was to be the new beginning for Republican revolutionary France. The very nature of the contemporary fluidity, however, meant these projects were rendered obsolete, before they could be finished. Reunification with the West changed the German story, and Napoleon ended the Republic.

This points to national and cultural variations in what is referred to and studied as contemporary history. For Germany more broadly, both 1870 (unification) and 1917 (US entry into World War One) have been used as starting points for 'contemporary' history. Soviet Russia also took its 1917 Revolution as its new beginning, although no longer in post-Soviet 2017. The idea of 1789 as the upheaval transforming 'modern' or even 'contemporary' France is near universal now, but it was often decried and denied between 1815 and 1875. Historian Geoffrey Barraclough therefore suggested one approach, that:

> contemporary history should be considered as a distinct period of time, with characteristics of its own which mark it off from the preceding period... [e.g.] revolutionary change and crisis.[11]

However, none of this makes sense as either a universal or temporal concept. Barraclough kept circling and interrogating the idea, and finally came up with a more compelling definition. It also aligns more clearly with my conception of this PhD.

> Contemporary history begins when the problems which are actual in the world today first take visible shape.[12]

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[10] Peter Catterall, 'What (if anything) is distinctive about contemporary history?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 32/4 (1997), 441-452, 441, in JSTOR [online database], accessed 2020/07/21/.
[11] Geoffrey Barraclough, *An Introduction to Contemporary History* (Rev. edn., London: Watts, 1966).
[12] Ibid. 12.

Peter Catterall describes this as giving 'contemporary history an elastic hinterland'.[13] To give events due context and to derive durable meaning, I refer to a hinterland requiring as much historical depth and global latitude as an historian needs. Barraclough's definition then begs the question; how do we know when events first became visible, especially if the historian is required to maintain some independent distance? The link is the short-form journalism of those moments, supplemented by the more considered long-form journalism that assembles and expands this work.

Which brings me to my next definition—long-form journalism. In the context of this thesis, long-form journalism refers to expansive, well-researched, highly considered, non-fiction content, created—mostly—for a general audience and disseminated either via traditional mass media, or through newer digital media platforms. The format can be text, audio, vision, or a hybrid mix of these three. I say this is *mostly* for a general audience, because there is an increasing trend towards niche or specialist audiences—referred to as niche-casting, in contrast to broadcasting.

Long-form journalism takes many forms—essays and feature articles in newspapers, magazines and online; documentary and investigative features on film, television, radio and online; and, increasingly, online-only podcasts. Some text-based long-form journalism material may also end up being published in book form, but this is usually a secondary outlet.

Long-form journalism has often been difficult to define, simply because it can take so many different forms, and is not always created by those traditionally thought of as news journalists. Megan Le Masurier notes that, 'news' is often used interchangeably with 'journalism' and that 'it may be time to begin disentangling journalism from news' which would mean 'disentangling our association of news and journalism with speed and instantaneity.'[14] If we accept this, long-form journalism can, theoretically, be created by anyone with the knowledge and skills to communicate sophisticated ideas on public media platforms.

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[13] Peter Catterall, *What (if anything) is distinctive about contemporary history?*, 451.
[14] Megan Le Masurier, 'What is Slow Journalism?', *Journalism Practice*, 9/2 (2015), 138-152, 139.

Other labels have emerged over time. For example, *New Journalism* became attached to writers like Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson in the early 1970s. While neither was fond of the label, the term gained favour. Former *Atlantic Monthly* Editor-in Chief, James Bennet, wrote, ''New Journalism' is a stirring promise to the wider world; 'long-form' is the mumbled incantation of a dying priesthood.'[15] The suggestion is that the word *long* in long-form was unenticing.

Another label that has emerged over recent years is *slow-journalism*. The idea has developed to align with the rise of a wider *slow* movement, which began with the idea of *Slow Food*. Megan Le Massurier has made the connection to journalism clear.

> The core principles of Slow Food have resonated beyond food to many areas of culture and everyday life, with implications for individual responsibility about the way we consume journalism... If we understand 'slow' in its obvious temporal sense of allowing journalists to take their time, then slow journalism has been with us since the early days of journalism.[16]

The term *long-form journalism* has been familiar to me, however, over many years working in public radio as a producer, presenter and feature-maker. The term also has the merit of not being specific to any one medium. I use it in this setting, because it is a simple and unambiguous description, even if the label has fallen out of fashion.

[15] James Bennet, 'Against 'Long-Form Journalism'', *The Atlantic* [online journal] (2013), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/12/against-long-form-journalism/282256/>.
[16] Megan Le Masurier, *What is Slow Journalism?*, 141.

History and journalism—Finding common ground

Historie = Investigation = Journalism

Why should comparisons be drawn between, what we consider today to be, the two distinct realms of journalism and history?

There are very few studies looking for common ground. Even when these two practices were contrasted together closely, journalism was usually narrowly defined via short-form, daily news. An example can be found in a cross-disciplinary course that was run at Boston University in 2009, between their History and Journalism schools.[17] Most of the case studies cited framed journalism in its most ephemeral form. But journalism covers a wider spectrum than that, with highly researched long-form documentaries, feature articles and series often sitting closer to what we think of as academic practice.

A relationship can be established between journalism and history, because scholarly analysis of Greek history indicates that both disciplines have shared cultural DNA. Modern conceptions of both journalism and history spring from a single idea in the fifth century BCE—the Greek notion of *historie*, as conceived by Herodotus (c. 484 – c. 425 BCE) and extended by Thucydides (c. 460 – c. 400 BCE). At this point of origin, the word *historie*, coined by Herodotus, meant a personal *investigation* or *inquiry*, unassisted by muses, prayer or divination—as claimed by the great poets, Homer and Hesiod, who preceded the historians.

Even in the fifth century BCE, explicit and implicit differences arose in the approaches of each of the two historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, to personal *investigation* or *inquiry*. They differed on what constitutes reliability in *historie*.[18] The differences endure. A distinction was also clearly made at this point, in the mid-fifth century BCE, between contemporary history and ancient history. With Thucydides, history became

[17] C. B. Daly, 'Are journalists always wrong?: And are historians always right?', *Journalism Practice*, 5/5 (2011), 538-550.
[18] J. W. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 2-5.

an examination of contemporary or recent events—events that could be verified either from eye-witnesses, from first-hand accounts and from reliable record-keeping. Ancient history, on the other hand, was the province of traditions, legends, myths, epic tales from the realms of the poets. Virginia Hunter speaks of Thucydides' 'difficulty in finding trustworthy evidence for 'ancient history' (τά παλαιά)', [19] which he made clear at the start of his *History*.

> it is difficult to be sure of every detail in the evidence since people accept quite uncritically any [oral] reports of the past they get from others, even those relating to their own country.[20]

So too, the practice of *historia*, as Herodotus saw it, relied heavily on the art of interrogation, especially with priests or travellers, and record keepers or archivists. This was, conceivably, not too dissimilar to what we now think of today as an interview or an oral history. Apart from his harrowing personal account of the plague in Athens,[21] Thucydides, on the other hand, took a more studious approach. While he also interviewed widely, he chose to curate information, in the interests of discovering the 'truth', rather than giving us all that he heard. Herodotus was more of the opinion that the readers could make up their own minds, so he generously offered everything, largely unfiltered. For the most part though, Thucydides relied heavily on personal observation, official documents, treaties, decrees and annalistic chronicles, as his source material.[22] Thucydides mistrusted Herodotus' sole reliance on his 'garrulous'[23] methodology. When it came to ancient histories, however, both scholars engaged in what has been described as 'manipulations' or 'rationalizations'[24] of the received stories of distant times and events, in order to make sense of them in the present.

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[19] Virginia J. Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton Legacy Library edition.. edn., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 17.
[20] Thucydides and Jeremy Mynott, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), [1.20] 14.
[21] Ibid. [2.47.43-42.54.45] 118-123.
[22] J. W. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century*, 5-6.,
Thucydides and Jeremy Mynott, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, [1.22] 15-16.
[23] J. W. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century*, 12.
[24] Truesdell S. Brown, 'The Greek Sense of Time in History as Suggested by Their Accounts of Egypt', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 11/3 (1962), 257-270, 262-263, in JSTOR [online database], accessed 2020/08/23/.

> 'Manipulation' may be strong, but certainly 'rationalization' is a word widely employed to describe both historians' use of epic poetry. [25]

However, Thucydides does distinguish himself when he speaks of both 'the poets' and 'the chroniclers', the latter considered by many to be a reference to Herodotus.[26]

> no one should prefer rather to believe the songs of the poets, who exaggerate things for artistic purposes, or the writings of the chroniclers, which are composed more to make good listening than to represent the truth…[27]

Unlike Thucydides, Herodotus didn't mind engaging in 'Homeric' renderings[28] of a distant and misty past, though he did acknowledge the risks this posed to historical accuracy.

> These are the stories of the Persians and the Phoenicians. For my own part, I will not say that this or that story is true.[29]

A great historian of historians, Donald Kelley, has since reflected on this willingness of Herodotus to engage with ancient history, saying that, if he 'was the father of *historia*, he was also "the father of lies"'[30]. Kelley then compared the readiness of Herodotus to receive and re-tell the wonders of the ancients to the determined *presentist*, Thucydides, whom he says:

> eschewed earlier history—events beyond living memory—as being fabulous and inaccessible.[31]

Kelley, however, says that both Herodotus and Thucydides recognised that the distant past was not simply an earlier version of their world, but that it was, in fact, akin to a 'foreign place'.

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[25] Virginia J. Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides*, 18.
[26] J. W. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century*, 33.
[27] Thucydides and Jeremy Mynott, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, [1.21] 14.
[28] J. W. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, chronicles, romances and inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the twentieth century*, 12.
[29] Herodotus, *The Persian Wars, Volume I* (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press), [1.5] 9.
[30] Donald R. Kelley, *Versions of History from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 12.
[31] Ibid. 8.

> This recognition of pastness, this consciousness of and curiosity about remote and alien experience, marks the beginnings of the critical study of 'history.'[32]

In all this, we see the origin of myriad subsequent debates over historical interpretation, and of arguments over journalistic versus historical practice.[33]

How we approach the telling of both the present and the past, whether recent or ancient, depends entirely on context—where, when, why, who is adopting the position of speaker, and to whom they are speaking. Likewise, in the second book of *The Persian Wars*, Herodotus attempts to build an historical picture of Egypt. This meant he had to juggle many differing voices and stories, from both inside Egypt and abroad—weighing inevitable differences in knowledge, vantage point and, therefore, interpretation of those he interviewed. Taking just one aspect of this, in his attempt to understand the origins and significance of the River Nile in the formation of an Egyptian society, Herodotus seems bewildered by the many divergent and often contradictory theories he encountered.[34] Herodotus admitted he had a problem attempting to apprehend and distil some sort of truth out of myriad fragments of spurious or semi-reliable evidence. This is also a perennial dilemma for both historians and journalists today. And while Thucydides may have found greater comfort and assurance by relying on more durable, officially recorded evidence, this method was also not without its risks and inaccuracies.

At this point, we see two distinct approaches to reconciling the notion that contemporary history is not ancient history, i.e., that our age is NOT an age of Gods and Heroes. Within the approach to contemporary history, there is Herodotus' more loquacious and effusive way of triangulating truth by being sure to report anything (interesting), then letting his readers decide. And there is Thucydides' sober academic way of researching in depth until he finds the one true truth, and then climbing on a

[32] Ibid. 2.
[33] Virginia J. Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides*, 19.
[34] Herodotus, *The Persian Wars, Volume II* (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press), [2.12-12.20] 287-301.

soap box, such as when he exemplified Pericles' funeral oration as Athenian statesmanship.[35]

Don't, however, be gulled by sobriety. Herodotus's way could be characterised as a proto-journalistic practice, downgrading him compared to the, seemingly, more disciplined and rigorous approach of the Thucydides. But what we see is not a binary distinction. Herodotus, Thucydides, and their successors exist on a spectrum in the practice of collection and analysis, just as today where, in many ways, historians and journalists often tackle similar problems, using similar toolsets. The difference is, in large part, the kind of audience, and the time available. The overlaps and the parallels are profound.

More than 2400 years after these ideas took root in Greek thought and practice, the question arises as to how close, or how divergent, are history and journalism today. This then leads me to ask—how important is journalism, and especially long-form journalism, to the way history is recorded, processed, understood and transmitted?

Bringing *historie* into the present

This exegesis necessarily weaves a path through both the scholarly considerations of historical truth finding and telling, and the personal motivations, touching on my real-world experience as a radio documentary-maker using journalistic long-form. My recent radio work posed these questions. What was happening to European cohesion? And what did my own practice, as a producer, writer, researcher and interviewer, have to do with the way we document this era of change?

Some threads of this PhD can be drawn back thirty years, to my four years living in the United Kingdom, coinciding with the European negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty (1992-93)[36]—the set of trans-national charters and agreements redefining the

[35] Thucydides and Jeremy Mynott, *Thucydides: The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, [2.34-46] 109-117.
[36] The Maastricht Treaty was ratified in 1993. It later became known as the Treaty on European Union (TEU), when it was amended and updated in 2007 under the overarching Treaty of Lisbon. This new treaty also covered the amending and updating of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which was renamed the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

shape and reach of the European Union. Maastricht planted an awareness of Europe as more than a label. Europe became the notional embodiment of a region consciously re-assembling itself—after years of conflict, division and destruction—as a peaceful, collaborative and optimistic unity. This was a counter-intuitive act of defiance against historical trends, differences and violently combative reflexes.

A personal Benjaminian approach

Another clear point of origin for this thesis has been my research into the life and work of German historian and writer, philosopher and critic—Walter Benjamin (1892-1940). Benjamin's ways speak to the radio-long-form professional and intellectual world I inhabit. Somewhat like Herodotus, Benjamin was a bowerbird. So am I.

This is why I started with the Ancient Greeks, and now move to the twentieth century. Radio is an ever-changing cornucopia of ideas, flirting and flitting from week to week. By linking Herodotus to Benjamin, I also note another common trait. I have already referred to the Greek writer as garrulous and loquacious. I now want to qualify that. There is, in the manner of both writers, an intellectual generosity and an inclusiveness—a determination to make the reader welcome to, and welcome in, their ideas, rather than being a guardian of knowledge. The arch view sat better with Thucydides or with Plato.

In the case of Benjamin, this bower of generosity and inclusiveness became obvious when I first encountered his posthumously created *Das Passagen-Werk*,[37] translated into English as *The Arcades Project*.[38] It offered a marvellous mystery; a labyrinthine portrayal of Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—labyrinthine, not as a barrier or monstrous trap, but as an inviting intrigue. It was a style I recognised, as longer-form radio can exhibit just such an allure.

[37] Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, Walter Benjamin Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982).
[38] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* [Das Passagen-Werk], ed. Rolf Tiedemann, tr. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, H/B).

Benjamin pinpointed and celebrated the burgeoning of Modernity, interests in evidence from his earliest writings. But there seems to be an urgency in the prolific scale of the writing. His cherished image of European possibility was cast into sharp relief. He fled the Fascists into exile in 1932. He witnessed Europe, once again, descend into fear and violence. Just as French photographer Eugène Atget (1857-1927)[39] had worked, fifty years earlier, to capture the images of old Paris, before the grand boulevards and orderly visions of Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann razed the memories, Benjamin immortalised the calm before the storm. He described what he admired in art and culture. He described the places and the people representing the Paris he admired, but all this as Nazi Germany was edging Europe towards another precipice.

> Against the backdrop of fascism, the pedagogic plan of the *Passagen-Werk*, a presentation of history that would *de*mythify the present, had become all the more urgent.[40]

Benjamin was not in denial about the growing storms over Europe, however. Aspects of his dismay weave unambiguously throughout his myriad other works, most of which were later collected and published in his four volume *Selected Writings* (1996-2003).[41] He observes the role that poverty and unemployment had in accelerating the rise of the National Socialists.

> The 'simple man of the people' was resurrected as the 'national comrade' [*Volksgenosse*]—molded from the stuff of neurosis, malnutrition, and misfortune.[42]

Benjamin also unpicks the way fascism betrays the people.

> It [fascism] sees its salvation in granting expression to the masses—but on no account granting them rights.[43]

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[39] Eugène Atget and Laure Beaumont-Maillet, *Atget's Paris* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993).
[40] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)* (London: The MIT Press, 1989), 36.
[41] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vols 1-4: 1913-1940*, ed. Michael W Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996-2003, H/B).
This series was derived from the German language version, a seven-volume series *Gesammelte Schriften* (1972-1999), which, unlike the English series, included *Das Passagen-Werk*. An English version was released as a separate volume, *The Arcades Project* (1999).
[42] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 127.
[43] Ibid. 269.

And then, in a statement of complete clarity, he predicts the inevitable:

> The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life... All efforts to aestheticize political life culminate in one point. That point is war.[44]

The Arcades Project differs. It is a disciplined, albeit radically experimental, focus on the modern incarnation and moment of a timeless city. This is a work of contemporary history, written with the clarity of a journalist, using the skills and rigour of a scholar, but with none of the long-winded prose of traditional academic style. In fact, the work is remarkable for its aphoristic concision (resembling Nietzsche) and for its accessible lyricism, even in translation. For example, on the topic *Modes of Lighting*:

> When, on February 12, 1790, the Marquis de Favras was executed for plotting against the Revolution, the Place de Grève and the scaffold were adorned with Chinese lanterns.[45]

And on *The Flâneur*:

> In 1839 it was considered elegant to take a tortoise out walking. This gives us an idea of the tempo of flânerie in the arcades.[46]

Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is significant here because it shows his new hybrid approach, placing small subjects within a larger landscape. His short, observational, almost diaristic style sits on the page as single lines, or small chunks, not unlike that of newspaper *in brevi* articles. While the writing is approachable, this is not conventional journalism; each chunk exists as part of a larger conceptual panorama.

The Arcades Project is the result of years of deep thought and accumulated writing. Many of the pre-echoes of what we read in here can be seen in the many drafts and experiments in Benjamin's *Selected Writings*.

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, [T1a,9] 564.
[46] Ibid. [M3,8] 422.

Fig. 2—Walter Benjamin, writing in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, in exile from his native Germany

He narrowed his subjects down over this time, from a wide-ranging gaze at Europe as a whole, to a focused account of one city—Paris. This rigour and constraint are the province of the academic, but this is not easily recognisable as a straight scholarly thesis. Benjamin sits somewhere on a spectrum—a link between the academy and the newsroom. And *The Arcades Project* is our evidence that such a bridge exists. A great deal of disciplined, long-form journalism also resides on this Benjaminian spectrum.

With *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin appropriated, for the twentieth century, the nineteenth century character of the *flâneur*. Benjamin re-moulding this 'man-about-town' figure that the journalist Victor Fournel (1829-1894) and the poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), in *Les fleurs du mal*[47] (1857), had observed on the new boulevards of Haussmann's Paris in the mid-to-late 1800s. As Benjamin refashioned this urban creature as an adaptive, somewhat flawed being in a fast-evolving metropolis, he described the flâneur's transformation into something less elegant. 'Paris created the type of the flâneur', he states. This is the well-dressed city dweller who exists entirely within constructed environs, walking and exploring streets.

[47] Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, *Baudelaire: The complete verse*, tr. Francis Scarfe (London: Anvil Poetry Press, 2012, H/B), 59-289.

> The street conducts the flâneur into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous... An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. With each step, the walk takes on greater momentum; ever weaker grow the temptations of shops, of bistros, of smiling women, ever more irresistible the magnetism of the next street corner, of a distant mass of foliage, of a street name. [48]

Neither Benjamin, nor Fournel, seemed completely in the thrall of this character. In 1858, Fournel, the journalist, writing on *L'art de la flânerie*, compared (unfavourably) the studied detachment of the *flâneur* with the gormless lack of self-consciousness of the average tourist. Benjamin cited this observation many decades later.

> N'allons pas toutefois confondre le flâneur avec le badaud: il ya une nuance que sentiront les adeptes. Le simple flâneur... est toujours en pleine possession de son individualité. Celle du badaud disparait, au contraire, absorbée par le monde extérieur... qui le frappe jusqu'à l'enivrement et l'extase. Le badaud, sous l'influence du spectacle, devient un être impersonnel; ce n'est plus un homme: il est public, il est foule. Nature à part, âme ardente et naïve, portée à la rêverie... le vrai badaud est digne de l'admiration de tous les cœurs droits et sincères.[49]

> Let us not, however, confuse the flâneur with the rubberneck; there is a subtle difference... The average flâneur... is always in full possession of his individuality, while that of the rubberneck disappears, absorbed by the external world... which moves him to the point of intoxication and ecstasy. Under the influence of the spectacle, the rubberneck becomes an impersonal being. He is no longer a man—he is the public; he is the crowd. At a distance from nature, his naïve soul aglow, ever inclined to reverie... the true rubberneck deserves the admiration of all upright and sincere hearts.[50]
>
> Victor Fournel 1858

Even as Benjamin recrafts this modern sophisticate into early twentieth century literature, he already observes the evolution of the *flâneur* into a consumer and, moreover, a fashion victim—something remarkably prescient today.

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[48] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, [M1,2; M1,3] 416-417.
[49] Victor Fournel, *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris* (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1858), 263.
[50] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, [M6,5] 429.

> The flâneur who so prides himself on his alertness, on his nonconformity, was in this respect also ahead of his contemporaries: he was the first to fall victim to an ignis fatuus which has since that time blinded many millions.[51]

The *flâneur* of Fournel and Baudelaire was different. In a sense, he was a consumer. With the luxury of wealth, he was merely consuming time, something of which the working classes lacked. The figure that Benjamin was witnessing was no longer that individual, but a casualty of modernity. Moreover, Benjamin was using the *flâneur* as a metaphor of change and decay—a recurring theme of Benjamin's, and a topic I return to in a later chapter *Building stories from the ruins*. He used contemporary history to make a contemporary critique. Benjamin's observational style was both analytical and journalistic, written with a real audience in mind. It conjures images in the manner of accessible storytelling.

It is strange to think of Walter Benjamin writing about this seemingly peaceful and rational world, while, in reality, he was being forced to move from place to place, city to city, to escape the growing persecution of leftist scholars and of Jews, doubly a target. While *The Arcades Project* quarantined an untroubled image of Paris, Benjamin left us in no doubt as to the threat that he and his peers were facing. In an essay published in a journal *Mass und Wert,* in 1938, Benjamin wrote about 'A German Institute for Independent Research', later known as The Frankfurt School. There was no romance or delusion here:

> When the dispersion of German scholars began in 1933... Europe's gaze was upon them, and it expressed more than concern. It harboured a question of the kind addressed to those who have confronted an unusual danger or been visited by some unprecedented horror. It took some time for those affected to form a clear image of what had descended on them.[52]

Despite the increasing uncertainty and danger, or perhaps because of it, he carried (or dragged) a heavy briefcase, filled with bundles of notes, which he called 'convolutes',[53]

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[51] Ibid. [J66,61] 345-346.
[52] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 3: 1935-1938*, ed. Michael W Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002, H/B), 307.
[53] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 958.
The translators of *Das Passagen-Werk* refer to these bundled notes to as *convolutes*—'the German word *Konvolut* means 'sheaf' or 'bundle' '. It explains the section descriptions in *The Arcades Project*.

with him as he kept on the move across Europe to escape persecution. The suitcase contained the fragmentary manuscript that would become, many years later, *The Arcades Project*. Henny Gurland, one of Benjamin's companions as he fled Paris for the Spanish border, later wrote:

> I noticed that Benjamin was carrying a large black briefcase… It looked heavy and I offered to carry it. "This is my new manuscript," he explained. "But why do you take it for this walk?" "You must understand that this briefcase is the most important thing to me," he said. "I cannot risk losing it. It is the manuscript that must be saved. It is more important than I am."[54]

We are so used, today, to the easy portability of ideas on laptops, on memory cards, or in a 'cloud', that we can easily forget the cumbersome realities of the physical object. He was quarantining, protecting his creations from the other harsh realities, the only way he knew how. They were not just unfinished love-letters to a disappearing world, they were the culmination of a life spent observing and trying to distil the impact of modernity on a world so steeped in and defined by its history.

The French Resistance eventually secreted him to the Spanish border in 1940. Here, within sight of a possible escape, but trapped by border security, Walter Benjamin died—whether by suicide (conventional history based on eyewitness accounts), natural causes (the official medical report) or murder (a persistent speculation, due to inconsistencies in the accounts of the time), the jury is out. Regardless, this sudden end to a life leaves us with the awareness of a valuable act, of bearing witness to an unfolding story, being cut short, leaving us wondering how Benjamin would have recorded the events that followed.

Small fragments and big pictures

Much of Benjamin's writing is unusual. His observations appear as fragments of a picture. He was a bowerbird. His notes were scattered across anything he could write on, notebooks, loose pieces of paper, and many of the notes were written on small strip cards. Each one with a few discrete thoughts. There were many hundreds of

[54] Ibid. 948.

these cards, all punctuated with an intriguing array of symbols. His first efforts at recording, clustering and writing resembled a modernist compositional score.

Fig. 3—Cards from Walter Benjamin's convolutes, the source material for The Arcades Project

All this listing, colour tick-coding and appending of symbols, paper strip by paper strip, enabled Benjamin to organise and structure an intricate thought system. It has the appearance of some seminal mark-up language. This is why it took forty-two years for anyone to attempt to assemble these ideas into a traditional book. There was no linear narrative through all this writing. Instead, the term now commonly applied to *The Arcades Project*, with its complex cross-referencing, is *hypertext*.

> Benjamin's writings in many ways anticipate the medium that we now call hypertext through his deployment of a file-based compositional structure, his extended use of quotation, his development of a means of linking a text to itself through the use of visual cues or 'blinks,' and his incorporation of images.[55]

[55] Heather M Crickenberger, 'The Arcades Project Project' [weblog], (2012), <https://arcadesprojectproject.wordpress.com>.

Crickenberger goes on to describe these 'blinks' as Benjamin's 'hard copy attempts at creating hyperlinks.'[56] The term 'blinks' appears in the translators' forward to *The Arcades Project*, though it is not apparent that this was a term Benjamin used.

> If we now were to regard this ostensible patchwork as, de facto, a determinate literary form, one that has effectively constructed itself (that is, fragmented itself), like the *Journaux intimes* of Baudelaire, then surely there would be significant repercussions for the direction and tempo of its reading, to say the least. The transcendence of the conventional book form would go together, in this case, with the blasting apart of pragmatic historicism—grounded, as this always is, on the premise of a continuous and homogeneous temporality. Citation and commentary might then be perceived as intersecting at a thousand different angles, setting up vibrations across the epochs of recent history, so as to effect "the cracking open of natural teleology." And all this would unfold through the medium of hints or 'blinks'—a discontinuous presentation deliberately opposed to traditional modes of argument. At any rate, it seems undeniable that despite the informal, epistolary announcements of a 'book' in the works, an *eigentlichen Buch*, the research project had become an end in itself.[57]

Benjamin created a literary form that had 'fragmented itself'. This idea suggests that those charged with the task of containing Benjamin's thoughts were at something of a loss. It appears to suggest that the style he had created transcended the linear traditions of the printed page and belonged in a different, still to be constructed, space.

The Arcades Project feels three-dimensional, much like a relational database. Rolf Tiedemann, the man who eventually took on the daunting task of turning Benjamin's fragments into a publishable work, wrote copious notes about the difficulties of attempting to intuit the writer's intentions, whether from these pieces, or from clues in Benjamin's earlier works.

> The fragments of the *Passagen-Werk* can be compared to the materials used in building a house, the outline of which has just been marked out or whose foundations are just being dug... Next to the foundations we find neatly piled excerpts, which would have been used to construct the walls; Benjamin's own thoughts would have provided the mortar to hold the building together.[58]

[56] Ibid.
[57] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, xi.
[58] Ibid. 931.

It has been observed, however, that Tiedemann's final textual interpretation of Benjamin's work, the publication that we have now as *The Arcades Project*, contains none of the non-textual information, none of the symbols or the colour codes contained on the cards that made up these convolutes. German artist Patrizia Bach wrote:

> With amazement, I thought that—in my artistic understanding—Benjamin's work has been published in a wrong way, without the visual sensibility.[59]

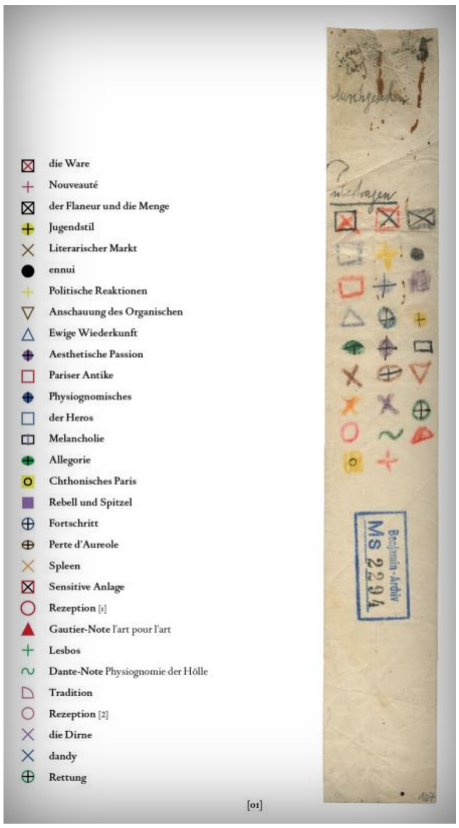


Fig. 4—Index to Walter Benjamin's notation symbols (Courtesy of Patrizia Bach) [see next section for translation]

In response to this absence, Bach published an index to the symbols in her book *Passagen-Arbeit*.[60] She went on to create an ambitious website[61] that not only reinserts the visual and colourful layers of Benjamin's original notes, but also realises the three-dimensional, hypertext quality that is missing from the book form of *The Arcades Project*.

Computers didn't exist in Benjamin's time, let alone the sort of complex, multidimensional data-mapping that our software routinely uses. In addition, no one really knows definitively what Benjamin intended with these fragments. His German editor Tiedemann, who eventually took up the challenge in the late 1970s, needed to come up with some way, just using text, to navigate the notes. He did a great job, given the limitations of print media. But Marjorie Perloff points to how Benjamin's system of convolutes naturally lends itself to the digital world, where:

> the numerical classification of the notes (e.g., A3, 1, A3, 2... A3a, 1) provides ready passage from link [black square] to link in this *Passagen-Werk*—a passage that would be even easier in a

[59] Patrizia Bach, 'Archive Works', *Akademie Schloss Solitude* [Web page], (2020), <https://schloss-post.com/archive-works/>.
[60] Patrizia Bach, Kathrin Busch and Knut Ebeling, *Passagen-Arbeit* (Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2017).
[61] Patrizia Bach, 'Walter Benjamin—Das Passagenprojekt', *Bach, Patrizia* [Website], (2015), <http://benjamin-passagen.de/>.

> hypothetical digital version of the whole, which would allow the reader to follow particular threads from text to text—indeed, to rearrange them. Benjamin's *Project* is thus literally a movable feast; its hypertextual quality is part of its great appeal.[62]

The world Benjamin describes is a three-dimensional mosaic. Myriad small pieces don't necessarily fit perfectly together, but still manage to form a coherent picture when you step back from it or walk around it. This also describes aspects of journalism. This is especially so when a journalist maintains a sustained coverage of one subject, even if the separate pieces of reportage are discontinuous and not intended to be viewed together as a single narrative. I found myself asking—Do we only understand something as amorphous and contradictory as Europe by stepping back from all the smaller pictures and viewing them as a whole? If so, this makes my role, as an outsider journalist, important, as I view and document what I see, from both inside, and from a panoramic distance.

Walter Benjamin, however, was the ultimate insider—someone deeply immersed in his subjects. He may not have had the outsider's panorama, but his intellectual and physical mobility gave him an intimate understanding of the European world he inhabited.

For me though, the trigger was not only what was being said, but how it was being said and by whom. Walter Benjamin was not just a writer. Instead, he was a true early modern hybrid. He was a philosopher and scholar, despite having failed his *Habilitation*,[63] and, as I describe in more detail further on, he was a journalist and broadcaster.

[62] Marjorie Perloff, 'Unoriginal Genius: Walter Benjamin's Arcades as paradigm for the new poetics', *Études anglaises*, 61/2 (2008), 229-252, in Cairn.info [online database].
[63] An Habilitation qualification is the European requirement for full professorship.

Decoding Walter Benjamin's notes for *Das Passagen-Werk* (*The Arcades Project*)

Fig. 5—Index to Walter Benjamin's notation symbols with translations (Courtesy of Patrizia Bach)

One way to understand the link between Walter Benjamin the scholar, and Walter Benjamin the journalist, is to look at his large, collective approach to small ideas. The evidence is in his notes for *The Arcades Project*, starting with Benjamin's system of symbols, used to cross-reference his thoughts.

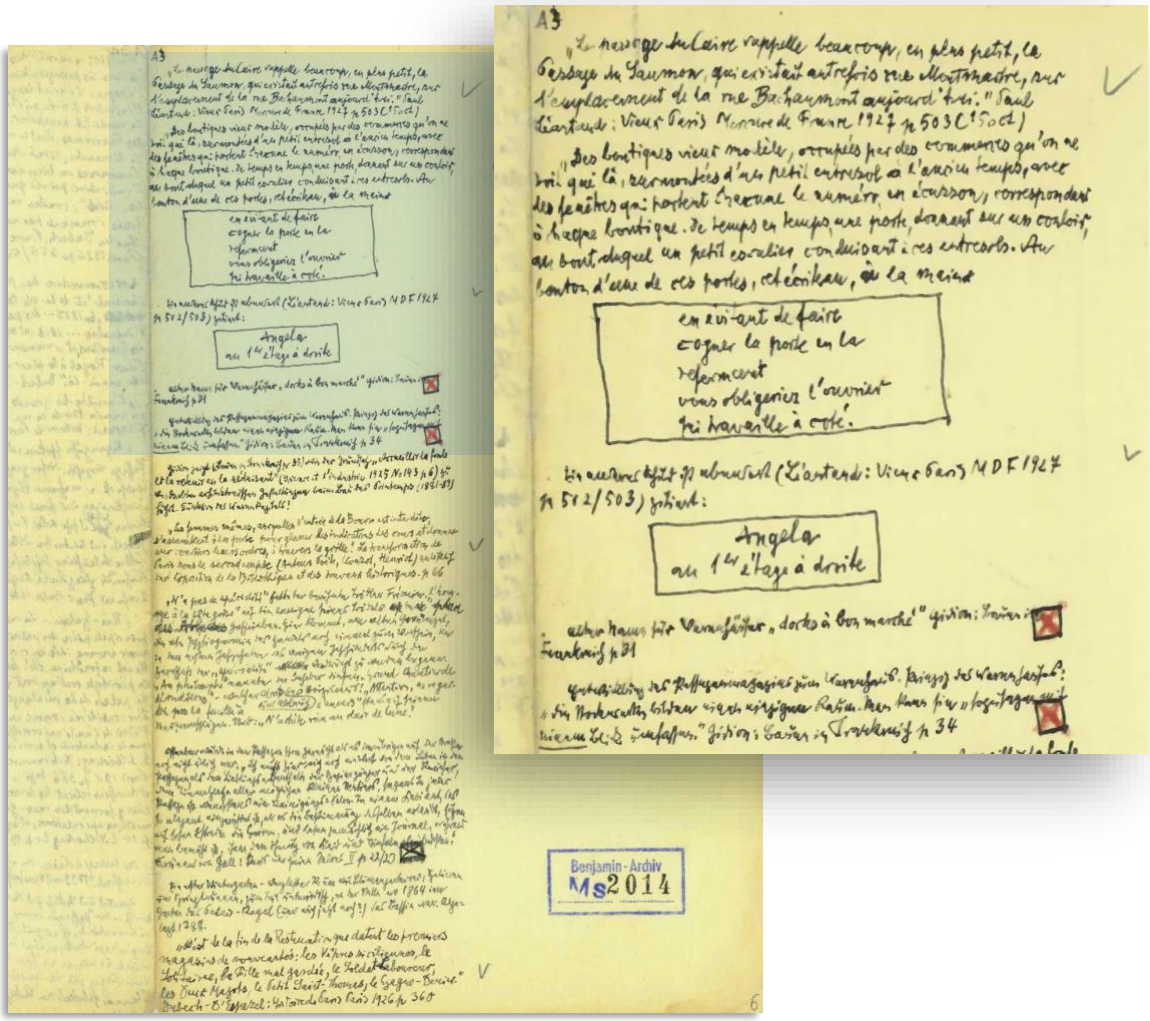
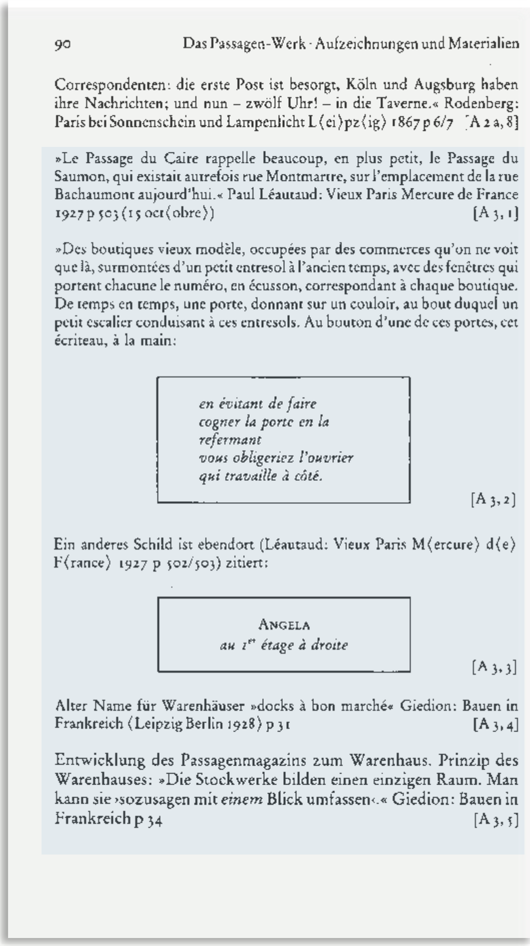


Fig. 6—Page from Walter Benjamin, Notes and materials for Das Passagen-Werk (The Arcades Project) [1928–1940], Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Walter Benjamin Archiv 294/6 (Ms 2014 old) und 303/143 (Ms 2330) Hamburger Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Kultur

As has been mentioned earlier, these notation symbols were inexplicably omitted when the first volume was finally published in 1982, forty years after Benjamin's death (*see page 20*), leaving out a vital layer of Walter Benjamin's thinking about how disparate ideas can connect in multiple, odd directions, across conceptual boundaries.[64] In effect, this extra layer of visual detail is the scaffolding that expands *The Arcades Project* out from being a conventional, two-dimensional linear work, into the more intellectually sophisticated, three-dimensional and fully-realised work that

[64] All subsequent publications, in all languages have maintained this omission. However, a new twenty-one volume series of books from Suhrkamp Verlag, titled Walter Benjamin: Werke und Nachlaß—Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Walter Benjamin: Works and Legacy—Critical Complete Edition], has been created, in concert with the Walter Benjamin Archiv at the Akademie der Kunst in Berlin. It is expected that this will include most of the hitherto missing visual elements of Benjamin's work.

Benjamin appears to have intended. It is the work of Berlin artist Patrizia Bach, who went back into the Walter Benjamin Archive to extract this data and create a website that behaves like a concordance,[65] that has finally allowed us to follow the Benjamin's thinking in all directions and dimensions.



90 Das Passagen-Werk · Aufzeichnungen und Materialien

Correspondenten: die erste Post ist besorgt, Köln und Augsburg haben ihre Nachrichten; und nun – zwölf Uhr! – in die Taverne.« Rodenberg: Paris bei Sonnenschein und Lampenlicht L⟨ei⟩pz⟨ig⟩ 1867 p 6/7 [A 2 a, 8]

»Le Passage du Caire rappelle beaucoup, en plus petit, le Passage du Saumon, qui existait autrefois rue Montmartre, sur l'emplacement de la rue Bachaumont aujourd'hui.« Paul Léautaud: Vieux Paris Mercure de France 1927 p 503 (15 oct⟨obre⟩) [A 3, 1]

»Des boutiques vieux modèle, occupées par des commerces qu'on ne voit que là, surmontées d'un petit entresol à l'ancien temps, avec des fenêtres qui portent chacune le numéro, en écusson, correspondant à chaque boutique. De temps en temps, une porte, donnant sur un couloir, au bout duquel un petit escalier conduisant à ces entresols. Au bouton d'une de ces portes, cet écriteau, à la main:

en évitant de faire
cogner la porte en la
refermant
vous obligeriez l'ouvrier
qui travaille à côté.

[A 3, 2]

Ein anderes Schild ist ebendort (Léautaud: Vieux Paris M⟨ercure⟩ d⟨e⟩ F⟨rance⟩ 1927 p 502/503) zitiert:

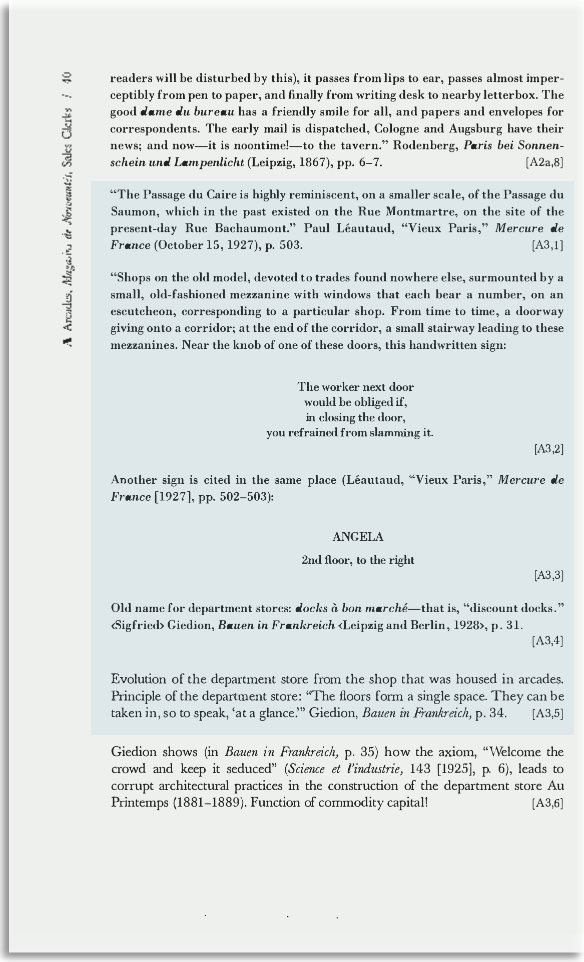
ANGELA
au 1er étage à droite

[A 3, 3]

Alter Name für Warenhäuser »docks à bon marché« Giedion: Bauen in Frankreich ⟨Leipzig Berlin 1928⟩ p 31 [A 3, 4]

Entwicklung des Passagenmagazins zum Warenhaus. Prinzip des Warenhauses: »Die Stockwerke bilden einen einzigen Raum. Man kann sie ›sozusagen mit *einem* Blick umfassen‹.« Giedion: Bauen in Frankreich p 34 [A 3, 5]

Fig. 7—The excerpt from Benjamin's notebook as it appears on Page 90 of the first publication, the German language edition—Das Passagen-Werk (1982)



A Arcades, *Magasins de Nouveautés*, Sales Clerks · 40

readers will be disturbed by this), it passes from lips to ear, passes almost imperceptibly from pen to paper, and finally from writing desk to nearby letterbox. The good *dame du bureau* has a friendly smile for all, and papers and envelopes for correspondents. The early mail is dispatched, Cologne and Augsburg have their news; and now—it is noontime!—to the tavern." Rodenberg, *Paris bei Sonnenschein und Lampenlicht* (Leipzig, 1867), pp. 6–7. [A2a,8]

"The Passage du Caire is highly reminiscent, on a smaller scale, of the Passage du Saumon, which in the past existed on the Rue Montmartre, on the site of the present-day Rue Bachaumont." Paul Léautaud, "Vieux Paris," *Mercure de France* (October 15, 1927), p. 503. [A3,1]

"Shops on the old model, devoted to trades found nowhere else, surmounted by a small, old-fashioned mezzanine with windows that each bear a number, on an escutcheon, corresponding to a particular shop. From time to time, a doorway giving onto a corridor; at the end of the corridor, a small stairway leading to these mezzanines. Near the knob of one of these doors, this handwritten sign:

The worker next door
would be obliged if,
in closing the door,
you refrained from slamming it.

[A3,2]

Another sign is cited in the same place (Léautaud, "Vieux Paris," *Mercure de France* [1927], pp. 502–503):

ANGELA

2nd floor, to the right

[A3,3]

Old name for department stores: *docks à bon marché*—that is, "discount docks." ‹Sigfried› Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich* ‹Leipzig and Berlin, 1928›, p. 31. [A3,4]

Evolution of the department store from the shop that was housed in arcades. Principle of the department store: "The floors form a single space. They can be taken in, so to speak, 'at a glance.'" Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich*, p. 34. [A3,5]

Giedion shows (in *Bauen in Frankreich*, p. 35) how the axiom, "Welcome the crowd and keep it seduced" (*Science et l'industrie*, 143 [1925], p. 6), leads to corrupt architectural practices in the construction of the department store Au Printemps (1881–1889). Function of commodity capital! [A3,6]

Fig. 8—The same section on Page 40 of The Arcades Project (1999), the English language version.

To give an example, Fig. 6 shows a page from one of Walter Benjamin's notebooks, with an excerpt expanded. The chapters or sections of *The Arcades Project* increment by letters, rather than numbers. So, A, B, C, D to Z, then a, b, c, d to w, though the alphabetical ordering bears no obvious relation to the chapter headings. This excerpt is numbered A3, with each new paragraph or thought separately numbered in the published volume as [A3,1], [A3,2], [A3,3] etc. Subsequent numbers increment

65 Patrizia Bach, *Walter Benjamin—Das Passagenprojekt*.

through A4, A5 and so on. The title for this chapter, A, is 'Arcades, *Magasins de Nouveautés*, Sales Clerks'. Both Fig. 7 and Fig. 8 show the same section in the original German publication, *Das Passagen-Werk*,[66] and in the English volume, *The Arcades Project*.[67] What is missing from the published versions, as mentioned before, are the symbols that Benjamin used. In this case, his symbol ⊠, meaning 'die Ware' or 'The goods', ought to appear twice—after [A3,4] and [A3,5].

The reader has no idea that Benjamin's notes connect these two thoughts, via that symbol ⊠, to fourteen other ideas, just in chapter A—[A], [A1,4], [A2,4]... through to [A11,3] and [A11,7]. But then, there are sixteen other cross-references in other chapters—[E4a,4], [F7a6], [G5,1] etc. None of this is evident in the books. Without access to Benjamin's original notes in the Walter Benjamin Archiv in Berlin, it is only through Patrizia Bach's work that the connections become visible.

This passage of the notes is indicative of much of Walter Benjamin's work, which is a mix of small, mundane observations, layered against much larger contexts of time, history, and cultural identity—all explored with the backbeat of great literary and philosophical minds of the past and present. Here, Benjamin is describing one of the Paris arcades—the *Passage du Caire*—that alludes to the book's title, citing an article from a literary journal, then another passage from an architectural book, linking them with his own thoughts. However, through his symbols, he links these ideas with another chapter dealing with the *Haussmannization* of Paris in the mid 1800s, which saw the destruction of many parts of the city to make way for the grand boulevards. Then another link to a section on *Iron Construction*, and the creation of the vast department stores and venues like the Petit Palais and the Grand Palais. Further links take us to Benjamin's chapter on the phenomenon of world exhibitions and the commodification of goods for Parisians through advertising. Another series of links connects us to Benjamin's large chapter on Charles Baudelaire, a writer that Benjamin examines in great detail. More connections are made in the chapter *On the Theory of Knowledge, The Theory of Progress*, and the subsequent chapter on *Prostitution and Gambling*. All of these different layers speak to each other, backwards and forwards, much of it through the voices of other writers and thinkers, and it was this unusual

[66] Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, 90.
[67] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 40.

curating of other voices that gives Walter Benjamin's work such intellectual heft. Benjamin's friend, Theodor Adorno wrote:

> "Benjamin's intention was to eliminate all overt commentary and to have the meanings emerge solely through a shocking montage of the material. The culmination of his anti-subjectivism, his major work was to consist solely of citations."[68]

This reveals one of the most significant parallels between Walter Benjamin's approach and the particular long-form journalism style displayed in the *The Identity Papers* collection of radio productions, which is the practical artefact of this PhD. Benjamin was a curator, carefully selecting 'voices' which could underpin his narrative thought processes. More than just giving meaning to these assembled fragments, Benjamin is giving meaning to the connections and the relationships between these discrete ideas. This is precisely the process of researching and making a long-form radio feature. It is never simply a monologue. It requires time and effort to find the assortment of voices that give substance to the larger idea being presented. The further step of bringing the discrete radio productions together on *The Identity Papers* website, adds an additional Benjaminian curatorial layer to this larger picture of Europe-in-flux.

However, where Benjamin's works were the product of his many years of singular and deep devotion to Europe, in both the concrete and the abstract, for a working journalist, opportunities to sit with an idea are relatively brief and spasmodic. The resultant work is unavoidably constrained and incomplete. Despite this, a middle ground of vignette-like detail can be achieved, if the subject is returned to over time, building to some sort of cumulative, albeit fragmentary picture. The comparison between this and Benjamin is therefore flawed, but not irrelevant, because both practices are focused on understanding and communicating complex ideas.

In the case of *The Arcades Project*, we don't know exactly why Benjamin was assembling this large collection of thought fragments about a single city. There is,

[68] Irving Wohlfarth, 'Perte d'Auréole: The emergence of the dandy', *MLN*, 85/4 (1970), 529-571, 530, in JSTOR [online database], accessed 2020/12/08/.; Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (London: N. Spearman, 1967), 239.

however, a parallel to an idea that we've become familiar with in an era of impending climate crisis—the concept of a seed bank. There is a strong sense that Benjamin was assembling the building blocks, the genetic code of a city that he loved, that he felt symbolised the best of Europe, and that he felt could be increasingly under threat. As such, we can see *The Arcades Project*, not as some distant meandering for scholarly discussion, but as an intellectual blueprint for the resurrection of Paris, should it be lost to war.

Benjamin as journalist

As previously mentioned, Benjamin was not merely a journalist. He was also a broadcaster and long-form program-maker for radio. He was an engaged witness and contemporary-history writer, with a substantial personal investment in what he was describing. It was an investment that, arguably, cost him his life.

This makes him something of a prototype for what I've accidentally become, although I don't plan to die in the process. As a maker of long-form documentaries for radio, my job has always been to communicate difficult and complex ideas in forms that are succinct and accessible for lay audiences. The end result, if done well, usually hides a vast amount of technical work and scholarship, bringing together myriad sources and forms, and processing multiple layers and narratives into an essentially linear form, without flattening and overly simplifying layers and threads.

The layering is difficult, but important. Long-form program-making, especially within the realms of public media, is crucial in stimulating a public discourse about ideas and stories that might otherwise be inaccessible to the general-public.

Walter Benjamin recognised the challenge and its importance. He made many radio programs, especially ones aimed at young people. Written in the interwar years, between 1929 and 1932, his broadcast topics were ranged widely, from 'Berlin Puppet Theater', to 'The Lisbon Earthquake', to 'The Bastille, the Old French State Prison'. The original broadcast scripts, many thought to be lost, were found and re-

recorded in their original German in 2003.[69] English translations of his scripts were published in 2014 as *Radio Benjamin*.[70] Virginia Madsen notes:

> Radio features before and after the Second World War often sounded more like radio drama than what we today consider "documentary." They were mostly written as scripts and performed by actors live.[71]

And while this scripted style was typical of early radio features, Benjamin's programs, though substantial, were long-form monologues—radio essays—rather than a documentary style.

Nonetheless, the more I read Benjamin's work, the more he seems a multi-media precursor, an early echo for the way we work today. This is a topic I will deal with in more detail later in the chapter *Walter Benjamin & the birth of multimedia journalism*. However, simply put, he used whatever technology was available. Although this is a common feature of artists and media practitioners today, this was unusual in Benjamin's time, and was almost unheard of amongst scholars. He went where the audiences were, because the *idea* was not enough. What was as important was to *communicate* the idea effectively. This is a basic tenet of the media. It is not enough to know and understand the idea. If you fail to present an idea in forms and media that people can understand, access and engage with, you have wasted everyone's time. This idea of reach and accessibility is also the role of long-form journalism.

Journalism in long-form

The term *long-form journalism* can refer to a number of distinct, but related, styles and formats within both traditional mass media, niche media and newer multimedia environments. While long-form journalism can also be known as documentary journalism, narrative journalism, feature journalism or even slow journalism, I am

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[69] Walter Benjamin, 'Ubuweb : Sound, Walter Benjamin, 1892-1940', *Ubuweb* [Audio], (2003), <http://ubu.com/sound/benjamin.html>; Walter Benjamin and Harald Wieser, *Aufklärung für Kinder, 2 Audio-CDs* (Hoffmann und Campe, 2003).
[70] Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin*, ed. Lecia Rosenthal, tr. Jonathan Lutes et al. (London: Verso Books, 2014).
[71] Virginia Madsen, '"Your ears are a portal to another world" : The new radio documentary Imagination and the digital domain' in Jason Loviglio & Michele Hilmes (eds.), *Radio's New Wave : Global Sound in the Digital Era* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 127.

choosing the term 'long-form' as a broad container, because it is self-explanatory and works across media environments.

Long-form is more essayistic, extending to book length in some circumstances. Long-form radio, television or online programs are usually documentaries. Within media organisations, these are often referred to as *feature* articles or *feature* documentaries, implying a work requiring a greater level of sustained research and creative delivery. But in the early days of radio, the more expansive feature style developed along similar lines to non-fiction film, often taking on a more lyrical feel. Madsen writes:

> we can say that both radio documentary and film documentary in these early years of development concerned themselves with "the creative treatment of actuality," as Grierson famously defined the emerging genre of documentary film in 1932.[72]

Long-form writing will often display a more literary style. Long-form audio and video will require multiple layers, narrative threads and textures to be effective. This level of sophistication is needed, because the journalist/maker asks more of the audience—more time, more intellectual engagement, presuming both more curiosity about, and care for, the subject. Mia Lindgren provides an excellent examination of this approach in her PhD thesis *Journalism As Research: Developing radio documentary theory from practice*.[73]

Prime exponents of this deep dive into a subject have been insider journalists like Vasily Grossman,[74] Ryszard Kapuściński,[75] and Svetlana Alexievich[76], all observing the Soviet Union from within—in Grossman's case, as a soldier in the Red Army. Recently, we have seen many similar literary dissections of the United States, such as *When America Stopped Being Great: A history of the present*,[77] by Nick Bryant. A long time

[72] Ibid.
[73] Mia Lindgren, 'Journalism As Research: Developing radio documentary theory from practice', PhD thesis (Murdoch University, 2011).

[74] Vasily Grossman et al., *The Road: Stories, journalism, and essays* (New York: New York Review Books, 2010).
[75] Ryszard Kapuściński, *Imperium* (London: Granta Books, 2007).
[76] Svetlana Alexievich, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, *Last Witnesses: Unchildlike stories* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2019).
[77] Nick Bryant, *When America Stopped Being Great: A history of the present* (Melbourne, Australia: Viking / Penguin, 2020).

BBC foreign correspondent, Bryant blends his coal-face experience, as a journalist in Washington, with his scholarly background of a doctorate in American History. Working in these forms combines capacities for deep research with sustained storytelling. All this demands a base level of strong journalistic skills. This combined approach challenges the traditional rhetoric of academic expertise, which advocates a more exhaustive and unified thesis-type template, as opposed to a more storied approach.

Some existing debates around long-form have missed the key points because they have just centred around word-counts. Brendan Fitzgerald argues that the limitations are increasingly determined by shorter attention spans and the web's culture of concision, concluding that an optimum length appears to be between 5,000 and 30,000 words. He says that these limits become stifling and can start to render the long-form label meaningless.[78]

I disagree. Much of the scholarship around long-form deals solely with the written press, variously referred to as *immersion*, *narrative* or *literary* journalism.[79] However, the literary style also extends to audio and video forms, where the scripting devotes as much attention to the quality of the telling and the delivery as in text-based media. In many cases, actors will be used for some of the voices, adding more of a performance-style to fact-based stories. Actors also help resolve problems of presenting written, especially archival, information in a spoken form. Much of this is alien to traditional forms of academic writing.

In this audio environment, the term *sound art* is sometimes also used, to signify a highly developed creative approach. This is about more than mere aesthetics. It is about *The Grain of the Voice* (Barthes),[80] the acoustic territory of sound (LaBelle),[81]

[78] Brendan Fitzgerald, 'What does "Longform" journalism really mean?', *Literary Hub*, (2016), <https://lithub.com/what-does-longform-journalism-really-mean/>.
[79] Isabelle Meuret, 'A short history of long-form journalism', *INA Global*, (2013), <https://www.inaglobal.fr/en/press/article/short-history-long-form-journalism>, accessed 19/06/2018.
[80] Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980* (1st edn., New York: Hill and Wang, 1985).
[81] Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound culture and everyday life* (New York: Continuum, 2010).

and the way space is made by sound (Revill).[82] This also reflects an understanding that the sound of a program—sonic architecture that frames what is said—is as important as the words.[83] Well-handled, sound is as important to context and comprehension as poetics are in a beautifully crafted piece of writing.

In 2013, I made a radio feature, for ABC RN's *Into the Music*, called 'Gaspard de la Nuit' (54mins, 2015),[84] which examined a suite of piano works, of that name, by composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). What made the program unusual was that, for the first time, the music was blended with the poetry inspiring it—poetry that had been written by Aloysius Bertrand more than sixty years earlier, in 1842. The poems were read by the actor Helen Morse. The experiment added a new historical layer to a familiar piece of music, allowing for an entirely original, contemporary discussion of the work in this new context. It was also an experiment that required the medium of radio, as well as the space afforded by the documentary style.

Features, documentaries and investigative journalism

Another good example of this is a 2016 radio feature called *Baby Farming Murderess*,[85] which told the 1894 story of Frances Knorr, hanged in Melbourne for adopting babies from unwed mothers, claiming support money, then murdering the children. However, this feature sat not within one of ABC RN's more traditional social history programs, but inside a weekly series called *Soundproof*. The brief for this program allowed for a more experimental approach, with a focus on sonic innovation, and not demanding a conventional linear narrative approach to the telling of a story. While this historical story was told using readings from letters and newspapers from the nineteenth century, a second, modern story was layered over the top, using music. A female Iranian musician and singer was recorded in the Old Melbourne Gaol, where

[82] George Revill, 'How is Space Made in Sound? Spatial mediation, critical phenomenology and the political agency of sound', *Progress in Human Geography*, 40/2 (2016), 240-256.
[83] James Mansell, 'Ways of Hearing: Sound, culture and history' in Michael Bull (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies* (London: Routledge, 2019).
[84] Michael Shirrefs, 'Gaspard de la Nuit', *Into The Music* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne, Australia: ABC RN, 6 April 2013) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/intothemusic/gaspard-de-la-nuit/4604578>.
[85] Lynette Gallacher, 'Baby farming murderess', *Soundproof* [Radio broadcast], (Melbourne, Australia: ABC RN, 17 Jun. 2016) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/soundproof/baby-farming-murderess/7493964>.

Frances Knorr was executed. The singer used the music to evoke her contemporary Iranian reality; children born to unwed mothers in Iran are considered not to exist; the practice of selling these children persists today. The blending of these two layers was powerful, without becoming didactic. But audience opinion was divided, with the approach not to some listeners' tastes.

Television and other video forms also excel in long-form journalism. Investigative programs like *Frontline*[86] from PBS in the USA, or *Four Corners*[87] on ABC TV in Australia, are highly respected for their journalistic rigour and have a long tradition of tackling complex issues. Many times, these stories are more than clinical windows onto mono-dimensional subjects. Frequently, these programs have not merely taken on topics of local, national or international concern, they have actually been catalysts for major change. The Fitzgerald Inquiry into police corruption in Queensland was a direct result of the work of ABC journalist Chris Masters' documentary for *Four Corners*, 'The Moonlight State'[88].

The value of long-form, when well-handled, is that complex subjects can be addressed and delivered in more sophisticated ways than conventional short-form journalistic styles, which are, by necessity, short and sharp, with less room for detail and nuance. For instance, the three radio series that I wrote and co-produced, each looking at aspects of European complexity—*The Art of Being Europe* (6x25mins, 2010),[89] *Who Is Germany?* (3x25mins, 2012),[90] and *Crisis & Creativity* (4x25mins, 2016)[91]—all made discussions possible that covered a wide range of complicated issues, places and people, precisely because they had the broadcasting space to evolve narrative threads

[86] *Frontline* [Television program], (Boston, USA: PBS) <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/>.
[87] *Four Corners* [Television program], (Sydney, Australia: ABC TV) <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/>.
[88] Chris Masters, 'The Moonlight State', *Four Corners* [Television documentary], (Sydney, Australia: ABC TV, 11 May 1987) <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/the-moonlight-state---1987/2832198>.
[89] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe', *Artworks* [6-part radio documentary series], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, Mar-Apr 2011) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/artworks/features/the-art-of-being-europe/>.
[90] Michael Shirrefs, 'Who is Germany?', *Creative Instinct* [3-part radio documentary series], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, Nov-Dec 2012) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/creativeinstinct/features/who-is-germany/>.
[91] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, 'Crisis and Creativity', *Earshot* [4-part radio documentary series], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, August 2016) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/features/crisis-and-creativity/>.

and layers. *The Art of Being Europe* was a panoramic look at the fate of European culture in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). It was made, with the luxury of time, on the ground, travelling across Europe. Similarly made *in situ*, the second series, *Who is Germany?*, was a follow-up, examining the role that Germany, Europe's most powerful nation, was playing in the future of the European Union. The third series, another expansive project on the Continent, was *Crisis & Creativity*, examining issues of refugees and borders—the new pressures preoccupying Europe, nearly a decade after the GFC. All of these took time to make, and to broadcast. The longer form makes this possible, while still managing to contain length or duration.

Scope and time are important. Many topics can't be adequately researched, processed and communicated within the hectic churn of the daily news cycle. Investigative journalism is a clear case in point, often requiring that the journalist, or journalists, spend weeks or months trying to make sense of complex, diffuse or well-buried issues. Short-form news reporting can also fill an investigative role, of course, but while many stories have a timeliness to them, but there will always be subjects that are protracted, have long trailing effects, or have a wide and powerful social impact.

An example of this is a program I made in 2014, looking at sudden and radical changes underway in Hungary, moving the country further to the right politically. The changes also moved Budapest further from Brussels and the fundamental tenets of European Union, legally, geopolitically and philosophically. My feature, Hungary: Democracy Distorted? (29min, 2014),[92] was made for ABC RN's weekly program, *The Law Report*. Again, much of the depth and detail of this program was made possible because I was in Europe at the time. It was a difficult program to make, and the difficulties didn't stop once it had gone to air. The broadcast received a sustained backlash from Hungarian authorities, both in Australia and in Budapest.[93] The feature fits the long-

[92] Michael Shirrefs, 'Hungary: Democracy distorted?', *The Law Report* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne, Australia: ABC RN, 11 March 2018) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lawreport/hungary3a-democracy-distorted3f/5312044>.

[93] This backlash included: online trolling of the website (believed to be from Budapest), forcing the comments page to be shut down; two separate visits from the Hungarian Ambassador to Australia, who, under direction from Budapest, flew from Canberra to Melbourne specifically to make face-to-face complaints; and a number of official complaints from various Hungarian groups, in Australia and in Hungary, to the ABC's Managing Director, all of which required formal institutional responses. We had been warned that all of this fitted a consistent pattern of intimidation that followed any public

form category, however, not just because of the complexity of the making, or of the length, but because it was dealing with a subject evolving in real time. The subject needed time and space to make an involved argument about Hungary's trajectory into the future, and the implications for the rest of Europe.

In the context of this PhD, I'm using a body of my work in the public media to demonstrate this role of contemporary observation, documentation and subsequent broadcasting of detailed stories to build a picture, over time, of modern European complexity. My reason is that I started to recognise this accumulation of stories, over time in the early twenty-first century, as a parallel to Walter Benjamin's process in describing his European world in the early twentieth century. It must be made clear though that, where Benjamin maintained a sustained practice of observation, analysis and commentary on the Europe that he was inside, my work in Europe was relatively fleeting and, necessarily, narrower in focus. All my programs were vignettes, full of fragments. They were, in hindsight, aimed at elevating the very idea of a unified Europe—in my opinion, one of the greatest, albeit counter-intuitive and counter-historical, achievements of my lifetime. I was mystified by the incessant corrosion of the European Union from within, and so I wanted, in the radio programs, to highlight the people and the structures that were committed to keeping the EU in place and intact. This was an attempt to explain a European phenomenon to a largely non-European audience, whilst sidestepping the mire of regional populist debates. As I say, I observe and recognise this selective approach in hindsight.

Therefore, another critical point remains to be made about this type of journalism, however. Its intended outcomes function more like a bower, than as a result of a commissioning process or as an application of an algorithm. These ways of sustaining a focus and these ways of building a story on a subject, as accumulated juxtapositions, are rarely planned or anticipated at an outset. Documentary series and articles that I made and published over time[94] tie me back to the Benjaminian ways of performing—a process of juxtaposing an unmanageably large and shape-changing subject, through

criticism of the Hungarian regime of change, being enacted under the rule of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz party.

[94] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, *The Art of Being Europe*; Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, *Crisis and Creativity*; Michael Shirrefs, *Who is Germany?*

the use of myriad small pictures, showing what you can, implying what you can't. It is never the final word. There are always gaps. There are always cognitive dissonances between stories. In these ways, for example, two consecutive entries in Benjamin's section on 'The Streets of Paris' in *The Arcades Project* read:

> In an engraving from 1830, one can see a man seated on a tree trunk in the Boulevard Saint-Denis.
>
> In 1865, on the Boulevard des Capucines, at the corner of the Rue de Sèze and the Rue Caumartin, the first *refuge*, or street-island, was installed.[95]

The theme is the figure in the street, albeit no *flâneur*—refuge, hubbub, streets. Even if these were simply notes for himself to riff off in a more complete work, there is still a cogent, readable flow. Benjamin's skill was in letting the imprecision of mis-matched edges, between his thoughts and observations, simply sit and be—resonating, even disconcerting. Individually, these pieces, for the most part, don't fit any definition of long-form. What elevates Benjamin's work to the status of long-form, is that, taken as a collective body of work, there is the clear sense of a unified project—the accumulating juxtapositions amount to long-form.

There also comes, with patient observation, the knowledge that many of the small details of the present, and fragments of the past, have, if not an eternal value, at least an enduring quality warranting apprehension and examination. This then speaks to ideas that are more timeless. These ideas are no less important to our understanding of the world around us and the times we live in. This is also the province of the long-form. For us to comprehend and contextualise the news of the present, we also need to continually retell, re-evaluate and, in many cases, revise the stories of the past. This is still journalism, because it provides us with enduring and evolving intellectual shelving. The journalist is still using long-form juxtapositions to slot and make sense of the myriad shifting and fleeting events that constantly change our world. Diverse, open and enquiring societies require both forms, because the two approaches are constantly in conversation with each other.

[95] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, [P3,8] [P3a,1] 522.

An example of this was a radio feature I made, which was as much primary historical research as it was radio documentary. It was called 'Truganini, Bushranger' (55mins, 2009).[96] It was made for ABC RN's *Hindsight* program. It told, what was then, a barely known part of the story of one of Australia's most well-known indigenous figures, the Tasmanian woman Truganini. It described, for the first time in a wide, public-media setting, the tragic events surrounding her time in Victoria, when she became a bushranger, ultimately leading to two of Truganini's companions being the first people to be hanged in the Victorian colony. The wider significance of this story was that it overturned the common perception that Truganini was a passive victim, who had lived and died in Tasmania and simply represented the last of the Tasmanian aborigines. That was the story generations of Australians had grown up hearing about in schools. When permission was sought from Indigenous elders and scholars to make the program, it was explained to me that this other story was also unknown to most Indigenous people. The story needed to be told.

The program was created with a mix of readings from diaries, letters and newspaper articles, as well as interviews and a binding narration. In addition to this, I also wrote music and created sound-beds to gently weave, when needed, through and under the wide range of spoken voices, all of which gave texture to the overall sound, helping to 'glue' the mix together. It required months in libraries and archives, hunting out these primary sources. Both factual and discursive, while the program was not a definitive telling of the story, it did provide a starting point for subsequent treatments of the history, with a number of citations of the program appearing in print and online—including Wikipedia[97] and Gary Foley's *The Koori History Website*.[98]

Literary journalism and accuracy

Over the past one hundred years though, one particular debate has dogged long-form journalism—the argument over whether more-literary styles equate to less factual

[96] Michael Shirrefs, 'Truganini, Bushranger', *Hindsight* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 8 February 2009) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/hindsight/truganini-bushranger/3178510>.
[97] Various, 'Truganini', *Wikipedia*, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truganini>.
[98] Gary Foley and Michael Shirrefs, 'Truganini, Bushranger', *Foley, Gary*, (2009), <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/audio/trans_truganini.html>.

accuracy. Does an arm's-length distance from a subject deliver greater precision, and does this necessarily require a more clinical language? Conversely, does a literary approach suggest too much intimacy and therefore an emotive intent? Might proximity to a subject skew accuracy, due to the risk of emotional bias?

These issues of genre, style and proximity also lie at the heart of any question about the role and value of journalism for historians. How reliable is this material as historical evidence, when the demands of scholarship require critical scepticism? Whereas once, historians believed that the highest form of historical output was a [Thucydidean] objective truth, there is now a much broader emphasis on 'identifying and interpreting a wide variety of secondary and primary sources. Peter Novick writes that:

> 'Historical objectivity' is not a single idea, but rather a sprawling collection of assumptions, attitudes, aspirations, and antipathies.[99]

There has been a 'key shift' away from the grand narrative, the all-consuming thesis, what Foucault termed the 'privileging [of] totalizing historicist notions'.[100] The modern acceptance, in historiography, that all evidence, all reading of evidence and all writing of conclusions is inherently partial, allows for a post-structural shift[101] or linguistic *turn* within the discipline, as well as a more respectful dialogue across disciplines, in my case, with journalism.

However, truth and accuracy are not the same. In all disciplines, choices are made, because all of the information, all of the time, is never possible. Historians and journalists, alike, are constantly engaged in the process of selection, filtering the data, grading relevance, trying to find the most objective outcome from an inherently subjective set of conditions. This is one of the unavoidable dilemmas humans face, in their attempt to accumulate and harness knowledge.

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[99] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "objectivity question" and the American historical profession*, Ideas in context (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1.
[100] Adrian Jones, 'Identify and interpret a wide variety of secondary and primary sources' in Jennifer Clark & Adele Nye (eds.), *Teaching the Discipline of History in an Age of Standards* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2018).
[101] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [L'Archéologie du savoir, 1969], tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 2002).

John Hersey and the rise of New Journalism

Tensions have long between evident between literature and journalism, and between history and journalism. In 1949, the American writer and journalist John Hersey wrote an article for *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled 'The Novel of Contemporary History'.[102] It began with the words, 'Truth is said to be stranger than fiction; fiction can be stronger than truth.'[103] He was addressing criticisms of the period levelled at discursive and more novelistic approaches to the telling of contemporary histories. Critics suggested artistic licence supplanted factual accuracy. A deep mistrust had been cultivated, since the 1920s, towards any reportage that didn't look like or purport to be objective and clinical. Hersey continued:

> Palpable 'facts' are mortal. Like certain moths and flying ants, they lay their eggs and die overnight. The important 'flashes' and 'bulletins' are already forgotten by the time yesterday morning's paper is used to line the trash can to receive this morning's coffee grounds. The things we remember for longer periods are emotions and impressions and illusions and images and characters: the elements of fiction.[104]

Hersey was a significant scribe of the period, writing for both *Time* and *Life* magazines during the Second World War. But it was in the aftermath of the War, when writing about the rebuilding of Japan for *The New Yorker*, that he penned his most noted work, an article later published as *Hiroshima*.[105] The piece told the story of the Hiroshima bombing, but not through the traditional positionality and prose of a reporter-writer as a passive observer, one step removed. Instead, Hersey wove together a series of stories, about six separate survivors, before and after the atomic blast.

This was a radical departure from journalistic conventions. It used literary techniques to construct different perspectives for the audience. No longer was the reader viewing events with the clinical distance of a bystander. Hersey disassembled the story of a catastrophic event that had engulfed an entire city, and brought the focus down to the

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[102] John Hersey, 'The novel of contemporary history', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1949/November (1949), 80-55.; John Hersey, 'The novel of contemporary history' in Helen R. Hull (ed.), *The writer's book* (1st edn., New York, : Harper & Brothers, 1950).
[103] John Hersey, *The novel of contemporary history*, 80.
[104] Ibid.
[105] John Hersey, 'Hiroshima', *The New Yorker*, (1946), <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1946/08/31/hiroshima>, 15-68, accessed 5/6/2018.

elemental level of the individual. This approach, so familiar in literary fiction, was almost unheard of in the realms of reportage. The lack of ambiguity, the inability for the reader to be able to hide behind the abstraction of anonymity, was quite shocking.

This has been referred to as the origin of what came to be known as 'New Journalism', which came into its own in the 1960s with writers like Truman Capote and Tom Wolfe. Capote's *In Cold Blood*[106] explored an unsolved multiple murder case in the USA. It was seminal non-fiction—no novel, but told like one. Just as importantly, it spawned the *true crime* genre that has so dominated publishing, broadcasts and podcasts in recent years. Meanwhile, Tom Wolfe's book *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*,[107] was a significant, albeit unconventional, generational study. Wolfe documented the author Ken Kesey's hallucinogenic 'trip' across America in a colourfully painted bus full of Kesey's devotees, managing to capture the emergence of the hippie movement.

Although it's a label that Hersey rejected about his own work, he was clearly happy to occupy the disputed space between journalism and literature.

> It is an ironical fact that the great industries of mass communications, built at the cost of millions of dollars, and profitable, too, in the millions newspapers, magazines, radio, television these marvellously intricate industries have somehow failed to communicate clearly one thing: human truth. Novelists have often failed in this task, of course, but usually they have come a great deal closer than the huge businesses which profess that very task.[108]

One critic, John Hartsock, was sceptical.[109] He was one of a number of scholars who thought New Journalism was merely a more contemporary name for a literary journalism. Hartsock described it as an attempt 'to narrow the gap between subjectivity and a world reduced to a distanced object by mainstream, objectified journalism.'[110] Hartsock suggested the new agenda:

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[106] Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood: A true account of a multiple murder and its consequences* (London: Penguin, 2012).
[107] Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Bantam, 1968).
[108] John Hersey, *The novel of contemporary history*.
[109] John C. Hartsock; Professor of Communication Studies, State University of New York, NY, USA
[110] John C. Hartsock, 'The critical marginalization of American literary journalism', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 15/1 (1998), 63.

> can be detected as a concern in the works of other literary journalists over the course of the last century, including Lafcadio Hearn, Richard Harding Davis, Ernest Hemingway, Edmund Wilson, Sherwood Anderson, Erskine Caldwell, James Agee, John Hersey, Joseph Mitchell, Mary McCarthy, Joan Didion, Norman Mailer, and Truman Capote, among others.[111]

Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (also called Koizumi Yakumo), for instance, was born in Greece in 1850 and grew up in Ireland, England and France. He became a writer and journalist when he moved to the USA at age nineteen. These two strands of his work started to merge when he took up an assignment in the West Indies for *Harper's Magazine* in 1887, writing in a pictorial, non-fiction style about the place and the culture. His prolonged time in the one place culminated in a two-part series of articles in 1890 titled 'Youma'[112].

Lafcadio Hearn's prose was not travel writing. Hearn gave readers a window onto a world that they were unlikely ever to visit. His prose gained authenticity because the author had embedded himself in the society for some years, enabling sustained and considered observation. It was an approach he took with him when he moved to Japan later that year, where he remained until his death in 1904. In those years, he wrote many books and articles that provided readers then, and historians later, with a valuable window onto a period and place that was otherwise geographically, culturally and conceptually remote.

This style can be seen continuing in the works of people like George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway, whose slippage of style and subject between fiction and non-fiction was easy and fluid. Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*,[113] describing bare survival in the slums of two great European cities, had an enormous impact on a great many people. The writing felt like fiction, but it wasn't. This was autobiographical drama. It had the added power of lived experience—gritty life at close quarters. Similarly, Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*,[114] was as evocative a glimpse of Paris at a particular

[111] Ibid. 17-26.
[112] Lafcadio Hearn, 'Youma', *Harper's Magazine*, LXXX/CCCCLXXVI (1890).
[113] George Orwell, *Down and Iut in Paris and London: a novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961).
[114] Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (London: Cape, 1964).

time, through the eyes of a young writer. Hemingway's book had all the energy and lyricism of his fiction, and therefore blurred the lines between the real and the constructed, albeit that the constructs of Hemingway's fiction borrowed heavily from his own experiences. One problem, for a writer like Hemingway, is the tendency to loom too large in the narrative, in the process turning the author into the subject, rather than the spectator.

Much of journalism has creative layers to it, regardless of whether we talk about this sort of strongly narrative-driven literary style of reportage, or more conventional news writing. As Matthew Ricketson writes:

> There is scope for creativity in journalism, however, partly because the forms that journalism can take extend well beyond news reporting. They extend, first, to feature articles but then to long-form journalism, whether book-length narrative, nonfiction, documentary film, audio podcasts, or multi-media productions. It is also because there is much more to journalism than the form it finally takes.[115]

Ricketson indicates how a lot of journalism is, in fact, the conjuring of an idea, some set of connections, or a coherent tale hitherto hidden from the public imagination. He notes that creativity exists also in process as much as in a finished product. 'Building the trust of a survivor of family violence in order to interview them'[116] is a creative act, as is the ability to recognise and elevate a story of genuine public interest above the background drone and noise of mass information. It is a necessarily selective, sometimes haphazard and generally imperfect pursuit, but without this, our ignorance about events beyond our immediate, tangible existence would be fairly complete. This takes us back to the idea that 'journalism is the first rough draft of history'. With all its Benjaminian rough edges, journalism is crucial in linking our present to our future histories, because memory is volatile and knowledge fragile.

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[115] Matthew Ricketson, 'The Underappreciated Role of Creativity in Journalism', *TEXT: journal of writing and writing programs*, Special Issue—Making it new: Finding contemporary meanings for creativity/40 (2017), 3.
[116] Ibid.

Evolving shape, range and boundaries of the media

Across continental Europe, the journalistic tradition was both literary and political, but political writing is and was often much more overtly partisan and polemical. Italian journalists have been described as ''political clients' whose ties to political parties enable them to benefit both financially and in job security from political protection and patronage'.[117] More broadly, European journalism—in Nordic countries, in the Netherlands, in Germany and in Italy—has been politically linked to either 'socially relevant' or Socialist groups, or 'corporatist' organisations[118]—each with their own social agendas and, therefore, each with ideological investments in what is written. Kevin Williams says this was quite distinct from the Anglo-American model.

> In most European countries journalism and the media are the "voices of organised groups"... This contrasts with Britain and America where it is far easier for journalists to exercise political neutrality and objectivity, because of the limitation of political choice arising from the two party political system.[119]

But this is not to say that all European journalism was inward looking. According to Franco Venturi, Italian journalism of the late eighteenth century was surprisingly world-focused, with one of the most respected papers of the time, *Notizie del Mondo*, published in Venice from 1779, maintaining a constant watch of the dramatic events of the American Revolution and the impact this was having in England. This style became a model for another European publisher in Hamburg, which began in 1783 'promising "public newspapers... in the four principal languages of Europe"'.[120]

The different traditions of journalism, however, struggled towards the end of the nineteenth century. The profession was poorly paid and held in low esteem in many countries. The world was changing also. As the societies industrialised, newspapers had to shift their tone. Folksy storytelling, or blatant political lobbying, needed to be

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[117] Kevin Williams, 'Competing Models of Journalism?: Anglo-American and European Reporting in the Information Age', Journalistica - Tidsskrift for Forskning I Journalistik, 1/2 (2006), 22, 47.
[118] Ibid. 47-48.
[119] Ibid. 48.
[120] Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768-1789*, tr. R Burr Litchfield (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 20.

replaced to satisfy a new appetite—the hunger for information. This was driven by an increasingly commodified world, turning citizens into consumers—something that the Anglo-American model of journalism had already recognised. While the continental European styles of journalism are described as giving the profession 'strong roots... in the literary world', French journalism, especially, was often a 'first step towards a brilliant literary career',[121] as exemplified by the quotation, on page one of this exegesis, from Albert Camus, when he was working as a journalist. These European traditions couldn't change fast enough for a rapidly evolving media world and a shift in audience appetites; in consequence, newspaper journalism stagnated. Ideological *niche-casting* died off, replaced by something more familiar to us—mass-audience broadcasting. It is, however, significant that we now see the return of *niche-casting* or *narrow-casting*, brought about by new technologies and the explosion of social media, which has created myriad new tribal audiences—sports fans, car fans, knitting fans and political/ideological zealots of all persuasions.

The late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century is, therefore, dominated by an 'Anglo-American model of fact-based, news driven, objective reporting' and it's 'gradual absorption' into non-English speaking markets. Journalism scholar, Mark Deuze believes that these changes alter what being a journalist actually means.

> The 20th-century history of (the professionalization of) journalism can be typified by the consolidation of a consensual occupational ideology among journalists in different parts of the world.[122]

Kevin Williams argues that the lack of understanding of other forms is due to the dominance of the English language and the fact that most commentary and teaching of the subject, especially textbooks, is in English.[123]

This is a process that has also changed aspects of long-form journalism. Radio documentary and feature-making in the mid to late twentieth century, for example, in

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[121] Kevin Williams, *Competing Models of Journalism?: Anglo-American and European Reporting* in the Information Age, 49.
[122] Mark Deuze, 'What is journalism?: Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered', *Journalism*, 6/4 (2005), 442-464, 444.
[123] Kevin Williams, *Competing Models of Journalism?: Anglo-American and European Reporting* in the Information Age, 44.

Australia and other English-speaking countries, inherited many stylistic qualities and methods from continental Europe. Highly crafted sound design, as well as narrative techniques that often remove the program-maker's voice entirely from the final production, give such programs a dense, almost filmic quality. Many national broadcasters have radio networks that are dedicated to hosting this type of highly produced long-form program—for example, Radio France's *France Culture*;[124] BBC's *Radio 4* in the UK;[125] ÖRF's *Ö1* network in Austria;[126] and ABC *Radio National* (RN) in Australia.[127]

Since the late 1990s however, these techniques have become increasingly marginalised by broadcasting organisations, in lieu of an American style. The new sound privileges the maker, often placing them front and centre of the program, not just as narrator, but often as subject. The result is a simpler, more direct style of storytelling that appeals to a different demographic, and to media organisations in search of a younger audience. Significant examples of this are two radio/podcast series—*This American Life*[128] and *Radiolab*.[129]

The older tradition of highly produced features has not gone away entirely though, as independent production organisations, like *Falling Tree*,[130] and *Reduced Listening*,[131] have taken up the mantle of supporting and aggregating long-form features from freelance program-makers.

The industrialisation of the media

As mentioned earlier, in reference to John Hersey, there is a long period, through much of the early to mid-twentieth century, of disdain for print journalists engaging in literary styles. The battle lines were drawn between the traditional idea of the

[124] *France Culture*, https://www.franceculture.fr/
[125] *Radio 4*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/live:bbc_radio_fourfm
[126] ÖRF *Ö1*, https://radiothek.orf.at/oe1/
[127] ABC RN, https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/
[128] Ira Glass, *This American Life* [Radio feature and podcast series], (Chicago: WBEZ) <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>.
[129] Jad Abumrad, *Radiolab* [Radio feature and podcast], (New York: WNYC) <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab>.
[130] Alan Hall and Eleanor McDowall, 'Falling Tree', [Independent radio production house], (London) <http://www.fallingtree.co.uk/>.
[131] Barney Rowntree, Joby Waldman and Peter Meanwell, 'Reduced Listening', [Independent radio production house], (London) <https://www.reducedlistening.co.uk/>.

objective journalist and the seemingly less factually rigorous world of the novelist. John Hartsock believes the reason lies in an odd consensus between the academy and conservative media institutions.

> The historical ambivalence of the journalism community—among both its practitioners and academicians—derived, paradoxically, from much the same reasons as that of the literary establishment.[132]

Both realms mistrusted literary journalism, believing it strayed too close to creating fictions. Consequently, critics and scholars, from each side, managed:

> to construct critical paradigms that would prove exclusionary, whether intentionally or not, of literary journalism. Ultimately, such a stance makes of the form a kind of narrative cripple, a narrative imperfection for both.[133]

What Hartsock means is that by over-emphasising a fact-based, almost empirical approach to reportage, journalists couldn't write freely. The work became wooden; the delivery of information became clinical. This may have elevated the profession within the ranks of theorists, but for readers the experience was cold.

This concern, though, over the space between the high literary arts and the world of journalism extended earlier. Someone who wrote extensively, in fiction and in essays, on this schism was the 'Realist' American writer and critic William Dean Howells (1837-1920). Despite becoming 'one of the arbiters of literary taste'[134] at the end of the 19th century, Howells had grown up and learned his skills in the editorial offices and press rooms of the various newspapers and journals, initially working alongside his father.[135] Over time, Howells formed a clear view that the fixation with objective journalism was problematic, if not dangerous. In his book *The Critical Marginalization of American Literary Journalism*, John Hartsock writes:

> [William Dean] Howells took note of the depersonalizing nature of objectified journalistic practice in at least one of his major novels, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*. As a result, he "saw the new [objectified]

[132] John C. Hartsock, *The critical marginalization of American literary journalism*, 62.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Earl B. Braly, 'William Dean Howells, Author and Journalist', *Journalism Quarterly*, 32/4 (1955), 456.

> journalism as the vulgar and pernicious violator of private experience".[136]

Howell's novel, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, is a fictional work that borrows aspects from his insight into the newspaper world. It reveals yet another factor to explain the author's cynicism about some aspects of the media—the tension between independent and commercial journalism. The argument is that commercial media organisations are too close to, and too dependent on, the people and structures that wield money and power—often the very people that the public expect ought to be examined and scrutinised, without fear or favour, by the journalists.

This goes to the heart of any discussion about relative standards of objectivity and independence in the two worlds of journalism and history. Does the latter operate in bubble that shields it from distorting forces, while the former is forced to exist outside protection—exposed to all the harsh social, political and commercial elements that seek to corrupt it?

Interference and independence

The tension persists to the present and is important to the journalistic part of this project, which is exploring a way of describing the recent crisis of conscience across the wide European landscape. In a climate where so much is written about Europe, and while what is happening is so complex and confusing, we are seeing an alarming shift, in some parts of Europe, to constrain the media and to stifle independent voices. Hungary, for example, has changed fundamental legislation to make it impossible for any media organisation not favoured by the authoritarian government of Viktor Orbán, to retain a media licence.[137] It is a move other far right-wing governments are trying to mimic—Poland being a prime example.[138] Even in more liberal democracies across Europe and elsewhere, there is a distinct trend to remove support for independent and public media, with pressure to soften journalism, to appeal to

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[136] John C. Hartsock, *The critical marginalization of American literary journalism*, 64.
[137] Michael Shirrefs, *Hungary: Democracy distorted?*
[138] Adam Szynol, 'Towards commercialisation and politicisation - Polish media and Polish journalism 20 years after socio-political change' in Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska & Michał Głowacki (eds.), *Making Democracy in 20 Years. Media and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2011).

populism and to curb resistance to commercialisation. These causes and effects are highlighted in a 2019 report on media freedom.

> In some of the most influential democracies in the world, large segments of the population are no longer receiving unbiased news and information. This is not because journalists are being thrown in jail, as might occur in authoritarian settings. Instead, the media have fallen prey to more nuanced efforts to throttle their independence. Common methods include government-backed ownership changes, regulatory and financial pressure, and public denunciations of honest journalists. Governments have also offered proactive support to friendly outlets through measures such as lucrative state contracts, favorable regulatory decisions, and preferential access to state information. The goal is to make the press serve those in power rather than the public.[139]

Whether real or perceived, the potential for this lack of distance to be a corrupting or distorting influence lies at the heart of debates over democratic stability.

The idea has long existed that the subjective interests of politics and the singular interests of the business world were potentially corrupting journalism. This is echoed as far back as the 1890s, when the growth of large urban and national media corporations shifted the goal posts, especially for the public.

> A New York reporter, foreseeing the death of personal journalism, said: 'The fundamental principle of metropolitan journalism is to buy white paper at three cents a pound and sell it at ten cents a pound. And in some quarters it does not matter how much of the virgin whiteness is defiled so long as the defilement sells the paper.'[140]

The problem also stems from the loss of perceived intimacy that came with this *new* industrial scale of mass media companies. What was disappearing was the tradition of personal newspapers and the personal journalists writing directly to their readers.[141] Writers like Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, whom we think of today as archetypal American storytellers, wrote for this type of newspaper and represented

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[139] Sarah Repucci, 'Media Freedom: A downward spiral' [online journal] (2019), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-and-media/2019/media-freedom-downward-spiral>, accessed 12 January 2020.
[140] Larzer Ziff, *The American 1890s: Life and times of a lost generation* (New York: Viking Press, 1966), 147.
[141] Ibid. 148.

a marriage between the idea of enduring literary creations and the more ephemeral nature of journalism. The 1890s new age broke that direct relationship between the stories of the street and the readers in their living rooms. Cub journalists would be sent out to gather stories in the field, but they were not permitted to communicate directly with the audience.

> the writing would be done, in H. L. Mencken's words, by 'a homunculus at the end of a telephone wire.' The average reporter's observations would be reduced by 'literary castrati who never leave the office.'[142]

This approach, with all its emotional distance, led to a new form of journalism in the US, evolving from a battle between the two prototypical newspaper tycoons of the late 1890s—William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. Their respective publications, *New York Journal* and *New York World*, became increasingly competitive, mixing lurid headlines and graphic illustrations with an aggressive approach to newsgathering. The style was referred to as *yellow journalism*,[143] a label that became a pejorative for sensationalist stories, full of hyperbole and 'excesses' which, according to Stephen Ward 'overshadowed its strengths'.[144] It is a form that evolved into what we now refer to as *tabloid journalism*. But this culture of aggressive fact-finding also led to what we now usually elevate to high status—investigative journalism.

In this transition to large scale, mass media, while some media organisations have always peddled spectacle and controversy, we also see the embedding of an idea that became a guiding principle across more respected outlets in the modern media landscape—the ethic of objective independence in reportage. Whether or not it was simply a side-effect of growth and process changes, or a deliberate strategy, the result was the creation of an arms-length attitude by journalists to stories and subjects. But this was a hotly debated subject. Many felt objectivity was a euphemism for the blindly, uncritical republishing of third-party publicity and press releases. Others felt

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[142] Ibid. 146.
[143] W. Joseph Campbell, *Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the myths, defining the legacies* (Westport, USA: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 25.
[144] Stephen J. A. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond* (First paperback ed.. edn., Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 220.

strongly that this was also a moral issue.[145] Late in life, Joseph Pulitzer explained the moral dilemma.

> commercialism, which is proper and necessary in the business office, becomes a degradation and a danger when it invades the editorial rooms. Once let the public come to regard the press as exclusively a commercial business and there is an end of its moral power. Influence cannot exist without public confidence. And that confidence must have a human basis. It must rest in the end on the character of the journalist.[146]

This criticism of journalism as compromised, and the fear that it had lost its moral authority, meant that:

> editors and publishers began to talk about the need for a "wall" between the newsroom and business operations of the paper, described as a separation of "church and state."... *The Chicago Tribune* tower reportedly had separate elevators—one for editorial staff and one for business personnel.[147]

This physical manifestation of an ethical dilemma for the news media indicates the extent to which the industry has internalised and, still to this day, debates issues of accuracy and independence of reporting. It is a demonstration, both to itself and to its audience, that the questions remain live. Again, this is central to any examination of the relationship between the news media and the academy. If journalistic outputs are considered legitimate primary source material for scholars—whether historians, scientists or economists—the integrity and independence of the origin and provenance of the material's creation must be assured.

Even so, undue influence is insidious, regardless of the environment. Universities had historically prided themselves on being largely quarantined from the taint of external interference in research. Privatisation and commercialisation in the university sector challenged this notion, removing barriers between scholars and financial interests.

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[145] Ibid. 217.
[146] Joseph Pulitzer, 'The College of Journalism', *The North American Review*, 178/570 (1904), 641-680, 659, in JSTOR [online database], accessed 2020/09/25/.
[147] Stephen J. A. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond*, 222-223.

> Academically, the notion of producing and selling for a profit is the antithesis of the cherished ideal of disinterested devotion to learning.[148]

Once research institutions had been exposed to free market forces, however, the risks of coercion and bias, arising from conflicts of interest, widened. After some highly publicised cases of discredited research findings in recent decades, scholars in many countries are now required to conform to strict ethical guidelines. In Australia, where individual universities once dealt with research ethics internally, a national standardised approach, known as the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research*,[149] was jointly developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Australian Research Council (ARC) and Universities Australia (UA). Between 1990 and 2005, the guidelines were adopted by Independent Ethics Committees (IEC) of most Australian research institutions. These committees are now known as Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC).

There is now much greater public scrutiny on research. High-profile cases, such as the discrediting of a paper by Andrew Wakefield in 2010 linking autism to vaccinations, achieved significant media attention, due to organisations like the Center for Scientific Integrity and their *Retraction Watch* website.[150] History research has had its own share of public controversy, particularly since post-colonialism did much to rewrite the histories of global conquest. Subsequent *culture wars*, waged between scholars in many parts of the world, has leeched into the mainstream, with some prominent history deniers achieving prominence, fuelling ideological and political debates in the public arena. In Australia, a notable example is historian Keith Winsdschuttle, whose published work, questioning orthodox views about historical violence against Indigenous Australians, was intended to 'produce... a counter-history of race relations

[148] Roger Geiger, 'The Commercialization of the University', *American Journal of Education*, 110/4 (2004), 389-399, 389.
[149] NHMRC, *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018)* (Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007).
[150] Adam Marcus and Ivan Oransky, 'Retraction Watch', *The Center for Scientific Integrity* (<https://retractionwatch.com/>).

in this country'.[151] It created controversy across the media and amongst both academics and politicians.

All this parallels the issues that independent media organisations always had to confront. An adaptation of a previous quote could equally read 'for trust in the media to work, the notion of producing and selling for a profit is the antithesis of the cherished ideal of disinterested devotion to independence.'

Public broadcasting and the notion of integrity

The birth of electronic media, with the first regular radio broadcasts, also led to the creation of a new concept, public broadcasting—a media model that was de-coupled from the traditional revenue sources that newspaper organisations derived from paper sales and commercial advertising. Publicly funded broadcasting, then evolved alongside private, commercial broadcasters. In the case of the world's oldest national broadcaster,[152] which evolved into the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a novel mechanism was created, via Government statute, to charge households with wireless receivers a licence fee.

> A new British Broadcasting Company—with a monopoly on broadcasting—would finance its operations with a share of the licence fee and of royalties from sales of [radio] sets.[153]

The BBC was the starting model, to a greater or lesser degree, for many public broadcasters in the English-speaking world—the Australian Broadcasting Commission, now the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC); the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, now the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC); and the Radio Broadcasting Company that became Radio New Zealand (RNZ).

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[151] James Boyce, 'The Fabrication of Aboriginal History', *Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania*, (2006), <https://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/F/Fabrication.htm>.
[152] In 1922, the British Postmaster General granted a single licence to a consortium of firms that had applied for the right to broadcast.; Charlotte Higgins, *This New Noise: The extraordinary birth and troubled life of the BBC* (Kindle Edition edn., London: Guardian Books/Faber & Faber, 2015).
[153] Ibid. 17.

The ABC in Australia bore the most resemblance to the BBC. The ABC was also created by Government, in 1932, when they absorbed a number of private broadcasters. A licence funding model, similar to the BBC, was used for these original private operators and then for the new ABC, in order to remove the need for advertising-based revenue. This mechanism was used to give broadcasters an arms-length distance from influence from political or financial interests. As a result, independence is also at the core of public broadcasting around the world. Unlike the BBC, which is still funded through licence fees, the Australian Government abolished fees in 1974, instead funding the ABC directly from tax revenue. This change removed a safety barrier preventing real or perceived interference by the government of the day.[154]

This high-minded approach that we attach to public broadcasting was in no way a given at its inception. No one really understood what radio was or what it could be in society. And while the example that follows is from the BBC, it is an important origin story for other public broadcasters, because it shows that some of what we take to be a given is actually an accident of history.

The person tasked with conjuring the BBC into existence, the first Director General, John Reith (1889-1971), later to become Lord Reith, wrote 'I did not know what broadcasting was.'[155] Reith was a Calvinist. This is significant because, while he may not have understood the emerging medium and the organisation he was tasked with formulating, he was guided by strict personal principles, which gave him a clear model of what public service meant. LeMahieu writes that 'few figures would seem to illustrate better the relationship between private conscience and public duty in twentieth-century Britain than John Reith'.[156]

In her book *This New Noise: The Extraordinary Birth and Troubled Life of the BBC*, Charlotte Higgins notes:

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[154] K. S. Inglis, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1932-1983* (2nd edn., Melbourne: Black Inc., 2006).; Tom Molomby, *Is there a moderate on the roof?: ABC years* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991).
[155] Charlotte Higgins, *This New Noise: The extraordinary birth and troubled life of the BBC*, 13.
[156] D.L. LeMahieu, 'John Reith 1889-1971: Entrepreneur of collectivism' in Susan Pedersen & Peter Mandler (eds.), *After the Victorians: Private conscience and public duty in modern Britain* (London, UK: Routledge, 1994).

> That the BBC should have been set up as a company and a monopoly, and then a corporation in the public interest, was not inevitable, but the result of a series of incremental decisions at first pragmatic and then solidified into ideology.[157]

This emerging ideology of public interest was given full voice in the recommendations of the UK's 1925 Crawford Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting.

> Broadcasting was too significant to be turned over to mere profit-making. 'No company or body constituted on trade lines for profit, direct or indirect, of those composing it, can be regarded as adequate in view of the broader considerations now beginning to emerge,' it reported. 'We think a public corporation is the most appropriate organisation… its status and duties should correspond with those of public service.'[158]

These words state the fundamental ethos that has underpinned public broadcasting, in the United Kingdom and in Australia, to the present day. It has, for more than seventy-five years been the 'unarguable' rebuttal against anyone seeking to pressure public broadcasters into accepting advertising or commercial sponsorship, in an attempt to save public money. It is just one manifestation of the philosophy of the *common good*, a concept that underpinned social policy in many Western nations, reflected also in other social concepts that became synonymous with ideas of equity of access—public health, public education, public housing and the governing machinery of a public service.

The *common good* remained the guiding principle for governments in countries like Australia for much of the twentieth century. However, it is a principle that we've seen increasingly challenged or undermined in many countries since the late 1990s. It's shifting status affects long-form journalism and the role it plays, because, as has already been stated, reliable and accurate long-form journalism takes time, money and critical independence. Neoliberal philosophies have rejigged political thinking, alongside a fundamental shift in the defining of a 'public', resulting in fundamental changes in consumption and social expectations.

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[157] Charlotte Higgins, *This New Noise: The extraordinary birth and troubled life of the BBC*, 15.
[158] Ibid. 17.

> The shift in the construction of the public from citizens to consumers in public policy documents has coincided with the privatization of public services, the deregulation of various industries, and the liberalization of various markets.[159]

This is one of a number of factors that have affected attitudes to public service media, allowing for a more openly hostile political dialogue to enter the debate. The result has been that, far from feeling quarantined from the pressures of the private sector market, public service media organisations have been forced into ever more defensive positions, needing to keep advocating for their particular status in society and for the importance of maintaining independent media voices, free of commercial concerns and corporate influence.

This advocacy was not always successful. The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia's multicultural radio and TV network, created in 1978 (radio) and 1980 (TV) as a complementary public service to the more Anglo-Celtic Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), caved in to political pressure, deciding to start broadcasting commercial advertisements as far back as 1989. This contentious move was designed to supplement existing government funding. Instead, the move backfired. Over time, there was little substantial financial benefit, because governments merely adjusted their funding to take into account this new income stream. The net result was no effective increase.[160] But perhaps the greater penalty was the loss of real or perceived independence, which was, in the minds of many, SBS's greatest asset. Whether or not this is true, it certainly can have an effect, with the heightened risk of self-censorship amongst journalists—the fear of critique, pushback or reprisals from vested interests outside the editorial bubble—a phenomenon that Chomsky described in the film *Manufacturing Consent*.[161]

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[159] Simon Dawes, *British Broadcasting and the Public-Private Dichotomy: Neoliberalism, citizenship and the public sphere*, Springer Literature, Cultural and Media Studies eBooks (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 91.

[160] Rhonda Jolly, 'Special Broadcasting Service (SBS): Operations and funding', *Parliament of Australia* [Web document], (2007), <https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/SBS>.

[161] Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick, *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the media* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1994).

Another contemporary scholar who has located the evolution of the media within the development of the public sphere is Jürgen Habermas—an intellectual descendant of Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt School. Habermas views the modern incarnation of the media as a product of the power dynamics that formed the 'public sphere (*die Öffentlichtkeit*)'. His concern was with how the notion of a sovereign public was formed as an offshoot of the Enlightenment, how it deepened alongside the modern social welfare state, and how it reflects an era of rapid commodification. He observes that, at the point when:

> the press became commercialized, the threshold between the circulation of a commodity and the exchange of communications among members of the public was levelled.[162]

This suggests some sort of natural public sector/private sector equilibrium has been achieved. But he goes on to state that this also removed any 'political guarantees' that would 'safeguard the continued independence of its institutions'.[163]

The principles of journalistic independence and the common good are important, because they create the conditions in which long-form journalism can best operate, without undue influence or coercion. In the context of this project, public broadcasting has long been one of the most robust environments for independent long-form work, and there are strong parallels between this ethic and the basic philosophies of the European Union, which is the focus of the broadcast content of this PhD. Both ideas came out of an era when grand social projects, designed to elevate the well-being of all citizens, were possible and admired. Broad public comprehension of these concepts, however, is disappearing and we are seeing the consensus for these types of big social creations being withdrawn.[164]

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[162] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, 181.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Michael Shirrefs and Hans Sluga, *The Fate of the Common Good* [Audio and transcript], (2018) <http://www.theidentitypapers.com/professor-hans-sluga-and-the-search-for-the-common-good/>; Michael Shirrefs, 'The Fate of the Common Good', *The Philosopher's Zone* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC RN, 6 May 2018) <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/the-fate-of-the-common-good/9711298>.

Evolving media—range, shape and limits

Through the later decades of the twentieth century, the shape of the mass media changed little. There was some ebb and flow, with media organisations expanding or contracting, merging or collapsing, but the fundamental media forms remained a stable backdrop for the types of long-form journalism we are discussing here.

Change came in the late 1980s. The merging of media organisations was a prelude to the merging of media technologies. A new concept was created—convergence. In 1989 two media giants, *Time Inc* and *Warner Brothers*, merged to form *Time Warner*: then the largest media and entertainment entity in the world. Eleven years later, in 2001, *Time Warner* was bought by AOL (*America Online*). Collapsing media groups into a single entity 'is seen as a model for media convergence'.[165]

> Media convergence is a theory in communications where every mass medium eventually merges to the point where they become one medium due to the advent of new communication technologies.[166]

The arrival of the internet and the subsequent creation of user-friendly interfaces allowed the World Wide Web to develop, bringing with it the prospect of a singular, unifying portal for information and media of all descriptions.

The rapid changes in size and speed, capacity and cost that tech companies have delivered, since the mid-1960s, have (until recently) followed Moore's Law:[167] capacities of microprocessor technologies will double every two years (see Fig. 9).

[165] Sepideh Chakaveh and Manfred Bogen, *Media Convergence, An introduction* (Berlin: Springer, 2007), 812.
[166] Ibid. 811.
[167] In 1965, Gordon Moore predicted that miniaturisation in electronic circuitry would result in a doubling of capacity every two years

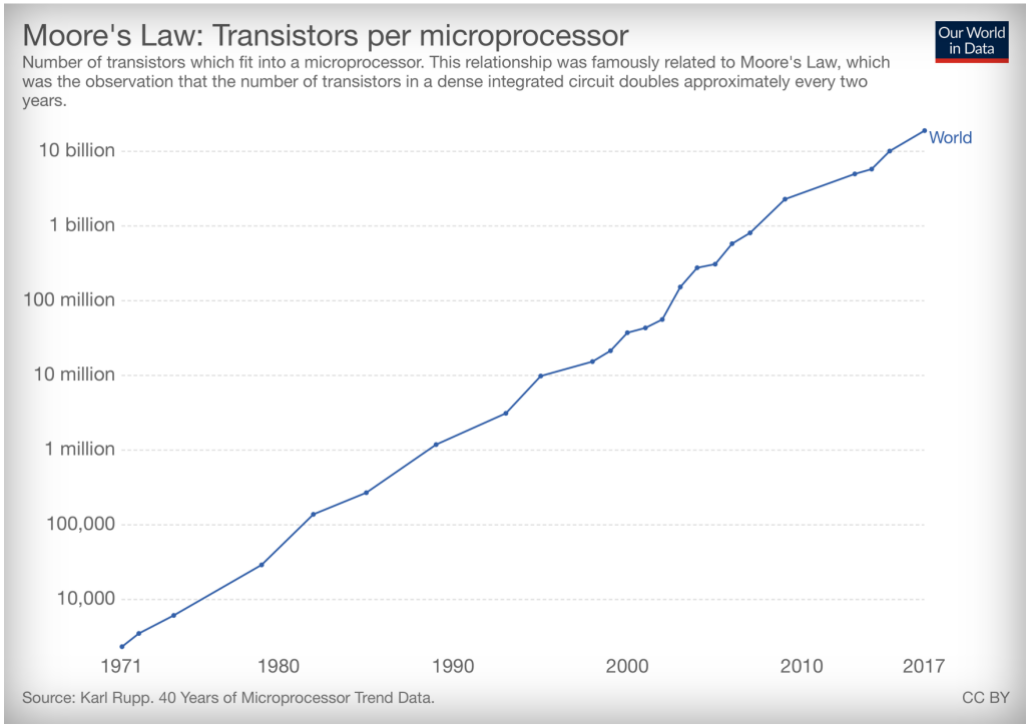

Fig. 9—Graph showing the consistency of Moore's Law over time

The media world is not immune to the endless pursuit of speed and miniaturisation. The mindset of faster, smaller and cheaper has changed both the creation and consumption of information, with media bosses trying hard to keep up with change. It is a world that seems antithetical to the ethic of considered, long-form media. Social media technologies, like Twitter, have overwhelmed the public and the political spheres, creating a culture of rapid and clipped messaging that traditional media organisations have done their best to mimic and absorb into their products. In spite of this, digital technology has produced alternatives—multiple solutions, for multiple audiences, who have a range of tastes and needs, and demand variety. A push-back against speed has produced a counter-culture of slow journalism and slow listening. Behold, the podcast!

Podcasting

Despite the much anticipated, or feared, prospect of complete convergence, the media landscape has yet to collapse into a monopoly. Listenership research in 2019 by the Pew Center in the United States compared traditional live terrestrial radio, live online radio and on-demand podcasts (see Figs. 10-12). Despite a steady increase in podcast

listenership—from 11% listening at least once that year in 2006, to 51% in 2019, and from 7%, listening that week in 2013, to 22% in 2019—the Pew study showed no significant reciprocal decline in traditional terrestrial radio consumption (from 92%, listening in a given week in 2009, to 89% in 2019). Figures for live online radio, much of which parallel-broadcasts existing terrestrial radio services, have seen as dramatic a rise as the uptake of podcasts (from 12%, listening on a weekly basis in 2007, to 60% in 2019).[168]

Podcasting has not caused traditional long-form media to go into a deep decline, even though the relative costs, for the making and distribution of content, differ a lot. It seems to sit, comfortably enough alongside the older, more expensive delivery systems, as a viable alternative. Podcasting appears to open up new audiences, with its mix of new and repackaged content.

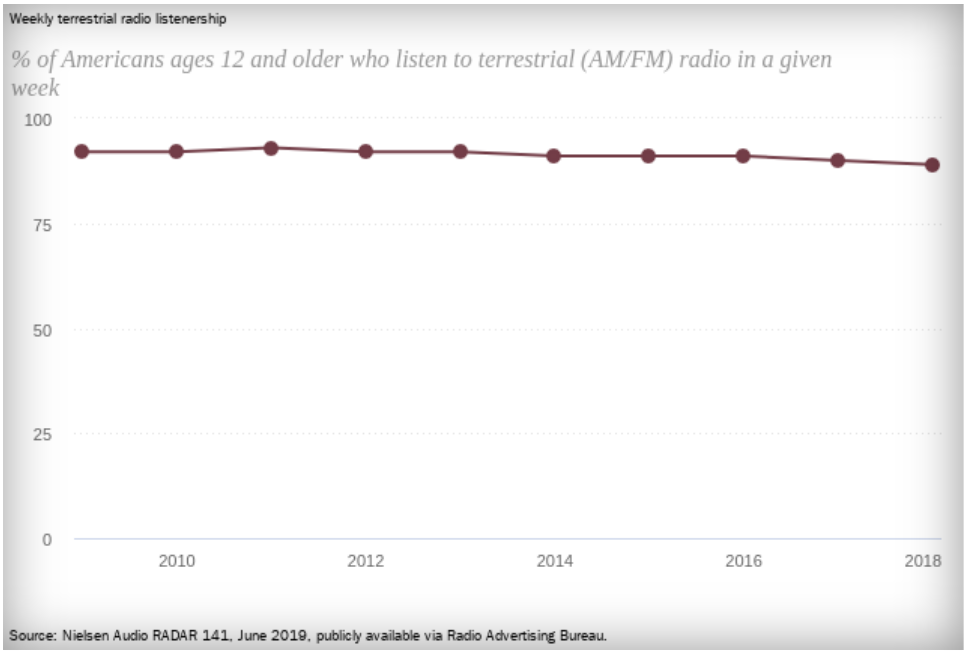

Fig. 10—US weekly terrestrial radio listenership 2009-2018 (Sources: Pew Research Center 2019)

[168] Journalism and Media Pew Research Center, 'Audio and Podcasting Fact Sheet', *Pew Research Center*, (last modified 9 July 2019 2019), <https://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/audio-and-podcasting/>, accessed 2 December 2019.

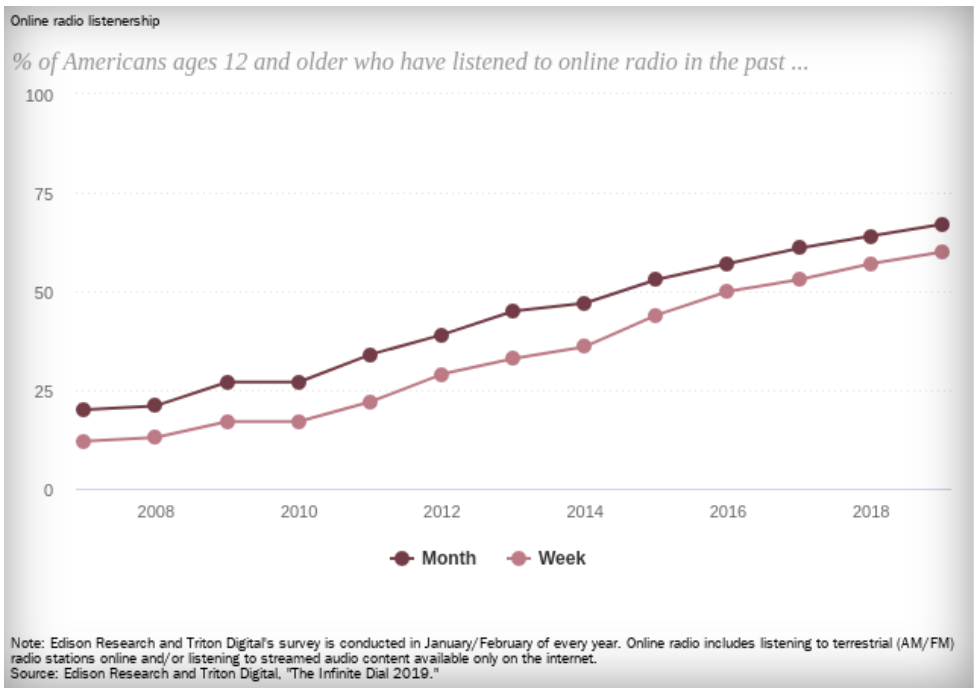

Fig. 11—US online radio listenership 2007-2019 (Source: Pew Research Center 2019)

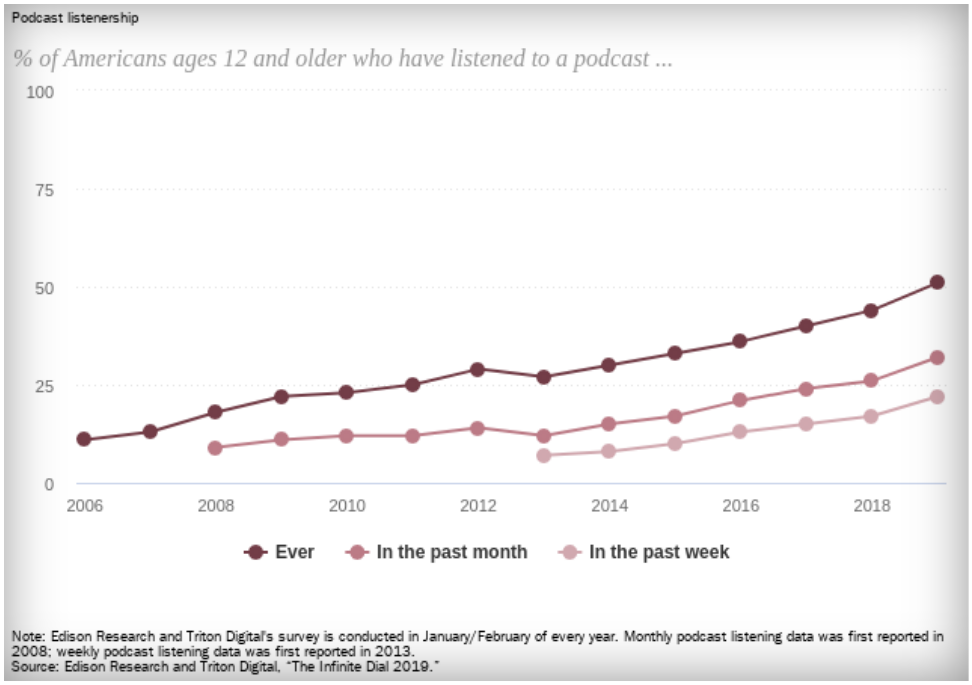

Fig. 12—US podcasting listenership figures 2006-2019 (Source: Pew Research Center 2019)

However, podcasting is not synonymous with content. It is merely a vehicle for delivery. Content must still be created in the same ways. The change is where the content is created, as well as some stylistic shifts. And while vast amounts of podcast content are still generated inside traditional media organisations, the internet has allowed would-be content creators to bypass the old media gatekeepers and deal

directly with an audience—mass or niche. This has been a radical shift, allowing many new and innovative styles of content to flourish. But in this brand-new world of content democracy, there are fewer chances for most podcasters to generate any sort of meaningful income. Many fine podcasts are made without the creators earning any money.[169] Time will tell if the media market will allow that to change. This is an evolving research area because the podcast industry is still inventing itself, and we are still unsure what the long-term impacts will be on long-form journalism.

Shifting the cost burden

Another implication of this is the wider phenomenon of cost-shifting in the online media world. One of the most significant, but under-acknowledged, ground shifts of recent years has been the ability for media organisations to shift the cost burdens, not only of broadcasting onto consumers, but also of content creation onto freelancers. With traditional electronic broadcasting and print technologies, final transmission and print/delivery processes are expensive. Running costs of networks of broadcast transmitters, and of printing presses and delivery systems across large landmasses, consume a big percentage of any media organisation's budget.[170] The advent of online distribution changed that. Disseminating TV, radio or newspapers online, removed one of publishing's most onerous overheads. The burden falls to the consumer. The publisher or broadcaster just needs to produce one digital version which is accessed by multiple consumers, whose ability to receive a broadcast or read a newspaper online relies entirely on them paying for a reliable internet access. In addition, many publishers have added paywalls, to mimic the income from traditional paper sales, or create entirely new income streams. The advantages are yet to be fully realised, as many media organisations still have a mix of old and new delivery systems.

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[169] Siobhán McHugh, 'Podcasting's Dirty Secret: Audio storytelling takes art, craft—and tons of time', *Department of Radio-Television-Film at the University of Texas at Austin* [Web Journal], (2018), <https://www.flowjournal.org/2018/11/podcastings-dirty-secret/>.

[170] The transmission and distribution costs of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in the 2019-2-2020 financial year, for example, constituted 39% of the organisation's non-staff related outgoings. That is spread across a large number of the ABC's radio and TV networks. However, for one radio network, the transmission costs can be upwards of 70% of the entire budget for that network.; ABC, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Annual Report 2020* (Canberra: ABC, 2020), <https://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ABC9864_v8_FILM_Revised_WEB_v3.pdf>.

The other area of cost shifting is in content creation, which has, traditionally, been done in-house by employees—large teams of writers, producers, presenters, journalists and technical staff. This too is changing. More and more of this in-house work is out-sourced to production companies or individual freelancers. In my experience of working in the documentary and features department of ABC Radio National (ABC RN), the change was radical. Prior to 2015, at least twenty full-time staff were creating five separate, highly researched and produced long-form (55 minutes each) documentaries per week. Budget cuts in 2014 initially halved the staffing and output.[171] All that remains today are five full-time producers and two part-time producers, making only two 25-minute features per week, with a much greater emphasis on commissioning and supervising work from freelancers, who may or may not have any radio experience.[172]

The cost benefit for media organisations is in not having to carry the staff overheads (e.g., ongoing salaries, leave entitlements, sickness benefits, superannuation contributions, as well as all duty-of-care responsibilities). Even in-house employees, who would once have been permanent and mainly full-time, are being replaced by contract staff. This bypasses union awards and enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA).

As mentioned earlier, with regard to podcasting, media organisations have developed a taste for putting the responsibility of content creation onto independent producers. With that, though, comes the loss of professional skills that come with years of experience. Even newsrooms, which also rely on a capable and ready in-house staff of journalists, have been hollowed out.

> Newsrooms are largely drained of journalists with knowledge, experience and wisdom. In their place are lower-cost general reporters who at best do some elementary Google desk research, place a couple of calls and write up 'the story'.[173]

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[171] Mike Ladd, 'A Poet's Progress in the ABC: Reflections on a life in radio', *Cordite Poetry Review* (2020).
[172] ABC RN's website has a page dedicated to helping independents to pitch their story ideas. https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/earshot-pitch/6331982
[173] Andrew Jaspan, 'Global Innovator' in Andrew Dodd & Helen Sykes (eds.), *Media innovation & disruption* (Melbourne, Australia: Future Leaders, 2016), 43.

As older, larger media operators struggle to survive, in a world that is spawning and supporting a vast number of smaller, and more agile innovators, the trend scales down, abandoning information-&-opinion generators, to becoming hybrid aggregators of material, created elsewhere. Control slackens. Maintaining standards of quality, of authenticity, and proper fact-checking, also becomes difficult when gates open wide.

Media boundaries and outliers

In this world of open-source journalism, the idea that anyone can be a provider is important and controversial, providing a setting in which debates around long-form journalism are taking place. Citizen Journalism has developed, alongside the idea of User-Generated Content (UGC), as widespread mobility technology has evolved, enabling expanded possibilities for the capture of sound and vision. Mobile phones now equip most people living in relatively wealthy countries with a recording device; many people spring into action as human surveillance activists, should a spectacle or scandal present before them. Media organisations have become infatuated with this seemingly endless source of content from tech-tooled spectators.

It was, perhaps, more of a novelty, until an incident during the 2008 US Democratic Primaries, between Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton. A citizen journalist, Mayhill Fowler, who had previously contributed to *The New York Times*, attended one of Obama's campaign fundraising events, even though the event was closed to the formal media. She recorded proceedings, unvetted, capturing a decisive moment in Obama's campaign—a misstep. Referring to Pennsylvania blue-collar workers, Obama said:

> It's not surprising then that they get bitter. They cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustration.[174]

Mayhill Fowler subsequently published this in an article for *The Huffington Post*, blindsiding the Obama campaign team. It forced Obama to backtrack. While he went

[174] Mayhill Fowler, 'Obama: No surprise that hard-pressed Pennsylvanians turn bitter', *Huffington Post* [online journal] (2008), <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/obama-no-surprise-that-ha_b_96188>.

on to win the Democratic nomination and the Presidency, he lost the Pennsylvania primary. Noting all this, a journalism educator concluded:

> What, then, does this episode mean for journalism? One way to view its impact is by asking what it tells us about journalism's boundaries. This was a moment—one of an increasing number—in which the borders of something assumed to be concrete called 'journalism' appeared flimsy and malleable. Fowler's scoop made news, but did this make it journalism?[175]

Regardless of the definition, validity or genuine newsworthiness of UGC, whether it be text, vision or sound, media outlets now depend more on citizen journalism to give them an edge, whether it be about proximity to the news, or about timing. We are yet to discover what impact this will have on the telling of history, and on long-form journalism, however media commentators, such as Margaret Simons are working in this area.

One significant arena that has already shown the power of public engagement in the process of news and data gathering is that of major disasters. In Australia, citizen voices have played a crucial role in some of the most devastating natural disasters. The Black Saturday fires, that swept across large parts of Victoria in 2009, happened with frightening speed and ferocity. They destroyed vast swathes of property and claimed 173 lives. Throughout the day, a mosaic of ordinary voices, both inside and outside of the tragedy, some of them becoming victims, provided the most accurate and heart-breaking accounts on live radio of things only they could witness. As Simons notes, the radio producers had to make difficult decisions about who to put to air.

> In some cases, the radio presenter was the last person the victim spoke to before he or she died. The producer and other journalists involved in that broadcast still live with the impact of the decisions they made that day.[176]

Just as important, though, was the role these voices played in the aftermath—in the public enquiries that followed and in the way the event has been recorded for history.

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[175] Matt Carlson, *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices and Participation* (London: Routledge, 2015).
[176] Margaret Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: Crisis and opportunity for the press* (Updated ed.. edn., Melbourne, Australia: Scribe Publications, 2012), 58.

Since then, the crucial role of citizens in the real-time telling and mapping of large events like this has been acknowledged, with new data gathering technologies being brought into play. Simons notes the adoption, by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, of an open-source, web-based mapping application called *Ushahidi*,[177] developed by citizen journalists in Kenya, to track the violence that followed the Kenyan election in 2008. The software allows ordinary citizens to input information on an event as it happens.[178]

In the same way that technology has changed the role for journalists, ordinary people have been altered, turned into hybrids. The devices we own, and the technologies that connect us, give us all the opportunity to actively engage with the social commentary, as well as adding to the record of our collective memories. Margaret Simons is clear that we won't be going back to a world where traditional media operators are the exclusive gatekeepers.

> Journalists no longer have privileged access to the means of publication and broadcast. Instead, for the first time in human history, anyone can publish their thoughts, news and views to the world within minutes of deciding to do so.[179]

Branded journalism & corporate newsrooms

The fragmentation and diminishing of older media players, due to the failure of their traditional business models, has resulted in a loss of confidence, not just amongst media consumers, but also within the ranks of journalists. Once upon a time, we had only three news options—newspapers, radio or television—media producers who functioned like mirrors, confecting reflections of our world. Not all the mirrors gave us true and honest images, but the distortions were generally known and factored into our consumption. Over the course of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, ownership within these three traditional forms, in Australia and many other countries, has increasingly concentrated into the hands of just a few centralised media empires. In Australia, it was Fairfax and News Corporation media conglomerates that

[177] Erik Hersman et al., 'Ushahidi' [Crowdsourcing data website], (<https://www.ushahidi.com/>)
[178] Margaret Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: Crisis and opportunity for the press*.
[179] Margaret Simons, 'Opportunities from media crisis' in Andrew Dodd & Helen Sykes (eds.), *Media innovation & disruption* (Melbourne, Australia: Future Leaders, 2016), 5.

ruled, alongside three commercial television companies, two public broadcasters, and a plethora of commercial radio networks. Then, in 2018, Fairfax was taken over by one of the television companies, Nine Entertainment, further reducing the number of media operators and raising serious concerns about convergence, media monopolies, and the loss of competition.

Size, it was thought, was everything. The term *media giant* was synonymous with money, power and unassailability. But then the internet became the giant—a new environment that reaches far more people and privileges smaller, more agile communicators. Suddenly, the sources of revenue, advertising and sales, started to abandon the old empires, who have been left wondering how to adapt, how to make themselves web-sized and relevant. The term *Digital First* crept into the media vocabulary, coined by a US media boss, John Paton, who, in 2009, rescued a failing newspaper publishing group called the Journal Register Company.[180]

> Paton adopted the motto 'digital first, print last'. The old model, he said, was broken... Digital First meant not only new delivery mechanisms, but also using the tools for what they were best fitted to do—brokering entirely new relationships with the audience.[181]

Digital First has become a catch cry of big media companies in desperate search of a makeover, although understanding who the new audiences are, and how to use the new tools, requires more than a slogan. Audiences have become less passive, more selective and discerning. There is debate over whether the idea of mass media is losing currency, as the mass audience turns into many niche audiences. Tim Dunlop says that this has produced the phenomenon of *disaggregation*:

> the process by which the range of topics collected under the masthead of a single mainstream newspaper—from economics, to sport, to politics, fashion, entertainment, arts, and even classified advertising—are unbundled and presented as stand-alone websites devoted to a given topic.[182]

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[180] Margaret Simons, *Journalism at the Crossroads: Crisis and opportunity for the press*, 32-35.
[181] Ibid. 32,35.
[182] Tim Dunlop, 'Success, Trends and Influence of Social Media in Mainstream Media' in Andrew Dodd & Helen Sykes (eds.), *Media innovation & disruption* (Melbourne, Australia: Future Leaders, 2016).

As rationalisations across the media landscape, since 2010, have cut expenditure and staffing in Australia, people with media skills and knowledge have scattered—some going down new media rabbit holes, but many of them leaving the industry altogether, taking their expertise with them. This is the subject of a report, from the *New Beats* research group, whose 2018 report, *Mass redundancies and career change in Australian journalism*,[183] examines the impact of unprecedented job losses across all traditional media sectors between 2012 and 2018. As previously mentioned, traditional 'newsrooms are largely drained of journalists with knowledge, experience and wisdom.'[184] One of the consequences of this has been to rob people of their confidence and trust in what remains in the media landscape. Many of the older media brands and mastheads retain the familiar names, but have changed, visibly diminished by these cutbacks and losses. Former newspaper editor in the UK and Australia, Andrew Jaspan, has watched this unfold.

> Most canny readers aren't fooled and can spot they are being short-changed. They are starting to look elsewhere for the deeper analysis or knowledge that can help them make sense of an increasingly complex world.[185]

Alongside this, many new names, new technologies, new media models and new alliances have appeared, making it harder to identify trustworthy sources. For most people, the old, large, predictable mirrors have been shattered and, as Andrew Jaspan observes above, what is left for media consumers are fraught searches, amongst the broken shards, to try to find images that are substantial enough and dependable enough, to picture their changing world.

One such recent media phenomenon blurring public perception is *branded content* and the rise of *corporate newsrooms*—as distinct from traditional newsrooms in commercial media. The term *content* describes anything created to populate media platforms. To a degree, all media *content* is *branded*. Traditional media creators, commercial or not, all publish via brands. Newspaper and magazine mastheads,

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[183] Lawrie Zion et al., *New Beats Report: Mass redundancies and career change in Australian journalism* (Melbourne: New Beats Project, 2018).
[184] Andrew Jaspan, *Global Innovator*, 43.
[185] Ibid.

broadcasting identifiers, all come with reputations that carry varying audience perceptions of integrity and trustworthiness.

The agendas of content publishers may or may not be always clear and transparent, however. Public broadcasters will generally strive to present themselves as politically and commercially neutral, untainted by external vested interests. However, as previously mentioned with regard to Australia's SBS, economic pressures can result in a degree of commercial capitulation, risking appearances of compromise. Fully commercial print and electronic media, however, with their absolute reliance on private sector income, can never escape the perception that their greatest priority is income survival, the concerns of advertisers and shareholders trumping all else. Regardless, all media organisations work hard to convince the public that their news-gathering divisions are quarantined from these other interests and sit at arms-length from any external interference.

However, with the depredations of newsrooms across the country, lines are being crossed and the boundaries are far less distinct. This is what Andrew Dodd has referred to as the:

> ever-so-slightly scary world of branded content, where reporting is being redefined while most of us are barely aware of what's occurring.[186]

A distinction must be made, between *branded* journalism and *brand* journalism. Brand journalism is unambiguous marketing; its content is tied directly or indirectly to its brand's products. Lehto and Moisala write that:

> "brand journalism cannot be a substitute for independent news reporting" (Swenson 2012, 29), the main point being the apparent lack of objectivity when a brand is paying the journalist's salary.[187]

[186] Andrew Dodd, 'Branded Content' in Andrew Dodd & Helen Sykes (eds.), *Media innovation & disruption* (Albert Park, Victoria: Future Leaders, 2016), 138.
[187] Markus Lehto and Vili Moisala, 'Defining Branded Journalism' in, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 2014, viewed 29 September 2020, <https://www.academia.edu/7331254/Defining_Branded_Journalism>.

The word *journalism* also deliberately misleads. The term is simply a pseudonym for PR or product placement. *Branded* journalism is meant to be different, whether or not it achieves that ambition, which Ebele Wybenga states is about:

> finding real-life stories that couldn't have sprung from the imagination of brand managers, PR advisers and copywriters.[188]

Two types of branded content exist. The first sits within traditional media outputs—paid-for stories or promotions that appear in the TV or radio news, or in newspapers and journals, with little or no labelling to distinguish them from journalist-produced, independent news content. One such tool is the *advertorial*, which looks and feels like legitimate and independently generated news stories or features. While these pressures are not especially new, advertisers and broadcasters sometimes go to great lengths to disguise this content, avoiding the critical radar of consumers and regulators, while still complying with media disclosure laws. This is because financial margins have shrunk for these older media producers, and their survival is at stake. A similar tool that the corporate world increasingly uses, is *native advertising*. Operating with a similar level of stealth and sophistication to the advertorial, these are promotions that 'are produced to look and feel like the editorial content around them.'[189]

The second form of branded content is a more recent arrival. This is material produced online, from within commercial, ostensibly non-media organisations with in-house *corporate newsrooms*. Banks and other financial institutions have been quick to see value in this type of narrowly targeted form of communication. This is a more honest approach. As Dodd observes, the branding is inherent. While the organisations are keen to convince consumers that an arm's-length independence exists, between commerce and information, there can be little doubt that a commercial agenda exists.

> Branded content tends to present itself with a higher purpose than mere marketing, but promoting its funder is central to its mission.[190]

[188] Ebele Wybenga, *The Editorial Age* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2013), 4.
[189] Andrew Dodd, *Branded Content*, 139.
[190] Ibid.

One New Zealand academic, Alan Samson, quoted in the blog of a US communications consultant Shel Holtz, has succinctly observed one of the fundamental misgivings about branded journalism creators.

> Sure they may be doing good research and telling the truth, but they wouldn't last five seconds if they tore into their own company.[191]

Arguably, this claim could be levelled at some traditional media organisations as well. Being old-school does not automatically afford a publisher or broadcaster the moral high-ground, especially when the entire media landscape is in flux.

All this goes back to the crucial factors of trust, accuracy and independence, and if there is to be a reliable bridge between humanities scholars and journalists, it is founded on these factors. Long-form journalism, precisely because it is more time-consuming and expensive to create, sends an implicit message from the publisher to the consumer—that, in this story, we are putting ideas before profit. Here, a publisher is investing in investigation and knowledge, therefore this content has value, in and of itself. This speaks to my fundamental thesis, that long-form journalism can exist in closer proximity to dedicated scholarship than stereotypes about the media would suggest.

Journalism and the academy

Now, to connect some of these dots. All in all, two distinct battle lines exist and persist around journalism. The first is an internal theory-versus-practice debate, between working journalists and the growing world of university-based journalism education and media studies. While it is more and more the case that the path into media and journalism is through formal study within universities, there remains a strong belief, among many industry practitioners in the mass media industry, that journalism is only learned by doing, and not by sitting in a lecture theatre.

[191] Shel Holtz, 'Brand journalism was never meant to replace independent news reporting' <https://holtz.com/blog/%20brands/brand-journalism-was-never-meant-to-replace-independent-%20news-reporting/3728/>.

> For many editors, journalism education is seen as theory-laden and out of touch with industry realities, even when lecturers are former journalists.[192]

But this thesis has argued, beginning by citing Herodotus and Thucydides, that there is a strong cross-over between the work of journalists and researchers in many areas of the humanities, and especially in history. My survey of the literature shows there are two reasons for this cross-over. The first reason is that, as well as being a vehicle for the transmission of both mainstream and more scholarly ideas into the public sphere, journalism is also an intellectual endeavour in and of itself. Good journalism requires highly developed and agile minds. The second reason suggests that journalistic outputs have long been an under-acknowledged source or pillar for some of the more traditional areas of higher study and research. Historians often depend on the work of journalists who provide one of their principal primary-source data streams.

Although the arrival of journalism studies within the academy, alongside significant paradigm shifts within historiography emphasising 'contemporary' history, has brought these two disciplines closer, this was far from true in previous centuries. French historians in the eighteenth century wanted to be seen as the reliable scribes and interpreters of the passage of events, without being associated with the gazetteers of the time, whom they saw as simply seeking to 'satisfy our curiosity or titillate our imagination'[193] with, as Voltaire (1694-1778) put it, '"this appalling flood of useless facts"'.[194] To demarcate this distinction, Yves Lavoinne states:

> History, inspired by philosophy and with scientific aspirations, henceforth defined itself as an austere, interpretive discipline rather than storytelling for the entertainment of the curious. Viewed from a standpoint which gave pride of place to the search for understanding, the concern for narrative, central to the gazetteer's trade, was seen as playing a definitely subordinate role.[195]

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[192] Penny O'Donnell, 'Journalism Education' in Bridget Griffen-Foley (ed.), *A Companion to the Australian Media* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2014), 226.
[193] Yves Lavoinne and David Motlow, 'Journalists, History and Historians: The ups and downs of a professional identity', *Réseaux. Communication - Technologie - Société* (1994), 205-221, 208, in Persée http://www.persee.fr [online database].
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.

Lavoinne's point applies much more to the influential traditions of German academic scholarship as established by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). Frederick Beiser writes:

> Ranke held that the sources of modern history were in no less need of critical scrutiny than those of classical history, and that modern history could advance only through the most scrupulous examination of its sources.[196]

The developments to which Lavoinne refers actually lagged in France and in England till the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, as earlier nineteenth century French historiography was obsessed by "le people"—for (Michelet (1798-1874)) or against (Guizot (1787-1874))—and as English historiography had the towering counter example of Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), who combined peerless writing with wit, irony and with an antiquarian-like exactitude with sources.

In the Anglophone world, this Enlightenment determination to occupy the intellectual high ground was never the main game of journalism, Addison and Steele's *Spectator* (1711-14) excepted, but as time passed, the desire to be taken more seriously did start to take hold, especially in those journals where the literary increasingly co-existed with the merely utilitarian. The nineteenth century saw a plethora of journals emerging in Britain, which mixed literary styles with, often partisan, political commentary—*Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* (1830-1882) and *The Edinburgh Review* (1802-1929) are two prominent examples. There was, however, also a push for more independent and objective writing. *Harper's Magazine*[197], which I have previously cited, is a prime case, having changed little, in this regard, since it began in 1850. In 2020, Harper's Editor, Christopher Beha, spoke about the magazine's determination 'to give readers a diverse range of viewpoints on topics', saying that:

> Our commitment to challenging readers is not a cynical reaction to the rise of 'cancel culture'; it is written into the magazine's design.[198]

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[196] Frederick C. Beiser, 'Ranke's Romantic Philosophy' in *The German historicist tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.
[197] *Harper's Magazine*, John R. Macarthur et al, New York, 1850- <https://harpers.org>.
[198] Christopher Beha, 'Fighting Words', *Harper's Magazine*, 341/2044 (2020), 4.

As mentioned earlier, the late nineteenth century saw the rise of highly crafted long-form, literary-styled pieces being included alongside the more familiar ephemera of short-form reportage in weekly and daily journals and newspapers in the USA. This coincided with a growing debate over the concept of objectivity,[199] so much so that it even reached the pages of Russian literature. Leo Tolstoy devoted the second part of his Epilogue to *War and Peace* (1869) to exploring limitations in objectively capturing and comprehending the events of our time, and modern history's inability to divine the future.[200]

In England, since *The* Spectator, though its audience was aristocratic, the more 'elitist, middle-class liberal newspapers' pushed for independence and impartiality, seeing themselves as an 'informed public educator and opinion creator'. [201] This has its roots in Habermas' idea, referred to previously, of the authentic public sphere, *die Öffentlichkeit*,[202] which created a discourse between the ruling class and the people, and later in ideas like the self-help and deserving/undeserving ethic of the industrial nineteenth century—the belief that a person's role in the workplace was to make the world a better place. In the USA, the impetus came from the popular press, who believed that 'News was the product of an independent paper for all people, not just for one class or political party.' This is fundamentally tied to the notion of free speech.[203]

The ideologies driving this change have been different—one somewhat imperious and the other egalitarian—but the ambition was not dissimilar. The press had traditionally been somewhat captive to vested interests, whether financial or political. This new ambition was different, wanting to distance reportage from distorting influences and, instead, instil a perception amongst the audience that what they read was informed more by facts, the search for truth and a striving for objectivity. For this to happen, the public needed to be convinced that the press was operating with freedom and uncensored.

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[199] Stephen J. A. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond*, 174-213.
[200] Leo Tolstoy, 'Epilogue: Part Two' in *War and Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1028-1058.
[201] Stephen J. A. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond*, 174.
[202] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, xvii-xix, 30-31.
[203] Stephen J. A. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The path to objectivity and beyond*, 174.

> The press must be not only uncensored but also maximally free of pre- or post-publication restrictions... Service to the public meant service to the construction of a liberal society.[204]

A notion of journalistic ethics was forming, in keeping with a growing public ethic. In Australia, as early as 1944, a *Journalist Code of Ethics* was adopted by the then Australian Journalists Association (a trade union that is now a part of the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance). The Code has been updated a few times since then, with the 1999 revision[205] being the most current. In addition to this, many media organisations have their own internal guidelines. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, for example, has developed its Editorial Policies (referred to as EdPols), dictating strict rules about how journalists operate in the field and the ways they present stories on TV, radio, the web and social media. Originally, these EdPols were a largely static set of documents that sat above everyone's desk, only updated occasionally. Today there is a full-time department constantly monitoring journalists in a constantly shifting media and technology landscape. Now, the ABC EdPols[206] are constantly updated, issued electronically to staff, and made available publicly via the broadcaster's website. This maintains a much greater awareness of the importance of best practice amongst staff, as well as guaranteeing transparency and accountability in the public sphere.

This is important to note, because it reflects a comparable set of standards to the academy. This is not just about risk management and harm minimisation. It is about maintaining an active attention to detail—a precision in story gathering and storytelling that earns trust in the reliability of the information in the public space.

Summary

The relationship between journalism and the study of history is crucial. Journalism plays a greater role in the telling of history than is generally recognised.

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[204] Ibid.
[205] National Ethics Committee MEAA, 'Journalist Code of Ethics', *Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)*, (1999), <https://www.meaa.org/meaa-media/code-of-ethics/>.
[206] Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 'ABC Editorial Policies', *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, (last modified 15 January 2019), <https://edpols.abc.net.au/>.

In this analysis of the issue, I have tried to show that one is dependent on the other. The symbiosis works equally in both directions—journalism is informed by history and history is informed by journalism. This happens because of the context in which both practices work, and because of the common frames of reference they both draw on. When discussing a subject as large as contemporary Europe in the public media, what is being created, reportage or history? The answer is that it is both.

The chroniclers of the past are the long-form journalists of the modern era. Walter Benjamin was in little doubt that, in the way we observe, document and analyse any 'given epic form', historiography is 'the common ground'. He believed that:

> among all forms of the epic there is not one whose incidence in the pure, colorless light of written history is more certain than the chronicle. And in the broad spectrum of the chronicle the ways in which a story can be told are graduated like shadings of one and the same color. The chronicler is the history-teller.[207]

Walter Benjamin was well aware of what had gone before him. He anticipated what would come after him. He didn't see rigid boundaries between disciplines. He exemplified the effectiveness of slippage between public and academic spheres.

No single story in the media is definitive. No single document in historiography can be treated as canonical. There are myriad viewpoints and interpretations. The more I attempted to build a picture of Europe-in-flux in a series of radio programs, the more I created what could be described as Benjaminian-style fragments that simply add to the many layers of observations and analyses of others.

There is another critical message that I take, from both Walter Benjamin's work and my own. This message is about the importance of getting this history-telling into the public domain in a form that widens understanding. The academy and the media have increasingly mutual dependencies, as many older boundaries have dissolved. The relationship between journalism and history is increasingly bi-directional, because the way we all consume knowledge has altered dramatically.

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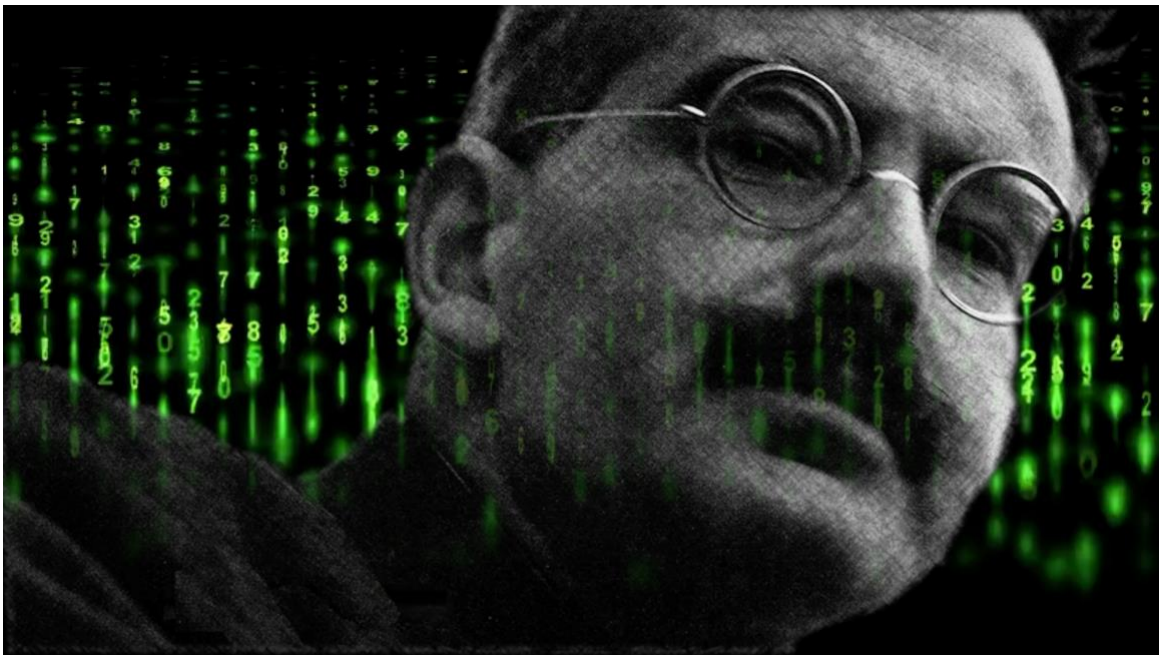
[207] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 3: 1935-1938*, 152.

A prelude to a methodology

Walter Benjamin & the birth of multimedia journalism

In this section, I return to the early twentieth century German philosopher, historian, writer, journalist and broadcaster Walter Benjamin, a pivotal figure for this study. He offers an example of the overlap between the historian and the journalist. He models an effective method for the long-form journalist bridging these two worlds.

Walter Benjamin symbolises a moment of change in the method and tone of European thinking, his hybrid approach breaking with some inherited structures and strictures of academe. This came at a time when a burgeoning European modernity, and growing upheaval across the continent, required new modes of complex thinking, as well as a greater need to articulate difficult ideas in the public sphere. In so many ways, this upheaval can be compared to the shifting media landscape we see today.



While Benjamin was not the first modern public intellectual, his unorthodox embrace of new media, new arenas for public discussion, and new 'platforms' suggests he was the seminal multimedia journalist. This part of my exegesis suggests Benjamin offered an early template for the type of long-form, in-depth journalism that we have today.

Walter Benjamin's work is intriguing, but it is not, as has often been said, 'difficult' or 'impenetrable'—quite the opposite. Benjamin's work compels, precisely because his style looks familiar to a hybrid journalist. As a long-time radio program-maker—and one who had to evolve into a multimedia hybrid—I recognise what Benjamin was trying to achieve.

The intellectual misfit

Walter Benjamin is a product of the twentieth century—a modernist, with certain post-modern tendencies—and while I have already dealt with certain aspects of his biography, it is important to describe the steps making him a precursor and an outlier. He was born in 1892, in Berlin, 'to a wealthy, assimilated German-Jewish family'.[208] His path seemed to lead inexorably toward an academic life, studying philosophy across a number of European universities, gaining his PhD from the University of Bern in 1919. Things came unstuck when he failed his *Habilitation*, the requirement to teach in universities. One reason was Benjamin's intellectual restlessness. He was an oddball—a mind out of time. He existed in an intellectual world that adhered to strict boundaries, but these lines were irrelevant to him. According to Lecia Rosenthal:

> he exceeded boundaries and made us more self-conscious about the way that we define the boundaries of disciplinary belonging... Was he part of literary studies? Was he part of Marxist studies? Was he part of Jewish studies? Why didn't he fit into any of these?[209]

Another reason for Benjamin's ill-fit, especially within the *Institut für Sozialforschung*, otherwise known as the Frankfurt School, where he had strong associations, was his unwillingness to resolve two seemingly incongruous intellectual interests—his engagement with 'Jewish and Zionist conversations' and his strong affiliation with Western Marxism. Benjamin rejected politico-social Zionism:

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[208] Michael Shirrefs, 'Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?', *The Philosopher's Zone* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC RN, 17 February 2019) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/walter-benjamin/10800302>.
[209] Ibid.

> its "nationalism" he felt, was diametrically opposed to the mission of Judaism to become an international cultural will.[210]

By contrast, he felt that 'cultural Zionism' was a type of Jewishness that he could abide, as it 'meant a duty toward the development of European culture.'[211] Examining, nurturing and broadly discussing European culture, was the task that seems to have consumed his life. Hannah Arendt noted, in the introduction to *Illuminations*, a collection of his essays:

> Benjamin was probably the most peculiar Marxist ever produced by this movement, which God knows has had its full share of oddities.[212]

His life's output was prodigious. Regardless, it was many years after his death before English speaking scholars could get his work into focus.

To understand what Walter Benjamin achieved, one must step back and view the work in total. Treating all his smaller observations as a single, but multi-dimensional picture of his time, they constitute a major work of contemporary historiography—a remarkable achievement of cumulative long-form journalism, culminating in the posthumously assembled collections (the multi-volume *Selected* Writings and *The Arcades Project*) that emphasise this overarching, relational quality.

By a combination of circumstance and deliberation, Walter Benjamin found himself working simultaneously as both a highly original, scholarly writer, and as a journalist. He bridged notional boundaries dividing academic from public realms. Circumstance, because, having failed to achieve the qualification needed to teach in the university, he needed work. Deliberation, because he seemed compelled to attempt to unpack and explain difficult ideas of history and modernity to a wide audience. As Justin Clemens observes:

> he's not repudiating the allegedly high, or the institutional kudos, but also the real capacities and abilities that people like Adorno have, and

[210] Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin: An intellectual biography* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 26.
[211] Ibid. 27.
[212] Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt and Harry Zohn, *Illuminations: Essays and reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

> Horkheimer [two Frankfurt School luminaries] and so on. But neither is he repudiating the possibilities of a transformation from the streets as well... This is his very oddball leftism, I suppose.[213]

In her book *The Dialectics of Seeing*, Susan Buck-Morss observed: 'leaving... academia' meant Benjamin 'would subject his intellectual production to the conditions of the marketplace.'[214]

The academic world was too strictly defined and too stifling for the roaming curiosity of Benjamin. However, his wasn't journalism in the narrower News sense. His work was an intensely focused, cumulative, long-form journalism—erudite, unconventional, but still not trying to be smug or remote. He wrote for newspapers *Die Literarische Welt* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, but it is his lesser-known work for radio that truly sets him apart. By chance, Benjamin was asked to make radio programs, many of them for children, at a time when the medium was still in its infancy.

> From 1927 to early 1933, Benjamin wrote and delivered some eighty to ninety broadcasts... working between Radio Berlin and Radio Frankfurt.[215]

In her book *Radio Benjamin*,[216] Lecia Rosenthal has gathered together, examined and given prominence to an area of Walter Benjamin's work often overlooked. In a sense, this isn't surprising. No recordings were made of these broadcasts. The only artefacts, Benjamin's scripts, were lost for many years. Radio is ephemeral. The written word endures. We understand better today that much in our media landscape is fragile in its transience, but no less important. Walter Benjamin also considered his time on radio to be of less value than his writings. With the same hubris as many members of the Frankfurt School, he once said that radio was symptomatic of the 'consumer mentality' of his age, which he believed would convert audiences:

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[213] Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?*
[214] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, 23.
[215] Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin*, ix.
[216] Ibid.

> into dull, inarticulate masses—a "public" (in the narrower sense of the word) that has neither yardsticks for its judgement nor a language for its feelings.[217]

This was hardly endorsing a medium in which he, himself, was engaged. His friend, the German-Jewish philosopher Gershom (Gerhard[218]) Scholem, saw the radio work differently, however, observing Benjamin's radio programs 'also contain sediments of his decidedly original way of seeing'.[219]

I doubt that Benjamin's own judgement on his radio work matters, as he was affected by his Frankfurt circle and his failed Habilitation. The more important question is one of judgement, method and hindsight, such as Gershom Scholem's. As an outsider—a hybrid radio feature-maker and academic—I am drawn to these questions. Does Benjamin represent a starting point for the type of multimedia journalism that we recognise today? Or is Benjamin simply too eccentric?

Benjamin & Fragments

Walter Benjamin developed a mix of both essayistic and highly aphoristic writing styles, as discussed earlier. The latter was influenced by the work of the eighteenth-century German physicist, satirist and writer of aphorisms, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. We know this because Benjamin wrote and broadcast a radio play called *Lichtenberg*, oddly populated by 'moon beings'.[220] Lichtenberg's style of ordering his short-form thoughts in scrapbooks labelled in alphabetical order also resembles Benjamin's own method, discussed earlier, of juxtaposing condensed observations for *The Arcades Project*, written on folded sheets of paper, and organised in bundles, or *convolutes*, which were ordered from *A to Z*, and then in lower case *a to w* (discussed in more detail in the earlier section, *Decoding Walter Benjamin's notes for Das Passagen-Werk*). The translators of the work, from German to English, note:

> The central portion of the manuscript of *The Arcades Project*... consists of 426 loose sheets of yellowish paper, each folded in half to

[217] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, ed. Michael W Jennings et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, H/B), 543.
[218] Gershom Scholem changed his name from Gerhard, when he emigrated from Germany to Jerusalem in 1923 to study Jewish mysticism.
[219] Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin*, xviii.
[220] Ibid. 336-359.

> form a 14 x 22 cm. folio, of which sides 1 and 3 are inscribed in Benjamin's tiny handwriting, with sides 2 and 4 left blank. These folios are gathered into thirty-six sheafs (the German word *Konvolut* means 'sheaf' or 'bundle') in accordance with a set of themes keyed to the letters of the alphabet. The titles of the convolutes, as well as the numbering of the individual entries, derive from Benjamin.[221]

Another explanation for this unusual aphoristic tendency, which sits at odds with the long-form modes of expression he inherited from his time within the academy, is his unwavering relationship to Talmudic modes of thinking. As much as his enduring links to the Frankfurt School, and his deep immersion in the ideas of Western Marxism, are evident in his constant conversation of enquiry and critique with Theodor Adorno, his other main dialogue was with Talmudic traditions, through his abiding friendship with Gershom Scholem. This is significant because the Talmudic tradition relies on an oral form, where thought is performed between people, in succinct fragments that carry well and are memorable. Talmudic forms also relish condensed provocations that keep intellectual conversations alive, as single meanings are continually deferred. A short, unfinished, but stimulating thought is seen as worthwhile, even generous; it invites the listener or reader into the conversation and encourages pursuit of the idea. These two disparate worlds—secular Marxism and Judaic metaphysics—produced, in Benjamin, an utterly unique form of Jewish Marxism.

There is another major influence however, which was central to Benjamin's habit of recording and collecting his ideas in the manner of small fragments—the German tradition of the *Trauerspiel*, or Baroque tragic drama, which Benjamin wrote about for his *Habilitation* dissertation. Alas, the University of Frankfurt-am-Main failed his thesis and, as a consequence, Benjamin never taught.[222] But the work was later published, and the research shaped Benjamin's understanding of how history is written and how meaning can best be read, once the structures of our world begin to decay and collapse. Benjamin kept returning to the topics of ruin and decay, allegory

[221] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 958.
[222] Peter Osborne and Matthew Charles, 'Walter Benjamin' in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 edn.Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/benjamin/>.

and myth, seeing them as the best ways to interpret history and understand the present.

Building stories from the ruins

Benjamin's time between eras of total war in Europe, and associated attempts at mass mobilisation, prompted Benjamin to emphasise 'ruin'. It is in this state of collapse that Benjamin finds the greatest clarity.

> Benjamin… insisted that the material world could best be analysed when it entered a state of decay, that it would reveal its innermost secrets when it had become an immobile 'ruin'.[223]

Benjamin's inspiration was his analyses of the meaning of *allegory* he derived from his extensive study of the world of Baroque German tragic drama—*das Trauerspiel*:

> Allegories are, in the realm of thought, what ruins are in the realm of things. Thus, the Baroque cult of the ruin.[224]

Benjamin developed this idea in his frequent references to an image by the artist Paul Klee—*Angelus Novus* (1920), now in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. In Benjamin's *On the concept of history* (*Über den Begriff der Geschichte,* 1940), he talks of the angel, in this picture he purchased in 1921, as staring at something and starting to back away from it.

> His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet.[225]

This idea of disintegration—of history as fragments, of memory as fragments,[226] of writing as fragments—prompted Benjamin to make it a method of sorts. Susan Buck-

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[223] Ulf Strohmeyer, 'Bridges: Different conditions of mobile possibilities' in Tim Cresswell & Peter Merriman (eds.), *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, spaces, subjects* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2011), 130.
[224] Walter Benjamin, *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility, and other writings on media* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 180.
[225] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 392.
[226] The historian Richard Vinen echoed these ideas of fragments and subjectivity when he wrote 'My view is shaped by those particular fragments of history that have intersected my own life.' Richard Vinen, *A History in Fragments: Europe in the twentieth century* (London: Little, Brown, 2000), 629.

Morss explains how the uneven fit of fragments, the edges and the gaps, were important to Benjamin.

> Just as the Baroque dramatists saw in the ruin not only the "highly meaningful fragment," but also the objective determinate for their own poetic construction, the elements of which were never unified into a seamless whole, so Benjamin employed the most modern method of montage in order to construct out of the decaying fragments of nineteenth century culture images that made visible the "jagged line of demarcation between physical nature and meaning."[227]

These 'meaningful fragments' are as important for the long-form journalist freed from the tyranny of today's 'news'.

Benjamin acknowledged this in a radio program—this one, appropriately, on *The Lisbon Earthquake* of 1755. He likened drawing together the necessary elements, to tell a story, to that of a pharmacist making up a medicine.

> On a scale with very delicate weights, ounce by ounce, dram by dram, he weighs all the substances and specks that make up the final powder. That is how I feel when I tell you something over the radio. My weights are the minutes; very carefully I must measure how much of this, how much of that, so the mixture is just right.[228]

This simple observation contains multiple meanings. He knows that any retelling of history requires a selective aggregation of elements, of fragments, as well as a good sense of timing and the limitations of time. In this, he is also describing the nature of radio broadcasting—a medium constrained by the clock. Broadcast time is precisely apportioned and strictly adhered to, forcing the broadcaster to make careful content selection and editing choices to accommodate the limited available time.

Benjamin also acknowledged that the nature of the new radio medium necessarily involved dis-assembling ideas in order to create a new idea in a new medium. This is also the paradox of the creation of histories; they emerge out of the ruins and fragments historians call sources.

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[227] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, 164.
[228] Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin*, 158.
Also, with varied translation: Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, 536.

In his essay 'Reflections on radio', Benjamin also discussed the inherent risks in this *new* medium of delivery. It fostered a passive listening audience, suppressing critical faculties about ideas, which he called 'barbarism'. He explained how the listeners becomes fixated on the quality of the broadcaster's voice.

> He will usually judge that voice just as quickly and sharply as he would a visitor... No reader has ever closed a just-opened book with the finality with which the listener switches off the radio after hearing perhaps a minute and a half of a talk.[229]

Benjamin described a new phenomenon of fragmentation. The new aggregate form of ideas arose not only from a radio presenter/producer's careful editing and curation, but also a listener's new ability to carelessly switch in and out of these ideas at random, and on a whim of the moment.

Some aspects of Benjamin's critique were, and remain, true of radio, and even more so for television. Audiences are not captive. They curate their listening as much as program-makers curate their broadcasts. However, not all content on electronic media is the same. While television and radio are performative spaces, full of big personalities, the long-form program-making tradition I come from often seeks to remove the voice of the maker, in order to not distract from the stories and ideas. This approach grew out of a German idea, from the early days of radio, called *Hörspiel* (sound play or radio play), which sought to create an entirely new experience for the new medium.[230] I am not convinced that Benjamin entirely believed his own critique, as it was he who helped craft the *Hörspiel* tradition.

Walter Benjamin was operating, not simply in academe in the traditional pedagogic sense, but as a hybrid journalist-intellectual, his behaviour and output make more sense. By taking this quasi-forensic view of the past and then applying it to the present, Benjamin began to observe and describe the ruination of the world around him with far greater clarity. Baroque German tragic dramatists had taught him about

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[229] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, 544.
[230] Mark E. Cory, 'Soundplay: The polyphonous tradition of German radio art' in Douglas Kahn & Gregory Whitehead (eds.), *Wireless Imagination: Sound, radio, and the avant-garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

the difference between allegory and myth—that 'allegory and myth were 'antithetical'. Indeed, allegory was the 'antidote' to myth'.[231]

This idea of ruin and fragments also resonates with the narrative arc of *The Identity Papers* project as a whole, portraying the European Union in decline, but also echoing my own experience of public broadcasting in decline. Consciously or not, the one became a metaphor for the other—both symptoms of a systemic decline in the philosophy of the common good.

One example of Benjamin's succinct analysis of the present—especially the mounting stress—personal, familial, social, political—accompanying the growth of Fascism in Europe comes in one of the aphoristic observations that loosely make up his non-linear essay, 'On the concept of history'.

> The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that accords with this insight. Then we will clearly see that it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against fascism. One reason fascism has a chance is that, in the name of progress, its opponents treat it as a historical norm.—The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are 'still' possible in the twentieth century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge—unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.[232]

Given the importance that Walter Benjamin seemed to place on finding suitable, and perhaps radical new modes of representation in his writings, it is also relevant to note the coincident emergence of Cubism in art. It aroused great debate, in 1917, between Benjamin and his friend Gershom Scholem, who had just visited a large exhibition of Modernist works in Bern, Switzerland, including some of Picasso's paintings. While disagreeing on interpretations, both 'felt strongly that Picasso's Cubism was a failure—Scholem speaks of "unheard of kitsch"'.[233] And in a letter from Benjamin to Scholem, Benjamin writes:

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[231] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, 164.
[232] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 392.
[233] Annie Bourneuf, '"Radically Uncolorful Painting": Walter Benjamin and the problem of Cubism', *Grey Room*/39 (2010), 74-94, 75, in JSTOR [online database].

> I have so far received this impression of impotence and inadequacy while viewing Picasso's paintings.[234]

Yet, he was also intrigued by these Cubist experiments with multi-dimensional representation in a two-dimensional physical format, using a mosaic style.

> In analytical geometry, I can certainly produce an equation for a two- or three-dimensional figure in space, without overstepping the bounds of spatial analysis; but in painting I cannot paint... to communicate the nature of space through decomposition.[235]

And years later, in *The Arcades Project*, he adds:

> By the time Impressionism yields to Cubism, painting has created for itself a broader domain into which, for the time being, photography cannot follow.[236]

Perhaps Benjamin liked the idea that the enduring art of painting had found a different perceptual rabbit hole to dive down and, in so doing, had outsmarted the world of technology, as he says, 'for the time being'. Benjamin was, however, constrained in his own inability to express his multi-dimensional ideas. Ironically, it would be the future technology of the internet that would, too late, provide the 'Cubist' solution he had hoped for in his own writing.

So, as early as 1917, Walter Benjamin was trying to understand the dilemmas of representation, and was attempting to develop his own tools to articulate the world around him. Convergence of ideas, in art and philosophy—the power of non-linear narratives and fragmentation to add a temporal fourth-dimension of time and decay—allowed Benjamin to conflate history with the present, in an unprecedented manner.

In examining Walter Benjamin's own subsequent mosaic-like use of observational fragments to describe contemporary Europe, one must also look at the uneven edges

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[234] Walter Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin: 1910-1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem & Theodor W. Adorno, tr. Manfred R. Jacobson & Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 101.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 6.

of the fragments and the inevitable spaces between the fragments. If the fragments were even and fitted together, jigsaw-like, the fragments would likely form a coherent narrative. The absence of undefined or unoccupied space leaves less room or need for uncertainty, interpolation or interpretation. The narrative would not be linear, but it would still be legible, point-to-point, in almost any direction. Benjamin's fragments, however, were rarely even or neat, each one sitting slightly apart, connected to the others by Benjamin's effort at association.

This is one of the strongest parallels to the body of work offered in this PhD as a practical example. Radio or TV documentaries, in particular, are often internally a sequence of closely related, but not necessarily sequential ideas, conversations, or 'scenes'. In addition, when a number of discrete productions by a program-maker over a period cover many elements of one subject, especially one as large as Europe, there is usually a strong sense of the programs, taken together, building to become a singular overview or journey around the subject, even if there may be gaps between the sub-topics.

But what else binds Benjamin's (and my) ideas together? Benjamin was conjuring the notion of concord in Europe, just as the region slid back into division and conflict in the 1930s. Excepting the fascists' exclusive *das Volk,* with few precedents for any sort of inclusive commonality—common goals, common ambitions, common beliefs, common wealth, or even a common good across cultures, races, classes and nations—Benjamin's thinking was completely out of kilter with the concrete realities of his moment. The jagged edges of the Benjaminian fragments suggest that he knew discrete pieces of national consciousness across Europe were not about to adopt an all-continental collective or harmonious state of mind. Nonetheless, Benjamin determinedly addressed the region as a singular—albeit one yet to contemplate coalescing. Benjamin's fragmentary method reflects the tension across his work, where, in some of his research and writing, he quarantines and reifies the aspects of European culture that he most admires. Yet, he still knows they are threatened. This is evident in *The Arcades Project*—a love letter to Paris, with no clouds in sight.

Even so, Benjamin hid none of his fears about the many unfolding tragedies overtaking the Continent, not least, in relation to the mortal threat facing so many of

his peers: 'It took some time for those affected to form a clear image of what had descended on them.'[237] Walter Benjamin wrote this while in exile in Paris, in 1938. He was appraising the German Institute for Independent Research (i.e., the Frankfurt School). He was writing an epitaph—an inscription on the tomb of what had been Weimar-period Germany's flourishing culture of modern liberal and radical ideas.

In one sense, Benjamin was a pragmatic romantic. He was vulnerable. His Jewishness and his intellectual status targeted him. Darkness in the 1938 essay[238] is unavoidable. His circumstances also placed him, literally and metaphorically, outside the academy and on the streets—an 'accidental' witness to chaotic events, with the skills and the desperate need to articulate, contextualise and communicate.

In other words, he's a long-form journalist, but not in the news-hound sense of the word, simply reporting and moving on. Every one of Benjamin's observations is made to fit into a larger story—a picture he continually added to his entire adult life.

This is why and where he has helped shape my own project. My own radio journalism has described the same landscape of European disillusion, just in a different time. The wider objective of this PhD also relates back to the definition of a long-form journalist. Benjamin had all the skills and inheritance of classical academic scholarship, yet he also intuited both were ill-suited to the rigours of the fascist moment. He learned to work fast, in a contemporary environment of changes demanding his full attention and requiring a radically new toolkit. Benjamin had to address many different aspects of Europe and the growing tumult, constantly switching focus between details, while maintaining an overarching and unwavering gaze on the entire European panorama. He painted a surprisingly broad and evolving picture, even as the individual elements of the picture, the convolutes, were often succinct and somewhat discrete. This is why Benjamin can be defined as a long-form journalist, as much as he can be a scholar.

The journalistic side of this PhD, the practical portion that has been brought together under the name *The Identity Papers*,[239] is a collection of radio documentaries, radio

[237] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 3: 1935-1938*, 307.
[238] Ibid. 307-313.
[239] Michael Shirrefs, *The Identity Papers*.

series and articles, originally made for, and broadcast, by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and published on the ABC's website. This is an example of this Benjaminian approach—building a broad picture of a large subject, out of smaller, discrete, often disparate elements. It is also in the nature of journalism that there is usually no initial intention to create a larger image. A combination of chance, opportunity and growing knowledge of the wider picture means that the wider project often forms organically and, perhaps even, unwittingly. When I first worked on the six-part radio series *The Art of Being Europe*[240], I had no idea that this would be merely the first in a series of discrete radio projects and written articles, spanning eight years, that would begin to illustrate the growing phenomenon of change and stagnation/entropy affecting the European Union. Just as Benjamin's European panorama was surprisingly articulate, in spite of the gaps, my own project began to take on some sort of larger coherence. I had been witnessing the loss of the very qualities of commonality that Benjamin had wished for the region. The unambiguous need for post-war Europe to embrace common goals and pursue the idea of a common future for the common good had produced the miracle of a European Union. But with each passing generation, the visceral memory of Europe at war with itself is fading. In that climate of Europe forgetting, my programs were documenting these signs of amnesia, and the growing disregard for the mechanisms of peace and prosperity that had come at such a high price.

One observation has been made that it is unfair to compare my methods, of producing radio documentaries, with Benjamin's dense works of deep research, suggesting the radio process is more akin to bricolage. Much of the time this is true, in the sense that there is often not the space for primary research, given the demands of the media schedule. Efficiencies are crucial and much of the time, the program-maker relies on curating the expertise of others, in order not to reinvent the wheel. This type of secondary research has the advantage of range, covering a lot of material in a given time. But the comparison is also a false binary because, sometimes, programs are the product of genuinely unique, primary research by the maker, an example being the aforementioned program *Truganini, Bushranger*.[241] Equally, it is wrong to cast

[240] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, *The Art of Being Europe*.
[241] Michael Shirrefs, 'Truganini, Bushranger', *Hindsight* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 8 February 2009)

Benjamin as a pure scholar. Much of his work was scholarly and rigorous, but he was also a magpie when necessary, borrowing and curating bits and pieces that helped him to assemble bigger pictures than the original parts would suggest. We are, both of us, hybrids, where the ideas dictate the appropriate methodology, not the other way round.

While Benjamin's agendas and ideas did not dovetail with mine, I was drawn to another force binding his many thoughts, other than that of a common author and the broad subject. It was the kind of 'picture' Benjamin constructed. In hindsight, Benjamin's model, for me as a long-form journalist, was based on a Deleuzian *rhizomatic* structure—subterranean, subconscious, invisible, indescribable. Rhizomes refer to invisible soil peculiarities shaping why plants grow here, but not adjacent, so to speak. Deleuze adapted the concept from complex systems of plant rhizomes proliferating beneath the ground, connecting plants in ways that have yet to be fully understood. In botany, rhizomatic systems fill the apparent gaps that we perceive, above ground, between discrete plants. Scientists still haven't properly unlocked the secrets of rhizomes, leaving us with a concept and a metaphor that defines our inadequate understanding of gaps, of spaces in between what we do know.

Irrespective of whether Walter Benjamin was an historian, a philosopher or a journalist, he was attempting, deliberately (sometimes unwittingly), to reveal landscapes beyond what was simply seen. These landscapes acquired a lexicon, decades later. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari created a vocabulary that appropriated many terms from the geophysical realm, to articulate ineffable concepts in the social sciences. Deleuze and Guattari gave us a new conceptual application of the term *rhizome*, analogous to the vast, unseen and little understood networks of botanical communication systems that connect discrete plant root-structures.

> Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual toolkit enables the humanities' and social sciences' practical engagement with contemporary physical and biological sciences, and vice versa.[242]

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/hindsight/truganini-bushranger/3178510>.

[242] Mark Bonta, John Protevi and John Proveti, *Deleuze and geophilosophy: A guide and glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 12.

We are ahead of Benjamin in one respect. We recognise the concept better today because we have created artificial systems, like social media and the internet, that operate without dimensions, hierarchies and definitions. These resemble Deleuze and Guattari's insistence that rhizomes are flat and non-hierarchical. Operating in any and all directions, the internet resists attempts to block or interrupt, and it acts almost instantaneously. This was unthinkable barely forty years ago.

Nevertheless, some scholars are correct to connect the internet, backwards, to the organisational thinking of Walter Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*. Augusto Ponzio links Benjamin's non-linear, multidimensional, textual assemblages to hypertexts of the cyber world.

> In the language of informatics, the 'hypertext' is writing with computers, writing which is organised... in a non-linear fashion... This implies the possibility of 'pasting' pieces of text into a 'network' and shifting freely, 'surfing' through the net, choosing a trajectory from the multiple alternatives a hypertext offers.[243]

When Walter Benjamin was writing his hypertext-like matrix of essays and fragments which became *The Arcades Project*, a work that Marjorie Perloff describes as an 'ur-hypertext'[244]—in other words a primitive, seminal form—he appeared to be striving for a language that would describe the unseen, indefinable rhizomatic phenomena that might exist in, what an artist would refer to as, the *negative space* that lives between definable subjects. Negative space is an indecipherable area, between the zones of coherence, that helps shape relations between subjects. In science, it would be referred to as junk data—the stuff we don't understand or think has no value. However, there's been a big shift in recent years, especially in the realm of genetics,[245] with scientists returning to the mullock heaps of junk data and mining them with fresh eyes and more sophisticated modelling. Where were Deleuze and Guattari, when Walter Benjamin needed such a 'conceptual toolkit'?

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[243] Augusto Ponzio and Susan Petrilli, 'Hypertextuality and Literary Translation', *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies/Revue de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique*, 163/1-4 (2007), 289-309, 290.
[244] Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Walter Benjamin's Arcades as paradigm for the new poetics*, 247.
[245] Rachel Nowak, 'Mining Treasures from 'Junk DNA'', *Science*, 263/5147 (1994), 608-610.

Nonetheless, Walter Benjamin's writings suggest that while what he was witnessing was a chaos of increasing disconnectedness and disparity across Europe, there was a much greater realm, outside the visible spectrum. The less visible realm created complex spectra, suggesting new forms of connection and communication between known elements, thereby complicating the easier, mono-directional stories of continental collapse. All forms of journalism must contend with what is said, what is implied and what remains unsaid. Long-form journalism is an attempt, within the structural constraints of time and space, to expand sufficiently in order to let imperceptible elements, layers of nuance to breath and speak.

All this points to a fundamentally false belief in the pre-eminence of data and its ability to deliver the complete and final word—the idea that data = truth. Thucydides was a fan of good record-keeping, believing that the disciplined documentation of data could be relied on to strip away the imprecision of human perception and memory. We now know that 'official' data (whatever that means) is always incomplete and fragmentary. Information is selectively filtered and recorded, according to systems created to fit very human agendas and our ability to process and store the data. This is not inherently a bad thing, but, as the Annales group of French historians realised, data, by itself, is one dimensional—not absolute truth. And our over reliance on data is a product of a world that is 'thoroughly science-up and technologized'.[246] Their response was to re-lay all other aspects of human experience over the data, for a more multidimensional and nuanced reading. This is, in a sense, the role of long-form journalism—to put flesh and form on the bare bones of news data.

Intent, structure and influence

Writing in the interwar years, Walter Benjamin may have been writing with an increasing sense of foreboding, but foreboding is an abstraction. It is not knowledge. We know what happens next. Benjamin, however, could not have imagined the scale of the calamity about to overtake Europe. He had no inkling of the events that would conspire to end his life.

[246] Adrian N. Jones, 'A (theory and pedagogy) essay on the (history) essay', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 17/2 (2016), 222-240, 227, accessed 2019/04/08.

Benjamin wrote journalism out of pecuniary necessity. As much as his private writing range was vast, he was largely writing at the time for a general audience. Although he may have aspired to be taken more seriously within the academy, his elevation to the ranks of revered scholar is posthumous. His connection to theoretical discourses, through friends like Theodor Adorno, was strong and enduring, however. Everything Benjamin did in the public sphere still carried a deep attachment to the academy in general, and the Frankfurt School in particular.

No-one was quite like Walter Benjamin at that period. He may have been the product of his time, his context, his background and his intellectual cohort, but his was not an approach understood in his day. In reviewing the only two books Benjamin was able to publish in his lifetime under his own name, Benjamin's close friend, Siegfried Kracauer wrote in 1928:[247]

> The kind of thinking that Benjamin today embodies, one-sidedly and in however extreme a fashion, has fallen into oblivion since the advent of idealism. He consciously restores such thinking within our philosophy's sphere of influence[248]... Such thinking is more akin to Talmudic writings and medieval tractates[249]

Benjamin was influenced by his engagement with Zionist conversations, exposing him to a mode of thought revelling in its circularity. He merged this circularity into his deep exploration of the work of Baroque German dramatists.

> Benjamin... in the *Origin* [*The Origin of German Tragic Drama*], is interpreting its [*Trauerspiel*] ruins and corpses as Kabbalists read the Torah of the Exile—to divine its opposite, the Torah of Redemption.[250]

This odd, blended approach gives a patina of the archaic and made his whole analysis of the modern seem quite rarefied, though not because he wanted to make the ideas

[247] Noah Isenberg and Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Walter Benjamin in the Age of Information', *New German Critique*/83 (2001), 119-150.
[248] Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 264.
[249] Ibid. 259.
[250] Blair Hoxby, *The Function of Allegory in Baroque Tragic Drama: What Benjamin got wrong* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 89.

obscure. Rather, in the process, he gave us a way of viewing the world that has become a trope.

But has it become a trope within journalism? Benjamin has been wholly appropriated by the modern academy. His ideas and stylistic influence show up in social theory, cultural theory, political theory, art theory, historiography and philosophy, but not in journalism, at least not explicitly… yet.

When reading, for example, Hans Gumbrecht's *In 1926*,[251] the influence of Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is unavoidable. Quite apart from the fact that Benjamin keeps wandering through the book's many scenes as one of many characters evoking the year 1926, the style is self-consciously Benjaminian in its porousness. Gumbrecht invites the reader to enter and exit the work from any point. He describes the work as 'an essay on historical simultaneity',[252] as is so much of long-form journalism, whether radio/TV, multimedia or print. But equally, Gumbrecht acknowledges his work is a construct and cannot pretend to be first-person historical narrative.

> The book asks to what extent and at what cost it is possible to make present again, in text, worlds that existed before the author was born—and the author is fully aware that such an undertaking is impossible.[253]

So, what was Gumbrecht doing? Just an homage? Benjamin's writing was, to a large extent, a type of long-form journalism, recording history, mostly contemporary or nearly so—'making present again, in text, worlds that existed' in his own time, or just before. Gumbrecht, however, was engaged in conventional historiography, albeit playing with the method of delivery. *In 1926* is not so much a thought experiment as a stylistic experiment. It works, because we recognise the form from Benjamin. But while Benjamin might inform the structure, he also informs the story, because Benjamin was a journalist. What have historians got to work with, if not the contemporary chroniclers of a period that, in many cases, and definitely in Gumbrecht's case, is before their time?

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[251] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *In 1926* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).
[252] Ibid. xiv.
[253] Ibid.

Eduardo Galeano and the Benjaminian lineage

Gumbrecht is not alone in reaching for a Benjaminian style. A writer like Uruguay's Eduardo Galeano (1940-2015) stands out, as his work also bears a striking resemblance to Walter Benjamin's efforts to find a method and language that would effectively articulate and embrace the vastness and chaos of early twentieth century Europe. Like Benjamin, Galeano attempted to picture the impossibly large and complex panorama of Latin American peoples, places, histories and dilemmas.

As we have seen, the twentieth century was a period of rapid change and upheaval across much of the world. People developed a new socio-political language and interconnectivity, facilitated by better communications and an explosion in mass media. Two world wars, in a sense, created the conditions of necessity for a greater public awareness of major phenomena, as national foci transformed into regional and then global consciousnesses. Suddenly, people were needing to understand the fate and fortunes, processes and progress, of not just their country, but of entire continents. This (Hegelian) moment enabled writers and intellectuals, as never before, to view themselves as voices of the people, confident in their ability to articulate, and even to transform, the vast and often incomprehensible events that consumed people's lives.

The post-war years saw a simultaneous ground shift in many places, as movements formed around new or chronically old realities of social injustice and inequity. The Cold War galvanised Europe and the impact of these events altered large parts of the world irrevocably. But in Latin America, discrete socialist movements had been forming since the late nineteenth century. Latin American countries had been picked off by the voracious colonial appetites of powerful and greedy European elites for centuries, and some sort of social and political pushback was both inevitable and long overdue.

It wasn't until the 1970s, though, that the individual trials and tribulations of these countries found a unifying voice. When Eduardo Galeano wrote *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina* (The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a

Continent) in 1971,[254] he defined the region's many and disparate cascading catastrophes into a singular cause that people could understand and rally behind. This book gave the diverse peoples of Latin America a greater sense of what they had in common, presaging the formal application of the term *postcolonialism*, at a time when North American governments and industrial machines were riding roughshod over sovereign rights in the region. This assumed licence perpetuated centuries-old European views that South America was just a limitless resource warehouse—there to be managed and plundered.

Open Veins of Latin America was the most baldly political work by Galeano. The impact of the book was dramatic, not merely amongst the peoples of the region. The book galvanised the minds of many across the world—an insider truth. Writer Isabelle Allende wrote in her forward to the 2009 republication of the work:

> Like thousands of refugees all over the continent, I also had to leave my country after the military coup of 1973. I could not take much with me: some clothes, family pictures, a small bag with dirt from my garden, and two books: an old edition of the *Odes* by Pablo Neruda, and the book with the yellow cover, *Las Venas Abiertas de America Latina*. More than twenty years later I still have that same book with me.[255]

For some, it marked the birth of a personal Marxist sensibility, explaining consequences of twentieth-century capitalism in eloquent and unarguable terms, and from the perspective of the victims. Capitalism had always been unapologetic about its sense of entitlement to expand and engulf people and worlds, like some perfectly modern continuum of traditional imperial colonisation. For the first time though, those engulfed peoples were talking back, and they finally felt no need to be timid. The timing was right for major rebuttals of historical and social orthodoxies. Galeano was helping to set the tone for works like Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978),[256] which took post-structuralism out of the academy and anchored the evolving idea of post-colonialism in the broader public consciousness. After such a stark reality check about

[254] Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five centuries of the pillage of a continent*, tr. Cedric Belfrage (Melbourne: Scribe, 2009).
[255] Ibid. xiii.
[256] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1991).

the colonial histories across Latin America, a disarmingly modest Galeano says, at the end of *Open Veins*:

> This book was written to have a talk with people. A non-specialized writer wanted to tell a non-specialized public about certain facts that official history, history as told by conquerors, hides or lies about.[257]

It is mere coincidence that Galeano is born in the same month in 1940 that Walter Benjamin died on the other side of the globe. However, Galeano certainly became aware of Benjamin's work.

> Even his first book, *Open Veins*, which Galeano himself described as economistic, reveals itself to be not just influenced by the dependency economists of the time but also by Walter Benjamin, whose [use of Paul Klee's] Angel of History's 'face is turned toward the past.' Benjamin's Angel contemplates history as a 'single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble.'[258]

This is a reference to Walter Benjamin's essay *On the concept of history*,[259] one of his later works, written as he was about to flee the Nazis in Vichy Paris. But it is through Galeano's myriad later works that we see another, more conceptual parallel with Benjamin—books assembled from 'in a mosaic form... fragmentaria'.[260] For example, in works like his *Days and Night of Love and War* (1978), his *Memory of Fire* trilogy (1982-1986), and his *Mirrors* (2008), we see a mix of observation, allegory and pure poetics, brought together to describe large subjects. As Justin Clemens observes:

> it really does communicate with Benjamin's [*Arcades*] *Project*. But now... at the level of continent and colonialism, rather than just Paris.[261]

However, although focus is so often on Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, his passionate love letter to Paris, Benjamin's wider œuvre was, as with Galeano, continental in scale and focus. Throughout his *Selected Writings* and his radio broadcasts, Benjamin surveyed

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[257] Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five centuries of the pillage of a continent*, 265.
[258] Greg Grandin, 'Eduardo Galeano: A prophet who looks backward' in *The Nation*, 14 April 2015 edn, Katrina vanden Heuvel, New York, NY, 2015, viewed 15 October 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/eduardo-galeano-prophet-who-looks-backward/>.
[259] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 392.IX
[260] Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?*
[261] Ibid.

Europe, just as Galeano surveyed Latin America—each building a vast mosaic out of small pieces. As Eduardo Galeano, himself, observed in an interview in 2001:

> Yes, they're fragments, and that's what I like to write… I begin with the belief that less is more, and with the necessity to recover all the little pieces of disintegrated reality so that each little piece can express the whole universe from its smallness, its miniscuLity, its tininess. But I also believe that each one of these pieces is like a brick looking for a wall. So, these bricks go about forming themselves into walls. Only the wall they form aren't walls to separate, they're walls to protect, walls of a house with thousands of windows and doors, and everyone can come and go when they please and where they please.[262]

Another aspect of Eduardo Galeano—an aspect I've deliberately failed to mention thus far—is an aspect that is important to this paper. Galeano was a journalist. And he was not merely a journalist, he was a sports journalist—a very famous and highly respected football writer. So, how does that knowledge affect our response to the writer's other work?

For Galeano, football was far more than a sport. On a continent where competition over a soccer ball is a transnational obsession, football offered a prism through which to view culture, language, politics, history, and a *lingua franca* communicating and uniting. Yes, it was a game, but it was also a mechanism, a vehicle for so much more, getting difficult ideas under the popular radar to the masses. This is evidenced by his story of the survival of the Mexican Congressman and anticorruption activist Victor Quintana, who:

> was abducted by paid assassins, brutally beaten, and threatened with death. By his account, he survived by distracting his assailants with stories about soccer—quirky and lyrical tales drawn from a history of the game that Galeano had recently published. After listening to the adventures of Pelé and Schiaffino, Maradona and Beckenbauer, the killers decided to let Quintana live. "You're a good guy," one told him.[263]

[262] Patrick Madden and Eduardo Galeano, 'Interview with Eduardo Galeano', *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, 3/2 (2001), 180-195.
[263] Mark Engler, 'The Pan American: The world of Eduardo Galeano', *The Nation*/10-17 September 2018 (2018).

Unlike Walter Benjamin, Eduardo Galeano was not what I would describe as a multimedia journalist. He was a writer—newspapers, journals and books—over a wide range of subjects. Also, unlike Benjamin, he was not a broadcaster. But, like Benjamin, he did occupy the liminal space of the long-form journalist, offering an expansiveness without any pretensions to universal theses or laws of history. More than that, this is a common space of overlap, in which academics, intellectuals, artists and specialists of all kinds can work to reach a large, non-specialist audience. Many different disciplines can occupy the bridge between the worlds of the academy and that of journalism.

Benjamin's relevance in the present

All this brings us back to the original question. Was Walter Benjamin the seminal multimedia journalist? Given that these writers/journalists/creative thinkers used Walter Benjamin as their muse, he can indeed be seen as a starting point. I can also personally cite him as an antecedent, even though I may have originally been unaware of this. These writers show how Benjamin's influence seeped into the broad field of long-form journalism across much of the world. While Benjamin wrote about the mass reproducibility mechanisms that modernity brought about, very little has been written about Benjamin as a practicing journalist. (Part of this may well be, as I previously mentioned, because Benjamin himself was dismissive of the work as simply a source of income.) It is also true that Benjamin could also have had no inkling of the role that electronic media would have in the future, in clear competition with the written word, let alone the convergence of all media forms that now dominates with the world-wide web.

Even within the limited range of his period, Benjamin seems to have been aware, moreover, that moving between media types—what we now call *media platforms*—required adaptation. Lecia Rosenthal revealed this in her book *Radio Benjamin*, which brought together, for the first time, the surviving scripts for his radio programs, some of which had been thought lost. In a radio program I made in 2018, Rosenthal said:

> in translating these pieces, I had a very clear sense that he wrote them for them to be read. I mean... the style is not the same as his other pieces, especially in the pieces for children here. But he was

> aware of the spoken, performative quality of radio. But back to your question about the multimedia. So, at a sort of obvious level, I would say yes, especially because of the citational quality, the interest in borrowing, the interest in what he called the dialectal image of presenting something, so that it could reveal something carried within it of its time, let's say, these things all suggest themselves. But the question that I then have is, what do we mean when we say multimedia?[264]

But what do we mean when we say multimedia? And, while it's a meaningless term for Walter Benjamin, it is not meaningless to project a modern concept back onto an older practice if it anticipates what follows—a glint in the eye, so to speak.

In journalism, multimedia refers to the simultaneous or separate use of many and different media platforms (print-, audio- or screen-based). You craft content to take advantage of differing strengths of each platform. Knowing how to achieve different outcomes suggests a more adaptive approach to each medium.[265] A work is altered to suit different media and distinct audiences. Dialectics form between variants—not the same cake in a different box. Distinctive qualities of each medium help create different interpretations, contrasts or complementarities. The work in *The Identity Papers* is an example of the way works have been adapted across differing platforms, altering the experience to fit the range of technologies.

We can't intuit Walter Benjamin's intent, but Lecia Rosenthal shows, from the radio scripts, that he understood that radio was a different medium. Although he brought many of his favourite topics to the airwaves, his treatments differed. He amended his written work. As Justin Clemens puts it:

> there is already an attempt, within one medium, to harbour the others and, thereby in such a way, constellate as to give us new organisations of stars by which to navigate around the world.[266]

This is similar to an observation that Sabine Schiller has also made.

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[264] Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?*; Michael Shirrefs, 'Walter Benjamin | Proto-multimedia journo?' [online journal] (2019), <https://www.theidentitypapers.com/walter-benjamin-proto-multimedia-journo/>.
[265] Mark Deuze, 'What is Multimedia Journalism?', *Journalism Studies*, 5/2 (2004), 139-152, 140, in Communication & Mass Media Complete [online database].
[266] Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?*

> Es sind die ausgefallenen Experimente, die Benjamin als Rundfunkautor auszeichnen, in einer Zeit, in der das junge Medium—um neu Ausdrucksformen bemüht—die Literaten und Schriftsteller für sich zu gewinnen suchte.

> It is the unusual experiments that distinguish Benjamin as a radio author at a time when the young medium—striving for new forms of expression—tried to win over writers and philosophers.[267]

I would also add that there is another way to answer this question about Walter Benjamin. This approach derives not from theory, but from practical experience of the modern media landscape. The world around Benjamin had disciplinary boundaries, both in academia and in the commercial media. These boundaries and demarcations persisted long after his death in 1940. Academic institutions, as I've said, still struggle with ideas of hybridity, although interdisciplinary discourse is far more fluid than it once was. This was also the case with media organisations until relatively recently. The internet has changed all that, introducing a new word into the media lexicon—platforms. As the internet evolved and grew in power, speed and capacity, and as a natural aggregator of text, image and sound, it became a 'new media' platform, threatening traditional media forms. It also became clear that the internet could aggregate these traditional forms, making many redundant. 'Old Media' organisations, as they became known were forced to become less rigid, less fortress-like, embracing an idea of themselves as digital platforms. Convergence was either going to destroy them, or they could re-invent themselves and maintain a semblance of control over their future. It was only at this point that we started to see, what we now call, multimedia journalists start to emerge—journalists who switch easily between media platform and communication styles, depending on task and audience. New media *natives* move fluidly around this landscape, seeing none of those traditional boundaries.

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[267] Sabine Schiller, 'Zu Walter Benjamins Rundfunkarbeiten [On Walter Benjamin's radio works]' in Gerhard Hay (ed.), *Literatur und Rundfunk 1923-1933 [Literature and Radio 1923-1933]* (Hildesheim: Verlag Dr. H. A. Gerstenberg, 1975), 310. Translation—Dr. Irina Herrschner

Who does this sound like? In 2019, I asked this question in a radio documentary for ABC Radio National's program *The Philosopher's Zone*. The program followed these paths back to Walter Benjamin, highlighting the odd prescience of both Benjamin's words and his methods. Lecia Rosenthal, author of *Radio Benjamin*, responded:

> So, he asked this great question—is it not crazy to try to describe a painting on the radio? I'm not sure he was able to really use the medium to its full extent, because it was such early days for radio... But... he was thinking about... how can we have a variety of media present, within this form, at the same time.[268]

Benjamin may have been the only person in the 1930s to intuit the new radio medium well enough to pose appropriate questions—questions that are still being asked by radio program-makers to this day.

Current affairs vs history

We need now to return to the concept of 'contemporary history' posed at the outset of this exegesis. Is contemporary history really the oxymoron some suspect as fundamentally conflicted and contradictory? Historian Norman Davies' (1939-) work *Europe: A history* (1996), quotes another historian, John Bowle (1905-85), who'd engaged in a similar pan-European history project seventeen years earlier.

> ''Current Affairs' cannot become 'History' until half a century has elapsed,' runs one opinion, until 'documents have become available and hindsight [has] cleared men's minds.'[269]

Davies agreed, suggesting emotion skewed proximate historiography.

> The decline of factual history has been accompanied, especially in the classroom, with the rise of 'empathy', that is, of exercises designed to stimulate the historical imagination. Imagination is undoubtedly a vital ingredient of historical study. But empathetic exercises can only be justified if accompanied by a modicum of knowledge. In a world where fictional literature is also under threat as a respectable source of historical information, students are sometimes in danger of having

[268] Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin | Proto-multimedia journo?*, 16'15".
Michael Shirrefs, *Walter Benjamin: Multimedia prototype?*, 18'54".
[269] Norman Davies, *Europe: A history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2.

> nothing but their teacher's prejudices on which to build an awareness of the past.[270]

Both Davies and Bowle were clinical in their approach to historiography.

Walter Benjamin, however, held a starkly contrary view. He thought any determined ignoring of the contemporary, supposedly to address pasts without fear or favour, characterises:

> the method which historical materialism has broken with. It is a process of empathy. Its origin is indolence of the heart, that *acedia* [i.e., listless longing] which despairs of appropriating the genuine historical image as it briefly flashes up. Among medieval theologians, acedia was regarded as the root cause of sadness… The nature of this sadness becomes clearer if we ask: With whom does [academic, i.e., Hegel and Ranke's] historicism [*Historismus*] actually sympathize? The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all rulers are the heirs of prior conquerors. Hence, empathizing with the victor invariably benefits the current rulers. The historical materialist knows what this means. Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which current rulers step over those who are lying prostrate.[271]

In the statements by both Bowle and Davies, the historian as author pens unsullied histories, supposedly working objectively above the murk of emotion and prejudice. The reality though, is that historians don't really write these Olympian sorts of histories. Instead, they filter and curate artefacts, interpreting according to their knowledge, standpoint and own associated biases. Interpretations are, as often as not, political and strategic—and human.

A debate developed in the 1930s over a separation in the humanities—a split created by a world fixated on the pre-eminence of science and data. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and his student Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) argued that method and science needed to be recombined with history and philosophy. As Adrian Jones writes:

> the agenda of humanities essay in general, and of the history essay in particular, had always been a particularly personal, but not

[270] Ibid. 3.
[271] Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 391-392.

> necessarily methodical, pursuit of a kind of rigour that educated people still prefer to consider as wisdom—not truth, not science.[272]

At the same time, in France, the founders of the Annales school—Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Marc Bloch (1886-1944)—were determined to develop a more nuanced approach, by blending history with the wider social sciences. In a sense, they decentralised the history writing, by taking it out of Paris and to the regions, but also, notionally, by creating a broader, more holistic practice. It was a way to write all aspects human behaviour and experience back into what had become an overly narrow discipline. Davies acknowledges the appeal of this approach.

> Most revealing, perhaps, was the professional sin against which the original directors of *Annales* were prepared to do battle. It was the sin of specialization. Historians were concentrating their efforts ever more narrowly behind their own *cloisonnements* or 'dividing walls'.[273]

The idea of hindsight, at least fifty years on, as Bowle would have it, might produce a clinical detachment, but it also gives the historian an out, decoupling them from implicit moral or emotional involvement. This also robs future generations of a complex, but crucial, layer of human connection that might enable comprehension and facilitate empathy across time.

This consciously stand-off-ish thinking is what enables some historians to dismiss, or at least diminish, the role of journalism in the history process. Journalism is inherently an 'inside job'—temporally, geographically and, to a greater or lesser extent, emotionally. Journalism needs proximity for credibility. It often requires emotional connection to make a story relevant to an information saturated audience. In the day-to-day news grind, journalists and media organisations will, to varying degrees, use emotional hooks—outrage, humour, self-pity, sympathy or empathy. We are all accustomed, if not immune, to these media manipulations. There is a spectrum, however. Enduring trust in reportage is bestowed on organisations and particular journalists who consistently appear balanced and free of heavy-handed emotional tricks. Even so, immediacy in the news will often highlight cruelty and oppression,

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[272] Adrian N. Jones, *A (theory and pedagogy) essay on the (history) essay*, 227.
[273] Norman Davies, *Europe : A history* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 955.

corruption and criminality, pain and suffering, frequently leaning towards the underdog.

Even as we recognise the cliché that winners often do get to write the history, it points to an imbalance in our collective memory. If, as Davies and Bowle are saying, time is the best filter, then empathy is jettisoned by this approach. Empathy is anathema to clinical academic historiography, which translates into a structural reading of history that consciously takes the idea of real people, with their three-dimensional lives and stories, out of the picture.

Eeclo Runia has another way of putting this. He refers to the idea of 'presence', as a way to describe a visceral connectedness to the world you are in, and, as a scholar, the world you are attempting to describe.

> 'Presence,' in my view, is 'being in touch'—either literally or figuratively—with people, things, events, and feelings that made you into the person you are. It is breathing a whisper of life and reality into what has become routine and cliché—it is fully realizing things instead of just taking them for granted... What I call the need for presence has been recognized—or at least acted upon—for quite some time *outside* philosophy of history. It has also left its mark on the domain of history.[274]

This fits Benjamin's approach, who saw the practice of historical remoteness as robbing us of crucial layers of comprehension. Eelco's concept of 'presence' bolsters the fierce defence of empathy in journalism and in Benjamin. This is the way we witness and record contemporary histories. Without some sort of visceral layer in the telling, future generations have no access to the thoughts and emotions that swirl around events. This visceral layer is neither abstract, nor objective. It is data full of errors, mis-rememberings, biases, positional subjectivity—but it is also the way humans function. This human connection was also the prime motive for Herodotus and Thucydides, the first historians. They wanted to save us from forgetting, because they could see no Gods, heroes or poets, and, instead, they wanted to help us sort out significances.

[274] Eelco Runia, 'Presence' in *Moved by the past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 4.

I am reminded of an expression that I keep returning to in my thinking about these windows on the art of narrative, one that was told to me by a public health scholar who works in the area of global epidemiology. She referred to the idea of 'multiple partial realities'.[275] The phrase refers to the broken narratives that domestic violence responders often have to deal with from victims and their families. She also referred to the way field workers build a picture of what is happening during major outbreaks of disease. No one person has a complete picture. Each person can only tell a tiny, possibly imperfect, fragment of the larger story. But within the imperfections there are elements of truth. These individual accounts are crucial in trying to track the spread of illness, and also provide a valuable dataset for the future. This is a variant, in the telling of contemporary history, that has strong parallels with journalism.

Another distinction is highlighted in all this, between history and memory. In *Regimes of Historicity* (2002),[276] French historian François Hartog (1946-) refers to the poet and essayist of *La Belle Époque*, Charles Péguy 1873-1914), as 'openly and fiercely opposed to the history practiced at the Sorbonne', favouring, instead, the idea of memory. Hartog writes that Péguy:

> set "essentially longitudinal" history against "essentially vertical" memory. History "goes lengthwise," that is, it remains "on the side and on the sidelines," whereas "memory, since it is within the event, primarily involves not going outside of it, remaining within it and going back over it from the inside."[277]

This notion of a recollection from within an event, and connected viscerally to that event, parallels the role of journalism. It opposes certain modes of history writing that maintain a clinical distance.

The journalist will sometimes be a memorialist. The journalist, especially in long-form, tells a story from personal experience—both the writer's and their subjects'. Many journalists are placed by organisations, or place themselves 'in the field', in

[275] Community Education Team at Wilfrid Laurier University, 'Fostering relationality when implementing and evaluating a collective-drama approach to preventing violence against women', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23/1 (1999), 95-109, 96, accessed 2020/10/04.
[276] François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and experiences of time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
[277] Ibid. 128.

order to be inside their subject—wars, natural disasters and other events; countries and regions; inside social groups and, sometimes even, under-cover. The journalist is part of the story—a guinea-pig. More often though, the task is to bridge the gap between the lived experience of someone else, becoming a vehicle for the story, from inside the memory, to the world beyond. The problem with all of this is that memory and experience are never passed on intact. This is a problem for journalists. It is also a problem for families or societies, trying to pass memories down through the generations, especially if those memories are meant to be lessons of pain.

If memory is powerful, absence of memory can be an affliction, as we will see in the next section—two stories of tragedy, one barely noticed and one remembered by the world, all because of a journalist.

The fortunes of Basque and Istrian identities

A compelling example of the power and fragility of memory is the case of the Basque people of Spain, and the devastating events of 1937, more than two years before the commencement of the Second World War—the unprecedented carpet bombing, by the German Luftwaffe, of entire Basque towns. These bombings were carried out on behalf of the Spanish regime of General Francisco Franco, whom Germany assisted. Little is known about most of these attacks, but the one event that we do 'remember' is, of course, the bombing of Guernica (Gernika) on 26 April 1937. Against the wider backdrop of growing unrest in Europe at that time, these stories would have been lost, but for the chance proximity of two foreign journalists, an Australian, Noel Monks (1907-60), and Englishman, George Steer (1909-44). Monks was first on the scene, after having had his car strafed by gunfire from German fighter planes on the outskirts of the town.

> We were still a good ten miles away when I saw the reflection of Guernica's flames in the sky... I was the first correspondent to reach Guernica, and was immediately pressed into service by some Basque soldiers collecting charred bodies that the flames had passed over.[278]
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> Excerpt from Noel Monks' biography *Eyewitness*, 1955

[278] John Carey, *The Faber Book of Reportage* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 520.

Having promptly sent his article to the London *Daily Express*, Monks was subsequently told by his editors that the story had been dismissed by both Germany and Spain, both countries insisting they had no planes in the region, instead blaming the Communist allies of the Republicans. I can find no record of whether Monks' article was actually published at the time, but when George Steer, who arrived in the bombed city soon afterwards, sent his own article to *The Times* in London, confirming Monks' account, the newspaper didn't hesitate. Steer's article, *The Tragedy of Guernica*[279] appeared on 28 April 1937, two days after the bombing, cutting through Spanish and German smoke-and-mirrors. To this day, although Germany has since acknowledged its Luftwaffe planes carried out these mass bombings of civilians, the Spanish government still denies any involvement.

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY APRIL 28 1937

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THE TRAGEDY OF GUERNICA

TOWN DESTROYED IN AIR ATTACK

EYE-WITNESS'S ACCOUNT

From Our Special Correspondent

BILBAO, APRIL 27

Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the centre of their cultural tradition, was completely destroyed yesterday afternoon by insurgent air raiders. The bombardment of this open town far behind the lines occupied precisely three hours and a quarter, during which a powerful fleet of aeroplanes consisting of three German types, Junkers and Heinkel bombers and Heinkel fighters, did not cease unloading on the town bombs weighing from 1,000lb. downwards and, it is calculated, more than 3,000 two-pounder aluminium incendiary projectiles. The fighters, meanwhile, plunged low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilian population who had taken refuge in the fields.

The whole of Guernica was soon in flames except the historic Casa de Juntas with its rich archives of the Basque race, where the ancient Basque Parliament used to sit. The famous oak of Guernica, the dried old stump of 600 years and the young new shoots of this century, was also untouched. Here the kings of Spain used to take the oath to respect the democratic rights (*fueros*) of Vizcaya and in return received a promise of allegiance as suzerains with the democratic title of *Señor*, not *Rey Vizcaya*. The noble parish church of Santa Maria was also undamaged except for the beautiful chapter house, which was struck by an incendiary bomb.

At 2 a.m. to-day when I visited the town the whole of it was a horrible sight, flaming from end to end. The reflection of the flames could be seen in the clouds of smoke above the mountains from 10 miles away. Throughout the night houses were falling until the streets became long heaps of red impenetrable débris. Many of the civilian survivors took the long trek from Guernica to Bilbao in antique solid-wheeled Basque farmcarts drawn by oxen. Carts piled high with such household possessions as could be saved from the conflagration clogged the roads all night. Other survivors were evacuated in Government lorries, but many were forced to remain round the burning town lying on mattresses or looking for lost relatives and children, while units of the fire brigades and the Basque motorized police under the personal direction of the Minister of the Interior, Señor Monzon, and his wife continued rescue work till dawn.

CHURCH BELL ALARM

In the form of its execution and the scale of the destruction it wrought, no less than in the selection of its objective, the raid on Guernica is unparalleled in military history. Guernica was not a military objective. A factory producing war material lay outside the town and was untouched. So were two barracks some distance from the town. The town lay far behind the lines. The object of the bombardment was seemingly the demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race. Every fact bears out this appreciation, beginning with the day when the deed was done.

Monday was the customary market day in Guernica for the country round. At 4.30 p.m., when the market was full and peasants were still coming in, the church bell rang the alarm for approaching aeroplanes, and the population sought refuge in cellars and in the dugouts prepared following the bombing of the civilian population of Durango on March 31, which opened General Mola's offensive in the north. The people are said to have shown a good spirit. A Catholic priest took charge and perfect order was maintained.

Five minutes later a single German bomber appeared, circled over the town at a low altitude, and then dropped six heavy bombs, apparently aiming for the station. The bombs with a shower of grenades fell on a former institute and on houses and streets surrounding it. The aeroplane then went away. In another five minutes came a second bomber, which threw the same number of bombs into the middle of the town. About a quarter of an hour later three Junkers arrived to continue the work of demolition, and thenceforward the bombing grew in intensity and was continuous, ceasing only with the approach of dusk at 7.45. The whole town of 7,000 inhabitants, plus 3,000 refugees, was slowly and systematically pounded to pieces. Over a radius of five miles round a detail of the raiders' technique was to bomb separate *caserios*, or farmhouses. In the night these burned like little candles in the hills. All the villages around were bombed with the same intensity as the town itself, and at Mugica, a little group of houses at the head of the Guernica inlet, the population was machine-gunned for 15 minutes.

RHYTHM OF DEATH

It is impossible to state yet the number of victims. In the Bilbao Press this morning they were reported as "fortunately small," but it is feared that this was an understatement in order not to alarm the large refugee population of Bilbao. In the hospital of Josefinas, which was one of the first places bombed, all the 42 wounded militiamen it sheltered were killed outright. In a street leading downhill from the Casa de Juntas I saw a place where 50 people, nearly all women and children, are said to have been trapped in an air raid refuge under a mass of burning wreckage. Many were killed in the fields, and altogether the deaths may run into hundreds. An elderly priest named Aronategui was killed by a bomb while rescuing children from a burning house.

The tactics of the bombers, which may be of interest to students of the new military science, were as follows:—First, small parties of aeroplanes threw heavy bombs and hand grenades all over the town, choosing area after area in orderly fashion. Next came fighting machines which swooped low to machine-gun those who ran in panic from dugouts, some of which had already been penetrated by 1,000lb. bombs, which make a hole 25ft. deep. Many of these people were killed as they ran. A large herd of sheep being brought in to the market was also wiped out. The object of this move was apparently to drive the population underground again, for next as many as 12 bombers appeared at a time dropping heavy and incendiary bombs upon the ruins. The rhythm of this bombing of an open town was, therefore, a logical one: first, hand grenades and heavy bombs to stampede the population, then machine-gunning to drive them below, next heavy and incendiary bombs to wreck the houses and burn them on top of their victims.

The only counter-measures the Basques could employ, for they do not possess sufficient aeroplanes to face the insurgent fleet, were those provided by the heroism of the Basque clergy. These blessed and prayed for the kneeling crowds—Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists, as well as the declared faithful—in the crumbling dugouts.

When I entered Guernica after midnight houses were crashing on either side, and it was utterly impossible even for firemen to enter the centre of the town. The hospitals of Josefinas and Convento de Santa Clara were glowing heaps of embers, all the churches except that of Santa Maria were destroyed, and the few houses which still stood were doomed. When I revisited Guernica this afternoon most of the town was still burning and new fires had broken out. About 30 dead were laid out in a ruined hospital.

A CALL TO BASQUES

The effect here of the bombardment of Guernica, the Basques' holy city, has been profound and has led President Aguirre to issue the following statement in this morning's Basque Press:—

"The German airmen in the service of the Spanish rebels have bombarded Guernica, burning the historic town which is held in such veneration by all Basques. They have sought to wound us in the most sensitive of our patriotic sentiments, once more making it entirely clear what Euzkadis may expect of those who do not hesitate to destroy us down to the very sanctuary which records the centuries of our liberty and our democracy.

"Before this outrage all we Basques must react with violence, swearing from the bottom of our hearts to defend the principles of our people with unheard of stubbornness and heroism if the case requires it. We cannot hide the gravity of the moment; but victory can never be won by the invader if, raising our spirits to heights of strength and determination, we steel ourselves to his defeat.

"The enemy has advanced in many parts elsewhere to be driven out of them afterwards. I do not hesitate to affirm that here the same thing will happen. May to-day's outrage be one spur more to do it with all speed."

Fig. 14—The tragedy of Guernica—George Steer

The impact of this moment has echoed to the present, simply because two journalists happened to be nearby. As a consequence, a war crime—the first documented act, in modern warfare, of deliberately targeting civilians—resonated around the world. Condemnation was swift. Finally, as if to memorialise the tragedy, within months of the event, Spanish artist, Pablo Picasso, created one of his most recognisable works, simply titled *Guernica*.

[279] George Steer, 'The Tragedy of Guernica', *The Times* (London, UK), 28 April 1937, 17-18, in The Times (London, England) [online database].

Fig. 13—Guernica (1937)—Pablo Picasso

The effect, for the Basque people, was that their suffering was noticed. It was a defining moment, because accidental witnesses gave them a worldwide audience, and because a high-profile champion in Picasso, gave the world an iconic image—one that is constantly invoked to highlight large-scale human rights abuses and state-sanctioned assaults against innocents.

The source of strength for a united Basque identity today can be traced back to that moment. I have personally witnessed clear and unambiguous expressions of this identity, visiting Guernica in 2017 for the commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of the bombing of the city. Many of the events revolve around the *Gernika Gogoratuz* (Guernica Peace Studies Centre) and the *Gernikako Bakearen Museoa* (Guernica Peace Museum). One of the most moving moments of these commemorations is a gathering around a bust of George Steer, located on a street corner, where flowers are laid, speeches and readings are delivered, and music is played. There is no doubt, in the minds of the people of Guernica, of the debt they owe to this foreign journalist.

Fig. 15—George Steer Jr (c) and the Mayor of Guernica (r), laying flowers at the bust of the journalist George Steer, on the 80th anniversary of the bombing of the City's (Shirrefs 2017)

By contrast, another place terrorised by the fascists during the Second World War was the region of Istria, far less well known than that of the Basque people. The Istrian peninsula straddles the edges of three present-day countries, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, and juts out into the northern Adriatic Sea. Despite its relatively small size, it is an area of the Balkans that has been much disputed and fought over, largely because of its strategic position. In the twentieth century alone, it has been in a tug-of-war between Italy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and, of course, Yugoslavia.

> Hitler and Mussolini pursued a 'divide and rule' strategy towards the Yugoslavian people, poisoning relations among them and promoting civil war.[280]

Once the Second World War started, and after a precarious pact between the Yugoslav government and the Axis countries collapsed, things turned sour. On 6 April 1941, Italy and Germany attacked Yugoslavia, fuelling a growing Partisan communist

[280] Gregoria Manzin, *Torn Identities: Life-stories at the border of Italian literature* (Leicester: Troubador Publishing, 2013), 282-283.

resistance across the entire country. And yet, amidst all this, the small Istrian region was disproportionately targeted as a stronghold of anti-fascist guerrillas. Many people were executed, many more were sent off to concentration camps. The numbers killed may never be known.

For the Istrian people, there was no one defining event, captured and memorialised for a world that could witness their pain, as was the case for the Basques. This was, as much, because there was also no one group in the region. Wrested from Austro-Hungarian control by Italy in 1920, this area, sometimes referred to as the Julian Veneto, had a majority 60.6% Italian-speaking population by 1936 (as opposed to 25.1% Slovenian-speaking and a mere 13.5% Croatian-speaking), an almost 20% increase since the 1910 census measured the number at 41.9%.[281] This almost guaranteed that, just as attacks could come from external forces, the conditions for internal division were now built into these societies. Istria endured a private and protracted assault by both Germany and Italy, as well as by homegrown fascist militias like the Croatian *Ustaše*, carried out over years and largely invisible to the wider world—a world that had a much wider arena of tragedy to contend with and be horrified by, as the Second World War ground on, taking its myriad tolls.

However, even after the Partisans, under the communist regime of Marshall Tito, had begun to secure Yugoslavia against the fascists, from 1943-1945, the Istrian people faced new traumas. The first involved the approximately 30,000 Istrians participating in 'the National Liberation War'.[282] When the Partisans started forcing the mainly Italian forces out, they quickly switched their focus to reprisals against proven or suspected collaborators. This backlash, known as the '*Foibe massacres*', or just the '*foibe*', resulted in a large number of exceedingly brutal killings, with bodies being thrown, dead or alive, into karstic chasms, or *foibe*—deep natural sinkholes in limestone landscapes.

> The elimination technique in the foibe [in Trieste] had already been used and tested by Tito's partisan groups when Istria was first invaded, on 8 September, 1943… The corpses [found in the foibe] are shocking evidence for the cruelty and ferocity of the 'infoibatori':

[281] Marino Manin, 'On human losses and the exodus from Istria during the Second World War and the post-War period', *Review of Croatian History*, Vol.II No. 1 (2006), 15, 74, accessed 19 June 2019.
[282] Ibid. 78.

> naked and mutilated bodies, their hands bound with wires that cut to the bone, people bludgeoned, horrendous tortures of all kinds... The lorries of death arrived filled with victims who, often chained to one another and with hands cut up by wire, were pushed in groups from the edge of the chasm. The first ones in line who were machine-gunned fell and dragged the others into the abyss. Whoever survived after a fall of 200 meters lay in agony from the lacerations caused by the spiky rocks that broke the fall… When the tombs were covered, the tragedy of the foibe was also covered by the conjuration of silence. No government, no judge—no one—pushed for an investigation of the massacres. [283]
>
> Marcello Lorenzini, *Le stragi delle foibe*

As a consequence of the lack of investigation, the numbers killed may never be known. Additionally, Darko Dukovski has written that:

> an unknown number of innocent people, both Italians and Croats, were killed mostly because of some unsettled scores or were victims of revenge.[284]

But the massacres were not the end of the pain. From 1943, when the Italian forces in Istria began to collapse, many people fled into exile. Marshall Tito gave the remaining peoples of the Istrian region a choice, or an ultimatum—leave or stay—a once only offer. The meaning of staying was unambiguous. It required allegiance to the greater Yugoslavia and the severing of all cultural links and loyalties to Italy. The meaning of leaving, therefore, was equally loaded. If not an admission of complicity with the fascists or absolute allegiance to Italy, it certainly meant a rejection of the new Yugoslav reality, and a rejection of communism. The result was the tearing apart, not just of communities, but of families. Although presented as a singular event, the exodus from the region, estimated to be between 300,000 and 350,000,[285] continued until at least 1956. This either represents almost half of the 1936 estimate of 606,623 Italian speakers in the area, or it may have included numbers of Slovenes or Croats who were deeply opposed to the new Titoist regime.

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[283] Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and identity at the borders of the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 130-131.
[284] Marino Manin, *On human losses and the exodus from Istria during the Second World War and the post-War period*, 88.
[285] Ibid. 79.

The upshot of these cascading events was largely silence. Only in more recent decades have scholars begun to examine the still open wounds, some testing accusations of ethnic cleansing, others delving into the pain of social and familial fractures. For example, Dr Gregoria Manzin, who grew up in northern Italy, but whose family were part of the exodus from the heart of the Istrian region, has dealt with the complexities by focusing, in her book *Torn Identities*,[286] on the stories of five other female writers, four of whom had direct experience of the upheavals. However, Dr Manzin has not yet written of her own family's experience, riven and scattered by these events.

Unlike the Basque people, Istria did not become a cause célèbre on the world stage. This is partly because Istrian identity was firmly attached to Italy, and this Italian wartime connection placed the idea of Istria on the wrong side of the victor's history. Travelling to the region myself in 2017, I attempted to gather stories from people and to gain a clearer picture. But almost no-one would speak to me about the idea of an Istrian identity. When they did, the stories came as almost impenetrable abstractions, or deflections. The question of Istrian identity, for the survivors and subsequent generations, seems to prompt fear, almost panic, along with confusion and deep pain. Their stories are complex. Their societies and families were riven, by suspicion, conflicted allegiances, exile and ostracism. Unlike the Basque people, who, in spite of their own complex histories, and the many atrocities committed in their name by terrorist groups for many decades, lay claim to the moral high-ground, wearing their victim status and solidarity as a badge of honour, none of this is true for Istria. Istrian identity, at least within Croatian and Slovenian parts of the region, is a reluctant inheritance. Only in the area around Trieste, notionally Istrian, but within Italian borders, is this identity openly celebrated and events commemorated.

This idea of memory is crucial to our understanding of history—what to remember, what to forget, and how to judge. Historians and journalists, alike, are fundamentally bound up in these questions. Our human capacity for memory is powerful, but remembering too little or too much can be curse. As previously mentioned, Walter Benjamin's theme of the 'angel of history', based on Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, describes the horror of being forced to witness and remember everything that

[286] Gregoria Manzin, *Torn Identities: Life-stories at the border of Italian literature*.

has passed in history. It tells us that our collective memories and identities are incomplete out of necessity. This is a subject that I deal with in detail in the Epilogue. However, the arbiters of our rememberings are not just historians and journalists. As in the case of the Basque and Istrian peoples, much is also down to chance.

Methodology of the radio practice project

This PhD was conceived, from the outset, as a practice-based dialogue between the process and function of long-form journalism, and both the theoretical and historical evidence of the relevance of public media creation for the way we tell contemporary histories. The project started with practical elements of real-world public journalism, because that is the environment from which this researcher and these questions emerged.

My project has an existential layer. Most people working in public media are likely to wonder if their writings, their utterances, and indeed their research, have any value or life beyond the hectic churn of media cycles. Mass media organisations, commercial and publicly funded, are sometimes considered to manufacture ephemera, because the world they serve is dynamic, and because the public eye shifts focus to keep pace. However, some mass media output is anchored deeper into more stable bedrock. This is the realm of long-form journalism—whether fact-based radio or TV documentaries; feature magazine or newspaper articles; and online blogs, articles and in-depth news or topic-specific sites.

Background to *The Identity Papers*

What do I call myself? After more than thirty years as a program-maker with a national public broadcaster, with a conviction that this was an important and honourable calling, I'm less sure now than when I started.

When I was began working for the *Australian Broadcasting Commission* (ABC) now the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the idea of 'public broadcasting' made absolute sense. Everyone understood what it meant. It was as indisputably important as public health and public education. These weren't sexy ideas. They weren't intended to be flashy and populist. They did something else. They aimed to treat everyone equally. From the late-nineteenth century onwards, the concept of access to a healthy, well-educated and culturally rich life, as a universal entitlement, gained

strength in many societies, and became a mainstay of regional, national and, at times, international policy thinking. It was the ethic of the 'common good'.

While this isn't exactly a story about me, it is about the world that I inhabit and my engagement with people and places. This is a story about vantage points—about positions of witness and incomprehension—mine, yours, everyone's. It is about how we all try to gain understanding, and evolve our sense of identity, by aggregating tales of life, in the somewhat doomed pursuit of truth and clarity. And in the process, it is about how we form and inscribe our collective experience into the durable memory of history.

This is a story about dealing with the here and now, and how we adequately perceive and represent realities that are in front of us, as well as those beyond our immediate perception. And while part of my concern is for the state of public broadcasting, there's also a much larger symbol of an ebb in this consensus around the idea of the common good—the unravelling of European unity. In some ways, the latter concern over European unity has for me, unwittingly, become a proxy paralleling the decline of the appeal of a common good. Over the past ten years, the fate of the large social and economic European project, the European Union (EU), has been a persistent and cumulative focus of my broadcast work.

The European Union may come more under the category of altruism-under-duress, coming as it did out of the desperate need to reinvent the region to prevent the possibility of a nuclear third world war. Nonetheless, it represents what has probably been the most ambitious example of peaceful social engineering since the Holy Roman Empire. It proved that, under conditions of extremis, humans can defy patterned behaviour and conjure idealistic visions into being. The European Union may be grounded in the practicalities of political and economic realities. It can even be accused of being a cynical exercise on the part of powerful nation states, businesses and banks to take control of the EU's myriad smaller member countries by stealth. And while the post-Global Financial Crisis years have revealed deeply troubling truths about some of the most fundamental mechanisms and frameworks of the EU, there are also simultaneous layers of genuine goodwill, and belief in mutually edifying outcomes.

… the inadequate idea of an auto-ethnography

This PhD is formed largely around the methodological framework of the auto-ethnography. The concept of the auto-ethnography grew out of a dawning acceptance that a great deal of *objective* academic data-gathering and subsequent analysis, in most realms of qualitative research—even in some areas of more quantitative enquiry—was in fact quite distorted by inherent bias. The use of a framing mechanism, such as that of an auto-ethnography, allowed for the researcher to acknowledge many factors, such as positionality, intent, cultural background and cultural assumptions. This sort of self-reflexive adjustment was crucial because, rather than saying that all such research is flawed, it instead allowed a new layer of recalibration that reoriented a researcher's ambition, giving participants in a study a clearer understanding of research outcomes. It also tempered a reader's expectation.

However, some research processes are more complex than the conventional idea of an auto-ethnography can accommodate. In the case of this *History in the Making*/*The Identity Papers* project, which is both a hybrid of historiography and media/journalism studies, and a blending of theoretical enquiry and practice-based outcomes, there is another distinct and powerful dimension of mitigating bias. While most scholarly research assumes an audience, that audience is usually limited to the contained world of the relevant academic discipline, with some possibility of breakout into other related areas of interest. Journalism, on the other hand, is a practice that always assumes, and is mindful of, a relatively large, general audience. More than that, a journalist is always thinking of this secondary audience 'conversation' during the recording of any primary conversations with participants, as well as throughout any subsequent editorial or post-production processes. This constant awareness of other spectators affects the process. It helps to corral ideas and focus the path of the discussion. It demands clarity in the choice of a narrative arc and in the making of an argument.

The major distinction between this and more purely academic conversations, is that the assumption must always be made that this is being conducted with a non-specialist audience. This frequently demands an extra level of processing of difficult

ideas into accessible language, which is doubly constrained by the limited time or space available within the particular broadcast or publishing medium. There is an implication here of the process being negatively reductive and overly simplifying of complex concepts. This is the risk, but most serious journalists work hard to effectively communicate the complexities within these constraints.

I have also observed that universities are increasingly acknowledging that the somewhat 'closed' academic conversations of the past are insufficient and fail to satisfy the implicit public contract that comes with public funding of higher education. As such, there has been a growing level of convergence between academia and the media. There is a greater acceptance that both realms are engaged in enquiry and communication, albeit with somewhat different skill-sets and different levels of intensity within a given topic.

Also, in Australia at least, an articulate and 'media friendly' academic is highly valued by media content producers, because they help to bridge knowledge gaps, and can help to explain the myriad layers of an increasingly complicated world. From the university side, an articulate and 'media friendly' academic scores highly, because they publicly advocate on behalf of their institution in, what is now, a highly competitive research arena. Plus, they help to demystify their specialist area, and indirectly allow public policy-makers to feel more comfortable about public expenditure on higher education and the attendant research that it hosts. This level of academic-media collaboration is a relatively recent phenomenon. As a radio producer, broadcaster and documentary-maker for three decades, I witnessed this dissolution of walls that had previously made many areas of these two realms somewhat immiscible.

It is important also to identify that necessary distortions exist in this context for more than just the journalist. In the context of bringing complex research to the public arena, the academic is also having to make changes and transformations to the way ideas are communicated. The presentation of the information is usually delivered in conversation, rather than as a lecture. This determines that the language must change. The contemporary academic must find a way to further process research into a widely communicable form. This requires a great amount of effort and careful judgement. It

is an inherently reductive process and thus requires that information is selectively delivered, meaning some aspects will be left out of the conversation. There's a strong parallel here with the concept of and dilemmas surrounding data compression. One choice is *lossy* compression, where data file sizes are dramatically reduced, making information transmission fast and effective, but at the cost of information being permanently lost. A ubiquitous example of this is the MP3 audio file. The other option is *lossless* compression, where the reduction in file size is less spectacular, but where the jettisoned data can be restored, and no information is lost. Historians would always hope to achieve the latter, but invariably and necessarily, the process must filter out excessive detail, which is something I refer to later in the Epilogue, discussing Jorge Luis Borges and the dilemmas of memory.

But in addition, this process also demands a change in the language used. The lexicon of specialist areas does not usually travel well outside its own sub-culture. But this myopia can't suggest that all long-form journalism must only operate in non-specialist areas. An interview with an aerospace researcher, for example, may be for a general audience, or it may be addressing people in the aviation industry. The researcher must identify the target audience and will choose a particular form of language. This is the language game, as defined by Wittgenstein;[287] language and activity are inseparable. We all have a sense of the linguistic rules appropriate to a particular setting. We understand that language is fluid and that there are multiple ways to play each word, or express each concept, depending on the context. Researchers today are increasingly mindful of their exposure to this public gallery, but it's difficult to know to what extent this creates a feedback loop into the research itself and alters or biases the nature and style of the research, or even the areas of research undertaken. However, it is quite evident that, at an institutional level, the decisions about research priorities have been dramatically altered by the increased scrutiny of both the public and political spheres. Despite all this, I am not suggesting that public exposure and commentary is deleterious to the complexity of research, rather that it adds an extra layer of mobility and comprehension of ideas. This is precisely the point of this theory-practice project—*History in the Making*/*The Identity Papers*.

[287] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (3rd ed. reprint of English text with index.. edn., Oxford: Blackwell, 1968).

At this point, another convergence becomes evident—the not-quite-parallel lines between the methodology of this PhD and the hybridity of the subject it examines begin to merge. In asking whether long-form journalism is one of the most effective methods of observing, recording and historicising vast events and phenomena in real-time, I argue that this method of bridging the journalistic-academic gap is also the best practical method for demonstrating the thesis.

Building a picture of Europe through long-form journalism

The Identity Papers is a moniker that slowly attached itself to an evolving process of observing, documenting, and publishing or broadcasting pieces of long-form journalism about Europe, which, from the outset, focused on issues of growing instability within the European Union. It is a process that has continued for ten years, but at the outset, there was no such longevity in mind, let alone the prospect of an academic analysis.

When I became aware that my work was building up more than merely sporadic observations of Europe, I entertained the idea of moving away from the traditional broadcast media that I was most familiar with, and instead creating an online magazine, creating, commissioning and aggregating works of text, sound and image, all with the purpose of examining Europe in flux. The emphasis would tend towards long-form, more considered and in-depth works of journalism. I tested this idea for some time, weighing up the difficulties and the benefits. Cost was a prime consideration. Attracting funding for online ventures is a dark art, especially if issues of journalistic ethics and independence are to be core principles. I had come from a world of highly principled journalism in the public sphere, and not from the different world of finance and business. I was aware of my limitations, aware of the high risk of failure, and so shelved the idea. But another thought presented itself.

I began to wonder what role this type of journalism had in the wider scheme of things. Could these sorts of analyses have any real impact, in my case, in our understanding of Europe? Could the observations of journalists highlight hitherto unseen cracks or flaws in the very fabric of European Union? Even more than that, could a more informed populous, achieved through good journalism, bring about positive change,

or at least ward off the dangers of ignorant neglect? As conceited as these questions might sound, they go to the heart of how meaningful the practice of long-form journalism is—whether it has agency in the way our societies evolve, or whether it is merely a pantomime-style background conversation, that is both predictable and ineffectual.

As a result, my PhD started down this road, asking these questions as I launched myself back into the topic of Europe. Midway through this process, however, I realised two things:

- I was trying to perform an impossible task on a target that was too big, too changeable and simply refused to stay still
- They were the wrong questions

Although, my background, skill-set and the subsequent practice-based portion of this project was always going to be within the realms of long-form journalism, the PhD itself is located within History. Once I had accepted that containment of a shape-shifting Europe within this PhD was unfeasible, different, more perennial questions that were hiding in the background became clearer:

- What role does this sort of multi-layered, cumulative, long-form journalism have in the telling of contemporary histories?
- Can a journalist be engaged in a form of narration, over time, that is durable and amounts to more than mere ephemera?

Understanding that the journalistic fragments can accumulate and build into some Benjaminian panorama, allows for a reframing of the journalistic practice, as well as a new understanding of its affect and implications in the wider human narrative.

Methods

The Identity Papers website

Crucial to this PhD, given that it is practice-based, is the website *The Identity Papers*.[288] I created this website to aggregate my various works of long-form journalism that are relevant to this PhD, and to also present the work in a publically accessible space.

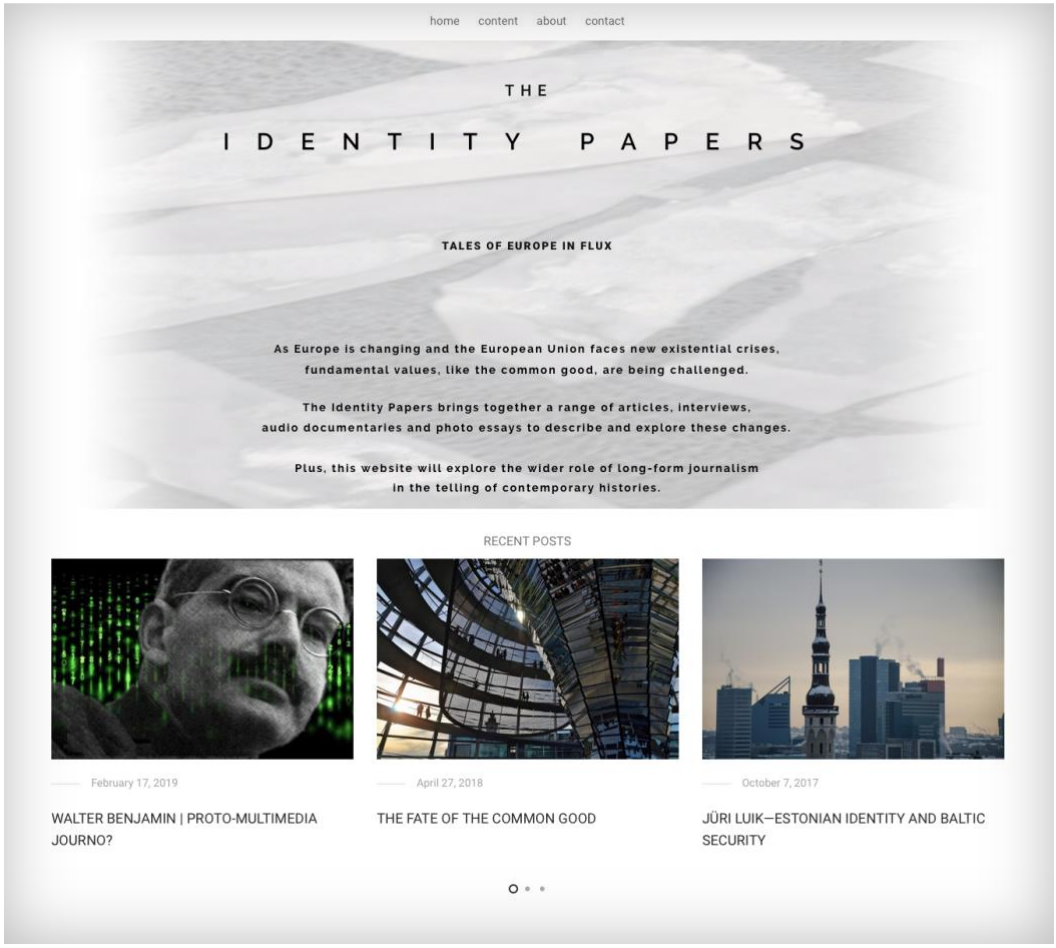


Fig. 16—Home page of The Identity Papers website

The website brings together a mix of broadcast radio single documentaries and series, alongside a collection of long-form interviews and feature articles, all relating to Europe. The material dates from 2010 onwards, and the following sections of Methods all relate to the work on that site, with parallel linkage to the ABC Radio National broadcast web pages, where relevant.

[288] Michael Shirrefs, *The Identity Papers*.

All audio work can be listened to through this site. In the case of the long-form interviews, the audio and transcripts are linked, so that the text highlights in sync with the audio. A screenshot of this can be seen below.

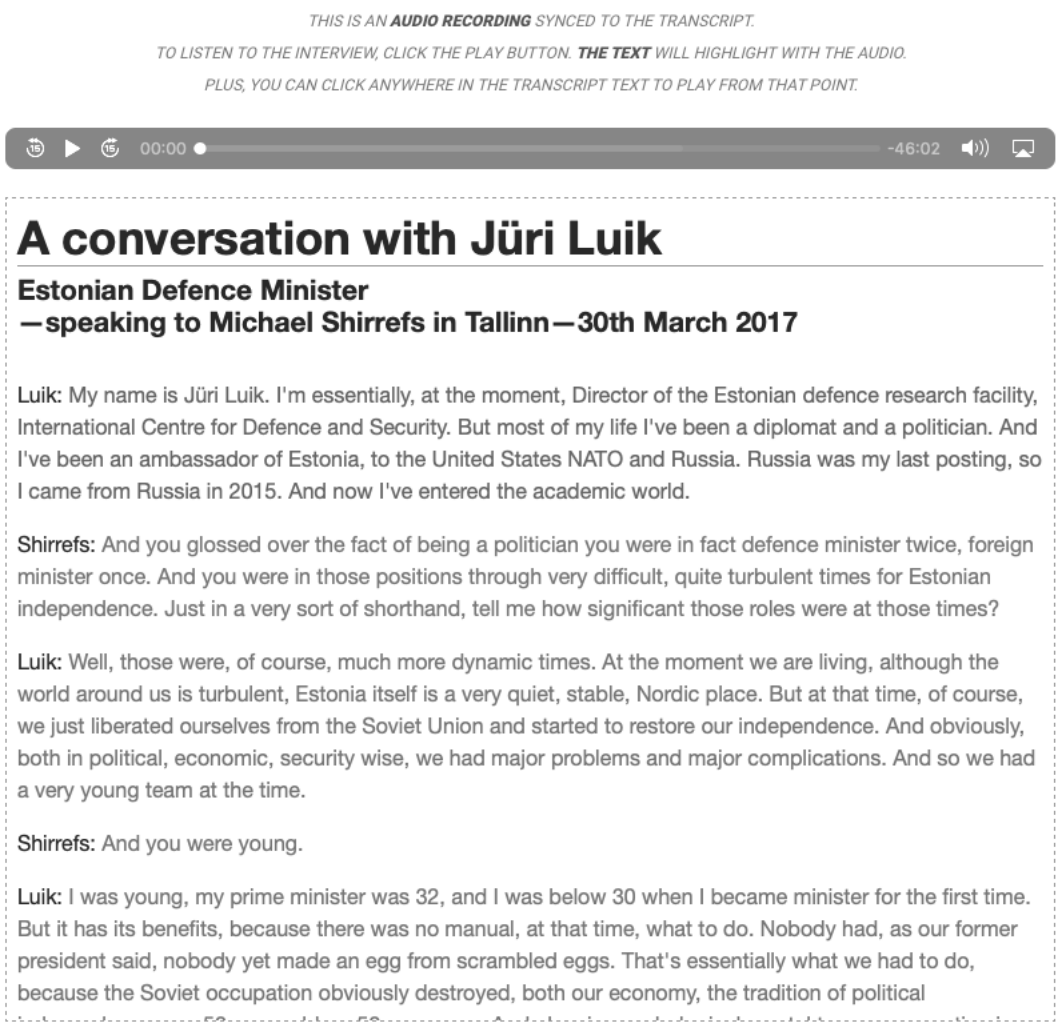


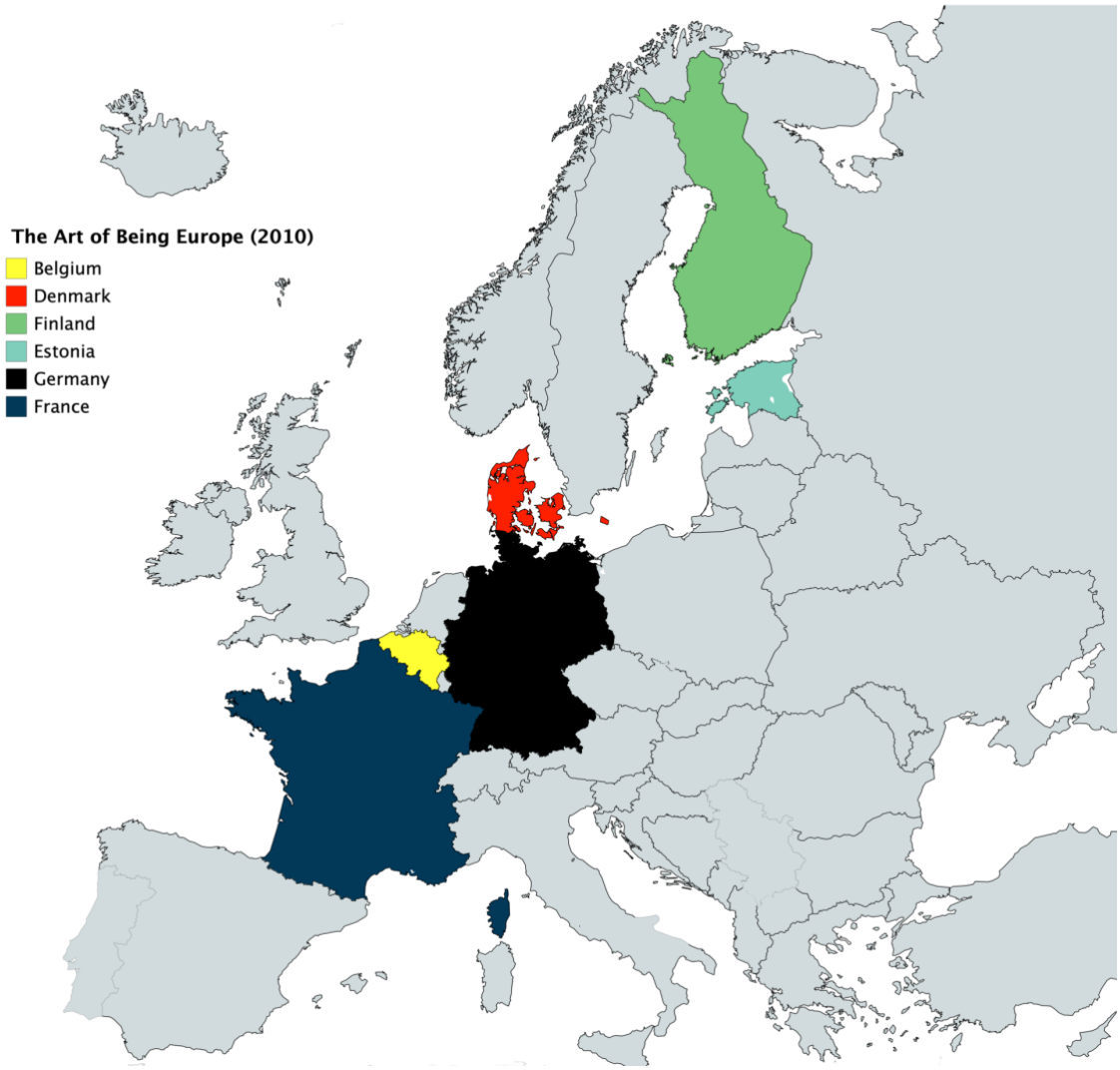
Fig. 17—Example of the combined audio/transcript player of The Identity Papers website

The website and virtually all elements that populate it—text, image and audio—are my original work, or have been created by me, in collaboration with other co-producers and interviewees, as is necessary in a broadcast environment.

The following sections show detailed explanations of the background and methods of a selection of the more significant programs that can be found and listened to on *The Identity Papers* website.

The Art of Being Europe (2010)—six-part radio series

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Artworks* program in early 2010
Produced by Dr Lyn Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs
Presented by Dr Lyn Gallacher



Abstract

It was Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission, who first suggested the idea that Europe needed a soul. 'No one ever fell in love with a trade agreement,' he said.

Over six weeks, *The Art of Being Europe* confronts issues such as Hollywood's threat to the European film industry, the difficult relationship between art and money and exactly how creative communities can rebuild a city.

From Victor Hugo to Wim Wenders, the series celebrates the idea of Europe. It joins in the shouting as Estonia embarks on its year as a

European Capital of Culture, and becomes the first former member of the Soviet Union to join the Eurozone.

Across Europe as the GFC bites and manufacturing industries fade, culture is on the climb and art is now an asset.

In 2007 the European Union launched an agenda for culture. Its aim was to mainstream culture into all areas of policy and show that it can help the EU achieve its political and economic objectives. This new co-operation between the economy, politics and culture drives *The Art of Being Europe* series, and tracks the progress of a group of artists, intellectuals and young people who are searching for a European soul.[289]

Background

In late 2010, I travelled to Europe to gather material for a six-part radio series, which would subsequently be broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio National (ABC RN) network, as well as being published online and made available as a podcast series.

[289] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, *The Art of Being Europe*.

I'd been in Paris the previous year conducting some research work in Parisian libraries and archives, which was part of a State Library of Victoria Creative Fellowship. This second trip involved some work to finalise that research, but the main purpose of the visit was quite different. The rest of the time involved a whirlwind trip through seven European countries, recording interviews with countless people. I was working with fellow documentary-maker Dr Lyn Gallacher, who had been awarded a European Union Journalism Award, which funded part of the trip and facilitated extraordinary access to people and places across the Continent.

The title of this series was *The Art of Being Europe*[290], and while the name suggests an aesthetic agenda, the question being asked throughout was somewhat more compelling—What was the fate of European culture in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC)?

The series was an exploration of whether, at a time of great economic stress for the region, areas of art and culture might be an easy target for governments looking to make budgetary cuts. Would culture be the canary-in-the-coalmine, an intimation of deeper and more profound structural problems in the European Union (EU)? This is a question that continues to resonate, a decade later, with each new crisis that European Union faces.

Process

The making of this series, and all other subsequent programs, was quite independent and free of any external pressure or coercion. The travel and access were partially funded by the European Union, with us covering any remaining costs, but all decisions over the subjects, destinations and interviewees were made by us. Applications for access were submitted by us to the EU's Australian Delegation in Canberra, who then made arrangements through the relevant agencies of the individual countries.

The choice of places to visit, out of myriad possibilities, was made against a number of factors. Time and logistics played a part. We had barely two months to prepare for the trip, and funding dictated the duration of the trip and therefore, also, the simple

[290] Ibid.

mechanics of travelling between destinations. The availability or non-availability of people we wished to speak to was also a major factor. This is the nature of journalism, that one is often subject to the vicissitudes of people and events that are beyond one's control.

Those were the limiting factors in our decisions about where to go. The rest concerned what ideas we needed to address in the programs and who we wanted to talk to. The reasons for our final destinations were as follows.

Belgium/Brussels

There was never any question that we would need to spend time in the city that is home to the major institutions of the European Union—the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council. Orbiting all this, there are a multitude of satellite agencies, think-tanks, lobby groups and media organisations that cluster around the European capital. To a large extent, the EU has a bi-directional gaze—the centre looking outwards to the member states and the member states looking towards the centre. Brussels allowed us inside the machinery of European integration, giving us access to that centre-out perspective. It also gave us access to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and bureaucrats, national representatives and policy-makers. For us, as outsiders, it was an intense immersion into the mechanics of this rather improbable organism.

Denmark/Copenhagen

Denmark was chosen, because it represents an important model for how to protect certain realms, in this case cultural institutions and cultural funding, from the inclemencies of wider events and the vagaries of political whim. Denmark uses an *arms-length* approach to the way decisions are made about funding important and enduring layers of society. It was useful to speak to artists, arts directors and politicians about how effective this was, at a time of extremis for Europe. Denmark is also interesting however, because it sits outside the Eurozone and thus maintains a level of hedging otherness in relation to the EU.

Finland/Helsinki and Turku

As much as it was important to go to the centre of the EU, it was also important to go to the furthest fringes. We were limited with our time, but visiting both Finland and Estonia took us away from the safe, and slightly complacent certainty of Western Europe. Not everyone on the fringes of Europe feels as secure or committed to the idea of a united Europe, especially in the east, as we've seen in recent years. However, Finland and Estonia, and to a slightly lesser extent the other Baltic States of Latvia and Lithuania, feel very connected to everything that Europe represents. This is in great contrast to some of their more southern neighbours on the eastern edge.

We met various people, both in politics and in the Arts, who spoke of Finnish pragmatism in the face of growing pressure from countries like China, and how important it was to be a part of a much larger economic and trading bloc. We then visited Turku, the old, pre-Soviet Finnish capital, which, along with Tallinn in Estonia, was about to share the mantle of 2011 EU Capital of Culture. This is a transformative program that allows smaller cities to reinvigorate themselves, through injections of money from Brussels, alongside twelve months of imaginative artistic programs that celebrate the city's culture.

Estonia/Tallinn

The visit to Estonia's capital, Tallinn, just across the Baltic Sea from Finland, was a chance to witness the other half of the 2011 EU Capital of Culture. The contrast, between Tallinn and Turku, is that Estonia, along with the other Baltic States, was under full Soviet rule through the Cold War, whereas Finland was allowed a large degree of autonomy. As a consequence, Tallinn was coming off a somewhat lower socio-economic base.

However, Estonia is a fiercely loyal member state of the European Union and looks to Brussels with ambition and hope for the future, as it continues to reinvent its post-Soviet society, identity and infrastructure. Most people I spoke to said that, through the whole of Soviet rule, Estonians always looked to the west and maintained an unshakable belief in their European-ness.

The other reason we visited Tallinn was that, at midnight on 31 December 2010, Estonia was also giving up its national currency (a potent symbol of their independence) and joining the Eurozone. This was a dramatic act of faith in the future of Europe, especially in the aftermath of the GFC, when many pundits were questioning the wisdom and stability of a common currency.

Germany/Berlin

While visiting Brussels was important from a political point of view, it had become increasingly obvious that Germany was crucial as one of the main structural pillars of Europe and, especially, of the European Union. This is a subject that was examined in much greater detail in a subsequent three-part series, called *Who is Germany?*, made two years later in 2012 and which I will discuss in more detail later.

However, within the context of this series, Germany—and Berlin in particular—became crucial, because of its somewhat unique and intriguing state of existential uncertainty. Unlike most other Western European nations, which were relatively fixed in their self-definitions, Germany's identity appeared to be still in a state of post-World War Two, post-Cold War flux. Berlin seemed to epitomise these existential questions. As one person said to us, 'We still don't know who we are. The only way we can understand ourselves is to look into the eyes of outsiders.' When compared to the almost arrogant rigidity of some other countries, this admission of German doubt revealed a very sophisticated and evolving set of intellectual questions that, to a large extent could be expanded out to examine Europe as a whole.

France/Paris

Paris was critical to this examination of European culture survival. As Europe's wealthiest city, it is synonymous with the very idea of European culture. But the city has a dual personality—the universally familiar centre of Paris, with all its spectacular architectural and artistic history, is at odds with what lies just outside the Périphérique, the ring road that defines the boundary between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Paris is being forced to confront the powder-keg realities of the swathes of its underclass, ringing the inner bubble. Some of Paris' strategies for negotiating

disparity and difference are through cultural initiatives, designed to bridge these two worlds.

Structure

The structure of this series did not follow a geographical itinerary. Instead, the six episodes were based on ideas about Europe, about European-ness, about values and vision. It was an attempt to find what binds the European Union beyond mere economics.

The episodes were broadcast across March and April 2010 on the weekly *Artworks* program, which was broadcast domestically in Australia on ABC Radio National, internationally via Radio Australia and syndications, and was subsequently available to everyone as a download from the ABC website. It is impossible to gauge the size of the audience for programs like this, but the reach of these ABC programs is substantial.

Series episodes:

1. The Soul of Europe is Steeped in Blood

   What is the connection between art, politics, economics and the European soul? In answer to this question, we take the long view, going back to the beginning of European Union, to what Victor Hugo calls its 'noble gestation.'[291]

2. The Economy of Culture

   In Europe, creative and cultural industries generate 2.6% of gross domestic product. That's more than the chemical industry and more than the real estate sector. But how does this figure help the arts during an economic downturn?[292]

[291] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 1: The Soul of Europe is Steeped in Blood', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 6 March 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/03/aks_20110306_1105.mp3>.
[292] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 2: The Economy of Culture', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 13 March 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/03/aks_20110313_1105.mp3>.

3. Film and the EU

How many European films would survive Hollywood without EU support? Is the next generation forgetting how to watch European films, growing up instead on a diet of American blockbusters? Wim Wenders is worried.[293]

4. Process Theory

The future of Europe is inconceivable without the contribution of culture. That's the starting point for Europe's 2020 strategy. And while it sounds obvious on one level, what does it really mean?[294]

5. Capitals of Culture

The European Capitals of Culture scheme is arguably one of the most successful of all of the EU's cultural programs. It began twenty-five years ago. Athens was the first city to be named European Capital of Culture. Since then, forty-eight different European cities have held the crown. This year the honour goes to Tallinn in Estonia and Turku in Finland. It is like an Olympic city title. To even bid for the prize a city has to transform itself and show how culture can improve the region now and in the future.[295]

6. A Soul for Europe's Future

What would make you get out into the streets with thousands of other people, hold hands with a stranger and sing? Twenty years ago, citizens of the Baltic States did just that as they regained their independence from Soviet rule. It's all part of the quest to find Europe's soul.[296]

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[293] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 3: Film and the EU', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 20 March 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/03/aks_20110320_1105.mp3>.
[294] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 4: Process Theory', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 27 March 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/03/aks_20110327_1105.mp3>.
[295] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 5: Capitals of Culture', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 3 April 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/04/aks_20110403_1105.mp3>.
[296] Lynette Gallacher and Michael Shirrefs, 'The Art of Being Europe—Part 6: A Soul for Europe's Future', *Artworks* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 10 April 2010) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2011/04/aks_20110410_1105.mp3>.

Who is Germany? (2012)—three-part radio series

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Creative Instinct* program in late 2012
Produced and presented by Michael Shirrefs

Abstract

In a world of global ambitions and amorphous regions, Europe has become emblematic of the struggle between the need for collective cooperation and the fear of becoming lost in a vast, culturally homogenous mass. And in the current crisis of confidence about the future of the European 'project', one country sits as a symbol of all the tension and all the uncertainty.

Germany is once again right at the heart of global events and its role in the unfolding drama is being examined from all the obvious political and economic angles. But to understand what the future might hold for Europe, it helps to understand something of the identity of the main player.

So, who is Germany? This series of three programs aims to provide some useful vignettes of how Germany sees itself, and how the country is perceived from the outside.[297]

Background

Two years after the making of 'The art of being Europe', I returned to the Continent to make three-part series called 'Who is Germany?'[298]. The series, which was consciously building on what I had learned from the previous project, was created in 2012 for ABC RN's weekly half-hour *Creative Instinct* program, of which I was both Producer and Presenter, giving me full control of editorial and commissioning decisions. The series was made possible after I received the German Grant for Journalism 2012, awarded by the German Government, through their Embassy in Australia. This grant funded the trip and provided support on the ground in Germany. The annual grant is given to a proposal that is chosen, from applications made by journalists from across Australia, in a competitive process. Once awarded, there is no editorial input or expectations made by the German Government.

[297] Michael Shirrefs, *Who is Germany?*
[298] Ibid.

This three-part special series was conceived to examine a number of layers of modern Germany—political, economic, social, cultural—by asking one simple question. At that time, did we really understand the character of Germany, given that, once again, this country appeared to be pivotal to the fate of Europe and the European Union?

Process

Making the series involved travelling through numerous regions of Germany, from the south-west to the north east, recording interviews with many people—across industry, education, politics, culture and the public—in an attempt to create a picture of the complexity of a country that is anything but homogenous. This was not a definitive portrayal of the subject and could never have been. Nor was the series without inherent bias, due to the choices made, and the constraints of time and coverage. However, vignettes always suggest meaning beyond the frame, and the value of this type of *document* is that it adds to, builds on and updates aspects of our knowledge and understanding of a subject, regardless of the limited or fragmentary nature of the process.

The journey started in Aachen, the traditional seat of German Kings, and now home to a range of high-tech industries, sitting alongside high-tech university and research facilities. I continued on to the BMW headquarters in Munich, then up to Weimar, the city of Goethe, Schiller, J.S.Bach, the Bauhaus movement and central to the German enlightenment and unification. But Weimar is also the site of Buchenwald concentration camp, a sobering symbol of the period that almost obliterated everything of which Germany was most proud.

The final destination was Berlin, which constantly proved that it was not indicative of the rest of Germany. Here I spoke to politicians, cultural theorists, a Cold War-era Lutheran minister, and members of the Turkish community. It was here that the tension between the past and the future was most evident—as one politician said to me, it's a clash between the desperate desire to forget the horrors of the recent past, and the absolute obligation to never forget.

This series though, as with *The Art of Being Europe*, was built around ideas and not an itinerary. The episodes were broadcast in November and December 2012 on the weekly *Creative Instinct* program, broadcast domestically in Australia on ABC Radio National, internationally via Radio Australia and syndications, and was subsequently available to everyone as a download from the ABC website.

Another effect of this series was to generate public discussion beyond the radio broadcasts, and invitations for me to speak at some public gatherings on the topic of Europe's future.

The series episodes:

Who is Germany? Part 1

> Germany is a relatively modern construct, but a lot has happened in its 140 plus years. The twentieth century saw Germany play a central role in some of the most seismic global events. In recovery from both WWII and the Cold War, Germany somehow managed to reinvent itself as an economic powerhouse. And yet, once again, events have conspired to give Germany a decisive part in a global drama.
>
> Economic commentators and political pundits tie themselves in knots trying to figure out the future of European economies, but understanding some of the underlying elements of German modern identity may help us to better interpret how events in Europe will unfold.
>
> In today's program we hear from some keen socio-political observers, who have thought much about the question of 'Who is Germany?'[299]

Who is Germany? Part 2

> In the second in our series where we're piecing together a picture of modern Germany, we step away from the political sphere for a street-level view.
>
> The cultural identity of modern Germany has many facets, some historical and others very contemporary. The tricky issues of migrant Germany are as crucial to understanding the German psyche as is the rich tradition of romantic literature and enlightenment thinking.

[299] Michael Shirrefs, 'Who is Germany? Pt.1', *Creative Instinct* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 17 November 2012) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2012/11/cit_20121117_1420.mp3>.

From Weimar to Kreuzberg, this episode finds a human view of Germany today.[300]

Who is Germany? Part 3

In our final exploration of German identity, a look at this European country's remarkable capacity of collaboration and innovation—in industry, in music and in healing the rifts of history.

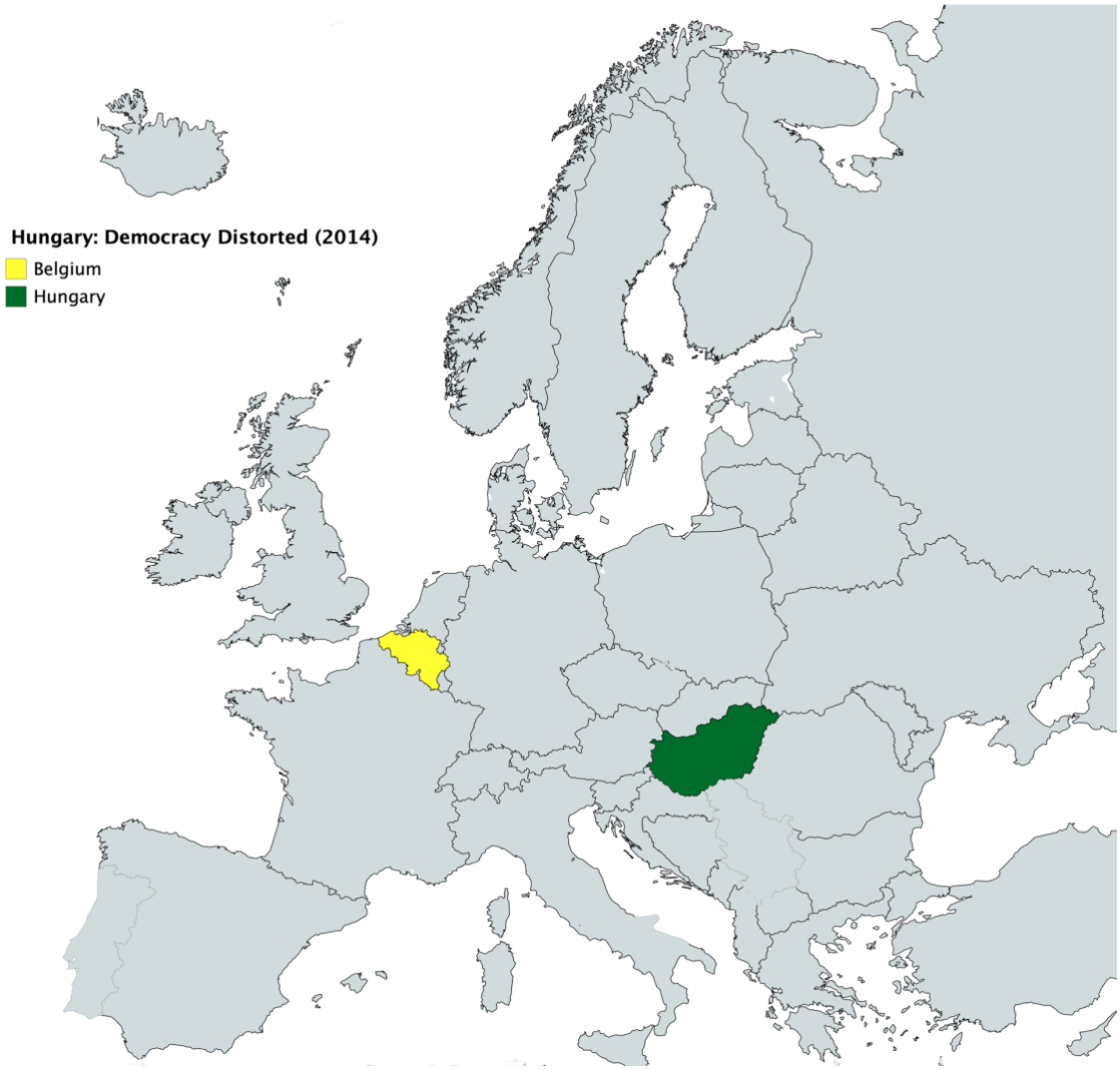
It's the land that applied its national quality of focus and discipline to manufacturing and turned it into an economic art-form. But it takes much more than discipline to continually reinvent and adapt to industrial and social change.

Germany has maintained a premium edge in cars and technology as it adjusts to a global marketplace, but it's also required some very nuanced social agility to cope with the divisions and upheavals of the Cold War and the subsequent unification.[301]

[300] Michael Shirrefs, 'Who is Germany? Pt.2', *Creative Instinct* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 24 November 2012) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2012/11/cit_20121124_1420.mp3>.
[301] Michael Shirrefs, 'Who is Germany? Pt.3', *Creative Instinct* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 1 December 2012) <https://abcmedia.akamaized.net/rn/podcast/2012/12/cit_20121201_1420.mp3>.

Hungary: Democracy distorted? (2014)—radio feature

Broadcast in ABC RN's *Law Report* program in March 2014
Produced and presented by Michael Shirrefs



Abstract

While all eyes are glued to the cascading events in Ukraine and Russia, within the boundaries of the European Union, there's another insidious dilemma.

A number of member states are tampering with the basic EU-wide laws which protect their citizens.

Hungary is one country that has really set off alarm bells.

Since the ruling Fidesz Party of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gained power in 2010, the country's constitution has been dramatically revamped.

> Some of these changes have broken European Law, while others, although strictly legal, challenge the fundamental principles of European unity.[302]

Background

This program is a direct beneficiary of the work I had done, the connections I'd made and trust I'd built up, over the previous two projects, with people in Europe. It came about because of dramatic political changes within Hungary, that were setting off alarm bells within Europe, but which were not being reported in Australia's mainstream media, with the possible exception of an article in *The Economist*.

I had received a couple of messages in late 2013, from people in different parts of Europe, explaining the growing concern over sweeping changes that the right-wing ruling Fidesz party of Viktor Orbán was making to Hungary's constitution. These changes were seen as overtly ideological and in direct opposition to the values of the European Union, of which Hungary is a member. The changes impacted on the media, the legal system, the education system, protections for minorities, and independent oversight of the environment. The lack of coverage of this situation in the Australian

[302] Michael Shirrefs, *Hungary: Democracy distorted?*

media was alarming, and I was shocked at my own lack of knowledge of what was happening, digging deeper to see how well-founded the fears were.

As a consequence, I was commissioned to make a program for ABC Radio National's specialist law program, the *Law Report*. I was then able to arrange interviews with some legal and constitutional specialists in Hungary, Switzerland and the US. I was also travelling to Brussels at that time and was therefore able to set up interviews with the European Commission's spokesperson Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen and the author of the official report to the European Parliament[303] about the changes in Hungary, Rui Tavares, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

I was warned, in advance by some of my guests, that the Hungarian Government was particularly sensitive to critical investigations, and would likely try to block the broadcast or would make life difficult in the aftermath of the broadcast. As with all programs of this sort, I ran the final production past the ABC's legal department, who must sign off on any sensitive investigative programs.

All of the predictions of a backlash from the authorities in Budapest came to fruition. Multiple official complaints were sent to the Managing Director. I was then contacted directly by the Hungarian Ambassador and invited to a face-to-face meeting, which I agreed to, with the Ambassador flying from Canberra to Melbourne, twice, for this precise purpose. The final point of upheaval was the program comments page, which had to be shut down, due to an overload of 'trolling', thought to be from within Hungary.

In all the complaints, the ABC editorial managers stood by the program, supporting the research and the outcome. This was important, obviously because it meant that my judgement had been backed. But it also meant that, even as a distant outsider, I was developing a more nuanced understanding of fragilities and tensions within Europe.

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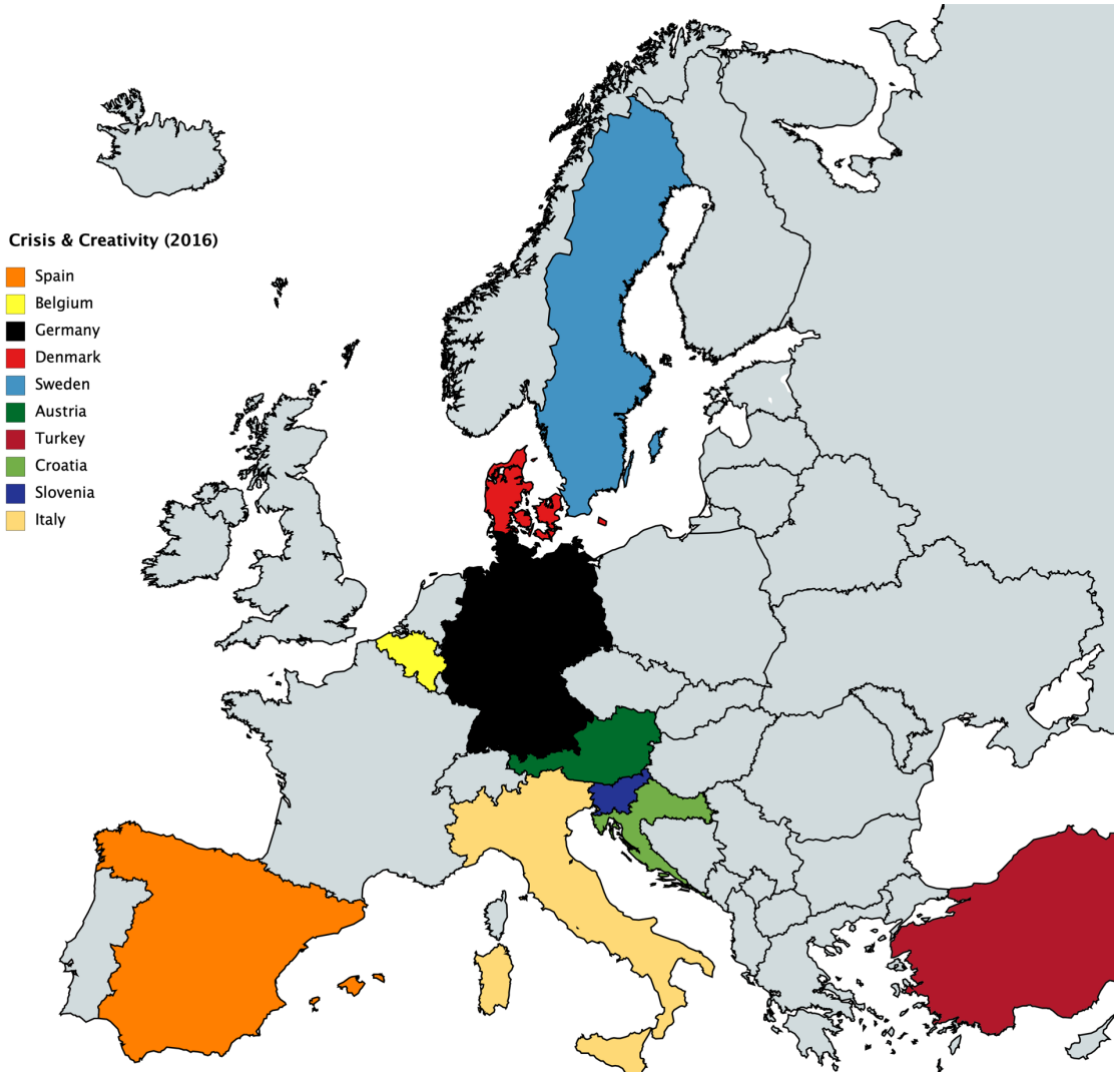
[303] Rui Tavares, *Report on the Situation of Fundamental Rghts: Standards and practices in Hungary* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2013), <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-0229+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=GA>.

Crisis & Creativity (2016)—four-part radio series

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Earshot* program in August 2016
Produced by Dr Lyn Gallacher
Interviews and writing by Michael Shirrefs
Additional recordings by Angela O'Donnell
Presented by Helen Morse



Abstract

The European Union is struggling. Not just because of the Brexit, the GFC, and the arrival of millions of refugees, but because Europe as an idea of fairness, democracy and freedom is under attack. Radical nationalists are using fear of immigration to shift voting patterns around the world, and Europe is the epicentre. But underneath all this there are creative responses, ones that can only happen with a shift in perception and certain childlike belief.[304]

[304] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, *Crisis and Creativity*.

Background

The radio series *Crisis & Creativity* was initially formulated to examine European resilience in coping with both the external and internal pressures of the mass movement of foreign refugees from 2015 onwards. In many ways, it came out of a similar mindset to the earlier *The Art of Being Europe* programs, which were looking at the stresses of the Global Economic Crisis on European culture.

To a large extent, all the material—the radio programs and articles that make up the collection of *The Identity Papers*—are really examining whether Europe is living up to its own stated values. This was especially so with *Crisis & Creativity*, because the fear impulse in many countries, when faced with a mass of humanity on its doorstep, was to erect borders within a region that was conceived around the principle of doing precisely the opposite. This was seen mostly across southern and eastern Europe, but there was also the somewhat alarming appearance of a border-stop being erected

between Denmark and Sweden, at the Swedish end of the Øresund Bridge, running from Copenhagen to Malmo.

However, the series also took a broader view, looking at examples of counter-intuitive responses to crises. This was the case with the Basque region of Spain, which has turned the story of Nazi carpet bombing of civilians in the lead up to World War Two, into a profound argument for peace. The series was then able to look at spontaneous and vast acts of community kindness in some of the hotspots of refugee movement in Europe, especially in Vienna and Berlin.

This meant travelling through many regions of Europe that were confronting the issues that mass migration was presenting. Croatia and Slovenia were not allowing refugees to remain in their territories and were, instead, forcibly channelling the traffic through to Austria, where a huge community effort in Vienna was working to counter the regional hostility with food, shelter, medical and legal assistance, free WiFi, clothing, and general kindness. Similarly, in Germany, despite a Federal decree about taking in refugees, many states refused, leaving it to a handful of regions to take the lion's share of the load. Areas like Berlin's Moabit district and parts of Bavaria were especially responsive to the crisis, working hard to facilitate a smooth movement of migrants into the community, either through the considered actions of politicians and bureaucrats to set a high standard, or through the work of volunteers, many of whom had given up their paid jobs, because they saw this as a moral issue.

Another side of this refugee surge was Turkey, playing games of political brinkmanship with the European Union, while playing reluctant host to many thousands of (mainly) Syrians, waiting to attempt the dangerous crossing into Europe.

Process

As with the previous two series, these programs were shaped around underlying ideas of identity and values, security and compassion. Unlike the previous two series, while I was responsible for all the interviews and writing, the decision was made to use an independent voice as narrator. The choice was to use Australian actor Helen Morse, whose voice gave the entire series the sound of a unifying overview.

Also, unlike the previous two series, which had been broadcast weekly, these programs were broadcast daily across one week.

As I've said, the approach to this series bears a strong resemblance to *The Art of Being Europe*, requiring travel to a range of vantage points across Europe which spoke to the topic. The final result, though, was not a chronological travelogue, because the subject required a more complex blending of the various distinct stories.

The following is a more detailed explanation of the places visited, and why these decisions were made.

Spain/Basque Region

The visit to the Basque region of northern Spain, was timed to coincide with the 79th anniversary commemoration of the bombing of Guernica (Gernika). The attack, which I discussed earlier, was carried out by the German Luftwaffe, prior to the start of the Second World War, at the behest of General Franco's fascist government. The purpose of the visit, in the context of this radio series, was to attend the anniversary events, and to interview survivors and descendants of the bombing. The significance, though, is that the city hosts a Peace Museum (*Gernikako Bakearen Museoa*) and Peace Studies Centre (*Gernika Gogoratuz*). Both demonstrate how a story of extraordinary violence against a civilian population can be transformed into a narrative about peace—a narrative that has reimagined what the Basque region is and elevated the identity of the people on the world stage.

Belgium/Brussels

Any journey to examine the fate of values of European Union had to include a visit to Brussels—the heart of the EU. This allowed me to examine how Europe was measuring up to the region's guiding principles, in the wake of rising widespread terrorism across the continent and deadly bombings in Brussels itself. All this was happening as Europe was figuring out how to respond to unprecedented refugee pressure on its borders. Interviews with leaders and locals in Brussels, along with a

large amount of recorded atmospherics of the City, gave the series a starting point and an evocative backdrop.

Germany/Berlin

Berlin was important to this story. While many European countries were hostile and closing borders to refugees, some European centres were open to many that were seeking sanctuary. Berlin was one such centre. While the German government's policy on refugees was more open, but patchy, it was ordinary people who were galvanised into action, filling the bureaucratic gaps. One volunteer organisation, in the Berlin suburb of Moabit, called *Moabit Hilft*, was staffed by people from across Berlin who felt morally compelled to act and create a safety net for the new arrivals. I interviewed organisers, many of whom had given up successful careers, as well as refugees, artists and journalists. All were closely bound up in the evolving drama.

Denmark/Copenhagen & Sweden/Malmo

The city of Copenhagen in Denmark and Swedish city of Malmo gained prominence during this period, because of a decision to defy the fundamental principle of a borderless Europe. Sweden imposed a border stop on their side of the Øresund bridge, which connects Malmo and Copenhagen and, consequently, Sweden and Denmark. Sweden believed that Denmark was deliberately channelling refugees through to the Swedish side and, therefore, the government erected the controversial border stop. In addition to recording the sound of police check at the border, I interviewed the bridge's architect. It was important to understand how this action had distorted the original purpose of the bridge, which was to connect two cities, two countries and bring people together. We interviewed locals on both sides of the bridge, as well as artists and political observers.

Austria/Vienna

Vienna was another city that made a conscious decision to welcome refugees, who were being funnelled through the Balkan region, south of Austria. As I mentioned earlier, this was another place of spontaneous support and generosity to these asylum-seekers, with the city's main railway station, the *Hauptbahnhof*, becoming the

centre of activity. As well as interviewing volunteers and politicians, this visit was scheduled to coincide with the annual International Radio Features Conference, where I was able to talk to other long-form journalists who were also covering this growing crisis in many parts of Europe. Some of these journalists were even embedding themselves in refugee camps.

Slovenia/Ljubljana & Croatia/Pula/Portorož

I travelled to the two Balkan countries of Slovenia and Croatia, who were both politically opposed to accepting asylum seekers, and were determined to force the steady stream of, mainly Syrian, refugees to pass through to neighbouring countries. One of the important aspects of this region was the fluidity of borders over the past few centuries. I spoke to a number of politicians and locals, and met with the former Yugoslav ambassador to Australia, Boris Cizelj, whose country was dissolved while he was still stationed in Canberra. He is now an astute political observer and academic in Slovenia's capital Ljubljana.

Turkey/Istanbul

I needed a perspective from beyond the European bubble, in particular from Turkey but was unable to travel there myself. Instead, I commissioned a freelancer, Angela O'Donnell, who was working in Istanbul at the time, to record some audio. Getting the voices of Syrian refugees who were trying to navigate the mercurial, and often brutal whims of the Turkish Government was crucial to this story. This was significant also, because Turkey, the country straddling east and west, had been trying, for many years, to gain membership of the European Union. The vast numbers of refugees building up in Turkey had finally given President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan leverage. He threatened to open the flood gates into Europe, which dramatically raised the temperature of the dialogue between already fractious EU member countries.

Italy/Trieste

One person I briefly visited, in the Italian city of Trieste, was writer and journalist, Kenka Lekovich, who has written much about her lived experience of displacement

and the impact on her sense of identity. She was important in her wider reflections on the unfolding refugee crisis and what it meant for the idea of European identity.

Germany/Ansbach

The final destination was the Bavarian region of Ansbach in southern Germany. I've previously spoken of the uneven response, by German States, to the federal policy of taking in victims of war. Some States simply refused to comply with the decree. Bavaria, on the other hand, echoed Berlin's welcoming stance. Ansbach was emblematic of this determination to act on a moral imperative. This was the place that I came closest to the individual stories and the traumas that went with this exodus from Syria, especially amongst children. I visited resettlement hostels and spoke to volunteers, government ministers and workers, as well as numerous refugees. For some, this was the first time they had dared to tell their story.

The series episodes:

Crisis & Creativity: In Europe

> Europe is at a historical turning point. It is a changing landscape that leaves refugees, who've journeyed to Europe in the face of great peril, asking questions.
>
> This is part one of *Crisis and Creativity.* In Europe the crises are easy to find. They come in the form of the GFC, the Brexit, the rise of the radical right, and unprecedented waves of refugees. But put these problems together, and you have a moment like no other in European history.
>
> But what about the creativity? Has this region, that conjured up a miraculous period of harmony in the European Union, still got a powerful enough imagination to move forward and stay intact?
>
> On this tour we ask the question that is being put to Europe by millions of refugees, where are your values? All these questions have everyone on edge

Crisis & Creativity: Draw me a sheep

Draw me a sheep is a line from *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupery. It refers to the moment when the narrator, a pilot, is stranded in the desert after having crashed his plane.

He recalls that when, as a child, he tried to draw a picture of an elephant inside a boa constrictor, adults only saw a picture of a hat. This strange, childlike perception comes back to him at a point of great peril. He is, therefore, able to draw a sheep.

Is this kind of creative shift that is needed in Europe today?

This is part two of *Crisis and Creativity,* and it starts in the cartoon heart of Europe, Brussels, where there is an idea brewing that comic books might pose the answer to some of the most difficult questions.

Crisis & Creativity: The unbearable lightness of borders

Borders are the point at which democracy comes to a halt.

So far, the recent terrorist attacks in Bavaria have not changed Germany's welcoming policy towards asylum seekers, but like all of Europe, its borders are under pressure.

The old-style, Cold War type of border is not really in vogue anymore. There are now new internal borders.

They work through an administrative process of visa acceptance, work permits and access to health care, education and social welfare benefits. They accept or deny access to a society through paperwork rather than barbed wire.

But even these borders are struggling, with unprecedented numbers of people flowing across them.

The road ahead for Europe is stark, and with Turkey still in a state of emergency and the fallout from the Brexit only just beginning, uncertainty is set to continue.

This is part three of *Crisis and Creativity.* It shows that way Europe negotiates borders affects thinking about immigration around the world.

Crisis & Creativity: The victory of Gernika

The bombing of Gernika in northern Spain by the Nazis, in the lead up to World War II, is an infamous moment in modern history. It was the first recorded case of deliberately carpet-bombing civilians.

But strangely enough, some Basque people consider themselves lucky—not for the death and destruction, but because this awful event had a witness, in journalist George Steer, and a champion in the artist Picasso, whose painting, simply titled *Guernica*, is a universally recognised symbol of both the place, and of the idea of war crimes.

Gernika is also lucky because it has had a very committed and articulate group of survivors. Ninety-three-year-old Luis Iriondo is among the last of them. He runs an art class and an action committee, which writes letters to presidents. The idea is to turn the story of violence... into a dialogue about peace.

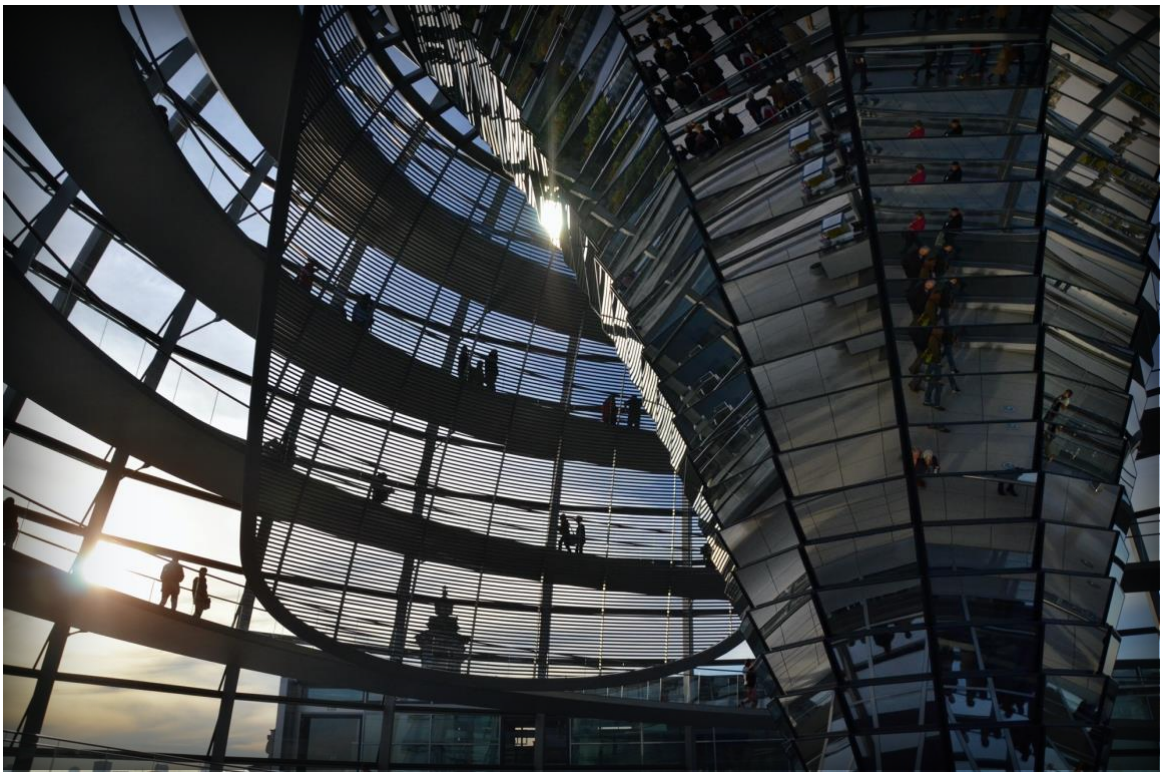
It all means that now, a bombing event which took place 79 years ago can be commemorated as a victory, not a defeat. The citizens see the bombing not as a military victory, but a victory of another kind—one that has meaning for all of Europe.

The fate of the Common Good (2018)—radio feature
An interview with Prof. Hans Sluga

Broadcast in ABC RN's *Philosopher's Zone* program 6 May 2018
Produced by Michael Shirrefs
Presented by Michael Shirrefs and David Rutledge

Abstract

The idea of the 'common good' drove some of the most important social developments of the 20th century—Franklin D Roosevelt's New Deal, civil rights, the United Nations, the European Union. Today, as western societies become more fragmented and organisations like the EU begin to fray at the edges, we ask whether nations and individuals are beginning to lose faith in the common good.[305]



Background

Throughout the years of making long-form radio features about aspects of Europe—of European-ness, of European unity—one core idea sat at the heart of the enquiries—if European Union was born of a widely held philosophy that is often referred to as

[305] Michael Shirrefs, *The Fate of the Common Good*.

the 'common good', is the growing failure to maintain unity within Europe the result of a failure of belief in this philosophy?

European Union was always a strange mix of pragmatism and altruism. Or to be a bit more blunt, cynical optimism. Constructed out of unarguable necessity in the decades post-World War Two, a belief that mutually beneficial trade and cultural could produce a climate of peace for Europe was compelling, with the memories of two World Wars and the tense impasse of the Cold War as ever-present motivation.

Somewhere along the way however, these convictions turned into complacency, as hard-won peace came to be seen as the norm, and institutions like the European Union began to look like bureaucratic impositions, rather than bulwarks against an alternate reality. Citizens turned into consumers, the world became commodified, and any awareness that a common good was only possible when there was a certain level mutual obligation and responsibility, seemed to vanish.

This program, created for ABC RN's *The Philosopher's Zone*, was therefore an attempt to explore this question about the fate of the common good. I was travelling to San Francisco, and I contacted Professor Hans Sluga, from the Philosophy Department of the University of California, Berkeley, one of the scholars and writers that has closely examined the topic of the common good.[306] As a German-born academic, steeped in the many strands of European philosophy, and understanding how this had created an environment for peace-time creations like the EU, he was keen to take on this question. The radio program was thus an extended conversation with Prof. Sluga, recorded in his office at UC Berkeley. Audio of full interview is available on *The Identity Papers*[307] website, and the transcript is also included in Appendix III of this paper.

[306] Hans Sluga, *Politics and the Search for the Common Good* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[307] Michael Shirrefs and Hans Sluga, *The Fate of the Common Good*.

Epilogue

The conceit of exactitude: Precise limitations in journalism & historiography

One of the greatest curses afflicting the humanities is that the past comes to us as imprecise, shrunken by the ravages of time. Our grip on the past is necessarily incomplete. While the future is simply in the realms of conjecture, even the present can be problematic—often too close for clear focus and always too near for balance. We think we can cling onto the past as an existential identity. 'Remembering the past is crucial for our sense of identity', writes David Lowenthal, 'to know what we were confirms that we are.'[308]

The impulse then is to constantly harvest the present to shore up the future. Our past can reassure us, informing who we are and what we do next. But we are dogged by the past's inability to remain concrete and complete.

> The past is gone; its parity with things now seen, recalled, or read can never be proved... Unlike geographically remote places we could visit if we made the effort, the past is beyond reach.[309]

So, if all apprehension is indistinct, how do we, as a species accumulate knowledge and progress?

Historians and journalists, alike, are afflicted by these sorts of limitations—where to look, what to focus on, how to cope with too much (or not enough) information or data.[310] To unravel these paradoxes, we need the skill of concision and the metaphorical power of language. This is the realm of the Argentinian wordsmith, Jorge Luis Borges, whom Zygmunt Bauman describes as 'one of the greatest writers

[308] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 197.
[309] Ibid. 187.
[310] Anna Clark et al., 'What is history? Historiography roundtable', *Rethinking History*, 22/4 (2018), 500-524.

ever and in my mind the greatest philosopher among storytellers, as always inimitable in spotting the universe in a grain of sand'.[311]

In 1946, Borges penned a short story of only one paragraph, *Of Exactitude in Science*, penned as if it were from a seventeenth century writer, known as J. A. Suárez Miranda.

> Of Exactitude in Science
>
> ... In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers' Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.
>
> From Travels of Praiseworthy Men (1658) by J. A. Suárez Miranda[312]
>
> Jorge Luis Borges

The small scale of this work belies the enormity of the idea it contains. The mythical tale tells of the failure of a realised ambition, to create a map in exact 1:1 scale of the land it is intended to represent. The failure is not of the map's creation, but of the functionality of the artefact.

Fig. 18—The Tower of Babel—Pieter Bruegel the Elder, c.1568

Borges offers a parable of human conceit in the pursuit of absolute precision. The map exactly covered the surface of the landscape it was describing but was consequently

[311] Zygmunt Bauman, *The New Bauman Reader: Thinking sociologically in liquid modern times*, ed. Tony Blackshaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 398.
[312] Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected fictions* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 325.

'cumbersome' and useless. The 1:1 map echoes other tales of human folly and hubris, of which the Tower of Babel is a persistent metaphor (especially amongst Renaissance artists) which, to this day, is still invoked in political critique.

Dilemmas of representation unite many areas of intellectual enquiry. Artists are in a perpetual private struggle with, what the late John Berger termed, *ways of seeing*.[313] And, along with people like historians, journalists, writers and scientists, artists wrestle with the very public concerns of representation. But how do we represent what is there, but not seen, what is experienced, but which is ineffable, beyond comprehension? Adrian Jones suggests that this allows a new freedom to step outside traditional scholarly boundaries.

> In a contemporary era showing the limits of representations, historians now have new potential partner disciplines. The opportunities now may be as fertile for historiography as when, long ago, the *Annales* School tilted studies of history towards social (structural) sciences. The new partnerships arise because psychologists and philosophers now attend to 'animated (оживленный)' minds in action in real worlds in real time, no longer satisfied with inferences drawn from psychologists' laboratory rats and rigorous stats. Likewise, philosophers are not so arch abstract.[314]

Journalists know that functional representation is, by necessity, a radically reduced abstraction of our world. Historians also recognise that their representations cannot amount to a perfect reproduction of what has happened. The task is much like data compression—to filter and judge what can be jettisoned, without losing the essence of cultural memory. The image that Borges conjures, of a map that smothers the landscape that it's meant to represent, suggests that we must scale the artefacts of the past, our historical legacies, to a manageable size that we can manage to carry into the future. If the baggage of the past is so great that we become bogged down, progress fails.

Jorge Luis Borges is also famous for being blind. He was the model for the blind librarian in Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980). Borges writes about his

[313] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972).
[314] Adrian Jones, 'New theories of mind and their implications for researching histories', *Rethinking History*, 23/3 (2019), 379-402.

blindness, which came upon him slowly, in his moving autobiographical essay, called simply *Blindness*.[315] For Borges, blindness is inconvenient and undefined,[316] and yet also a gift.[317] In practical terms, it meant that he had to stop writing short stories and stick to writing poetry. He could store short poems in his memory. Longer creations got lost.

This goes to the burden of memory, and the safety valve of forgetting. Neither individuals nor societies can remember everything, because this dooms us to endlessly relive our cumulative life's experiences in their entirety. As Borges again warns in another short story—*Funes, The Memorious*[318]—this would be crippling. Funes has the unenviable capacity to remember everything, or perhaps it is the ability to never forget. As a child, he is a curiosity. As an adult he is a tormented recluse in a darkened room, unable to take on more memories.

> I suspect, however, that [Funes] was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget differences, generalise, make abstractions. To Funes, there were only details, almost immediate in their presence.[319]

This means that memory and understanding are differ. The scale of one can overwhelm the other, just as the 'Map of the Empire' overwhelmed the landscape.

These fables also help us comprehend the issues raised by this exegesis exploring my journalistic practice. These fables disclose real-world, long-form dilemmas of exactitude and memory. The task of the news journalist is to capture contemporary histories in their raw form. Long-form journalists will take a somewhat longer view, contemplating and processing the cumulative narrative of unfolding events.

The selection task in journalism happens at all points of the process. In terms of short-form journalism, steeped in the daily news cycle, editors decide the stories the journalists should cover. The journalists subsequently make selective decisions

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[315] Jorge Luis Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, tr. Esther Allen et al. (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999), 473-483.
[316] Ibid. 474.
[317] Ibid. 483.
[318] Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 87-95.
[319] Ibid. 94.

regarding whom to speak to, and then they judge, back in the newsroom, how best to convey clarity in limited time or space. Sub-editors then decide which stories will get to air or to print.

Long-form or documentary journalists have more latitude. They have considerably more column space or airtime, but limitations still exist, and the ratio of raw material that's recorded to what actually gets to air is high.

All journalists focus on effective communication of, what are often, difficult and complex stories and ideas. Few stories arrive ready-made. With the audience in mind, the journalist interprets and reconstructs. It's a conjuring act. It requires integrity and antennae for accuracy. The historian arrives later to filter through all this. The historian decides what is ephemera and what should endure.

All are forms of data compression. Digital data compression, the sort that we get in digitised environments like photography, music and many computer applications that produce large, unwieldy files, comes in two distinct types—'lossy' and 'loss-less'. Loss-less compression uses algorithms detecting known patterns in the data, removing them, leaving shortcut codes, but then, when decompressing, perfectly re-constructing what's missing. Conversely, lossy compression, as the name suggests, doesn't do this. It permanently sacrifices data to achieve far more dramatic file-size reductions. It uses algorithms its creators hope will make good choices about what is or isn't redundant. The hope is that the jettisoned information, when the remainder is decompressed, is of such minor importance as to be irrelevant to functional comprehension.

This latter type is also the process of human memory, enquiry, record keeping. We survive best through using 'lossy' methods of passing on the past to the future. Retaining everything would be crippling.

Conclusion

Human endeavour is a dialectic between strength and frailty, remembering and forgetting. Making a mark, whether individually or collectively, is only memorable if the mark is noticed, recorded, and endures. We are the sum of our marks and our fragments—those that endure—piled up behind us, as they do behind Walter Benjamin's angel of history. Enduring memory, however, requires a conscious act to sift the ruins and find meaning. We know that history, as an idea, was created by Herodotus and Thucydides to give us a memory that was free of myths, grounded in facts. But, as I've shown from these early beginnings, the boundaries between history and the contemporary are blurred. Both Herodotus and Thucydides moved backwards and forwards between commentary and record, story and data, quite effortlessly. All of which points to similarities with modern practices of both history and long-form journalism, albeit without sharp distinctions. I have illustrated that, while history narrative has been seen to evolve, crossing into more journalistic territory, some areas of long-form journalism distinguish themselves clearly from news journalism, taking on many of the characteristics and rigour of, what we normally think of as, scholarly work.

In the process of this exegesis, I have shown that the task of both the historian and the journalist is to collect fragments, rebuild meanings and create narratives. Individuals, however, cannot see all, and make sense of everything. Historians and journalists rely on the collective endeavours of others to broaden their scope, to be less subjective. Benjamin shows us that the past does not come to us as clear, precise, or complete, but in these fragments, we can construct allegories to ward off the temptation to mythologise—either the past or ourselves. Benjamin used the thought fragments of others to construct a new reading, both of the past and of his present. His wish for the grand work he could never finish, but which we have today as *The Arcades Project*, was for an entire collection of citations, curated into a vast mosaic picture.

As I've said earlier, Benjamin's process of curation is remarkably similar to the style of long-form journalism represented in this PhD. Both practices sit somewhere between the academy and the newsroom. Both practices are hybrids, less concerned

with boundaries, more engaged in using whatever tools are needed to create the wider narrative found in the fragments.

One of the greatest human fears is to forget who we are. Lose our memory and we lose our culture, our identity. It is the work of the chroniclers—the historians and the journalists—that keeps us connected to the threads of our past, and gives us our identity papers to the future.

Appendices

The three appendices are included here, in addition to the material on *The Identity Papers* website, as examples or artefacts of the radio production process.

Appendix I contains the full, post-broadcast transcripts of the three episodes of the radio feature series *Who is Germany?* Post-broadcast transcripts are accurate written artefacts of a broadcast, often made available on the program's website.

Appendix II contains the pre-production scripts for the four episodes of the radio feature series *Crisis & Creativity*. Pre-production scripts are early drafts and don't include changes that are made to a program, either in the studio during recording of narrator links, or during the post-production editing and mixing process. Consequently, they often differ markedly from the final broadcast.

Appendix III is the post-broadcast transcript of a single radio program, *The Fate of the Common Good*, which consisted of a single long-form interview.

Appendix I

Transcripts of *Who is Germany?*—3 part radio series

Who is Germany? episode 1

First broadcast 17 November 2012 on *Creative Instinct*, ABC Radio National[320]

Michael Shirrefs: Hello and welcome to *Creative Instinct* on RN, RA and the web. I'm Michael Shirrefs. And as you can hear I'm not in the studio; I'm in Germany and over the next three weeks I'm going to explore some aspects of German identity, because once again this country finds itself at the heart of major events. But is there a single coherent Germany? At a political level, the answer is... almost.

Angela Merkel: [speaking in German]

Michael Shirrefs: That's the German leader, Chancellor Angela Merkel speaking recently in response to the surprise awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union. It was a decision that attracted controversy but, given the central role that Germany played in the formation of the EU and the pivotal role that the country plays in the current economic crisis, the award for Europe must have felt like a huge endorsement of modern German values; the sort of affirmation that Germany has been hoping for ever since the catastrophes of two World Wars and the Cold War. But what does Germany feel like at the moment? Well, I'm standing in the dome of the Reichstag in Berlin. It was bombed during the war and many decades later a new dome was designed by Sir Norman Foster to look like a ruined shell, as a constant reminder to people of a difficult past.

Above me tourists are rising up the long spiraling ramps looking out across Berlin. Most of them seem oblivious to the machinery of government and the parliamentary debating chamber visible through the glass below my feet. It's sort of an odd disconnect. And I'm about to head across the road to meet a remarkable woman. Her name is Gesine Schwan. She's a political scientist and she's the head of the Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance. But most Germans know of her because she twice ran for the German presidency. And although she failed both times, there is enormous warmth and respect for this scholar's voice in the public sphere.

Gesine Schwan: Identity is an achievement. It's not a fact. It's not something you have. It is of course complex, and not without contradictions, in your individual but also in society.

If you are an individual, if you are a Berliner, if you are a German, if you are a European, if you are a cosmopolitan citizen of that world, you always include a lot of identifications; that means that you identify with something. And I identify with the

[320] Michael Shirrefs, *Who is Germany? Pt.1*.

Germans, in the sense that I am a German, a born German. And although I've been brought up in a Lycée Français, I always knew that I am a German. And why? Because in the 50s when I went to school, the French were responsible for Algeria and I was responsible for Auschwitz. You understand? So, it is the identification is a common responsibility. If it pertains to be proud of something, proud of being part of a nation where Beethoven and Mozart live, this is already a wrong path.

You identify with something in the sense of common responsibility. Maybe also of joy, if you have a common project, you identify with the project. Therefore, if you want to bring people together you have to create common projects for them so that they would identify with common projects, and not just…I mean, I also drink red wine. I like that very much, but that is not sufficient.

Michael Shirrefs: But that implies also that a nostalgic identification is not actually that valid, that it has to be an active identification. And you said, an identification with responsibility and clearly an identification with a sort of a forward-looking project…

Gesine Schwan: Sure.

Michael Shirrefs: …so that idea that it is in the present and it's active.

Gesine Schwan: Yes. And it has to be brought forward. You are German, of course, if you are born in Germany from German parents, on your passport you are a German. But what I sometimes say, if you are a Turkish mother living in Neukölln and feeling responsible for the neighbourhood, and especially for a certain place where you have dealers. And if these Turkish mothers, even if they don't have yet a passport, but if they feel responsible for their children and for all the children around, to clear that place, and to make it less dangerous, then you identify with this project and with this challenge in Germany, in Berlin, I think they are more German than somebody who has a German passport who has never been interested in something of a common responsibility.

Michael Shirrefs: That reference that Gesine Schwan made to Turkish mothers hints at a major issue for contemporary Germany that I'll deal with a bit later. In the meantime, I'm taking the S-Bahn, the train across Berlin to visit the fabulously named Rotes Rathaus, the Red City Hall.

[German train announcement]

Michael Shirrefs: I've got a meeting with Dr Richard Meng. He's Secretary of State and Speaker in the Berlin Senate.

Richard Meng: We're here in the city hall of Berlin. I'm the spokesman of the Berlin Senate, which is a state in Germany; Berlin is not only a city, but it's also a state, one of our sixteen states. So, I'm a spokesman of a Federal…of one of the State governments. What we can look upon from here is the German capital with 3.4 million inhabitants, the biggest city of Germany but not a really big city in the world. But we hope that the world sees in this city that Germany has become an international country, an open country, an open-minded country.

The question for German identity is a very old question. It's a difficult question on the one hand, on the other hand, always, history is a chance. Our generation has grown up in the western part of Germany—I come from the western part—recognising that we are not only Germans anymore; we are Europeans also. Some of us thought we are majorly Europeans and we now learn we still are Germans more than we believe. But it's both, and this is a change, this is historical change. And there you see the chance you have after a disaster like the Second World War. It's different than Britain or France. French people think about themselves; there is much more broadness concerning national question and national identities and there have been decades when the Germans didn't even want to have a national identity, because it had to do with to be guilty.

We are now in another generation. We are now getting normal in this way too. But we have gained something. We have gained a European identity also besides our German identity. And this is more than you could hope 50 years ago. This is why this question concerning German identity is so complicated and I even would say it is not only bad that it is a difficult question. It is good that this is a difficult question and might be completely different in Australia because you are not a country, you are a continent, and our continent is named Europe.

The capital of this country…there have been 30 years of division and before that you had dictatorship and you had Holocaust and all that. And since '89 it's the first time that this Germany and this capital can find a new way. And you cannot hold a speech and people believe it and everything is okay. This has to develop in a few further decades. And we are now, so far that we can say, these East and West problems are not any more the main problems we have. We have a problem of poor people and rich people and we have environmental problems and so on and so on. But this is what every big city in the world has.

Michael Shirrefs: But how is Germany perceived a bit further afield? Well, I'm briefly heading west over the German border and into Belgium. I'm heading to Brussels, the home of the European Union, to speak to one of the people within the European Commission who deals directly with Germany.

Eric Dufeil: My name is Eric Dufeil. I'm from French origin. I am leading the German desk here in the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. As a non-German I would allow myself to say that I've observed the transformation in the German society over time. Germanic identity is by no means anything easy or simple. Forty years ago, or 20 years ago, there was still this feeling of being guilty because of the war, and that was very pregnant in the people's mind. Then seven years ago in the discussion of the current programming period, I remember there was no united German position about the budget, about regional policy and things like that. So, we could manage to divide and rule, so to say. I say it a bit crudely, but it was almost like that.

Now, this time, there is one single German position—Bund und Länder—because they have learned from the experience. And so, to answer your question, yes, now, building up slowly and step-by-step. Apparently, it has nothing to do... but the football World Cup, which was organised by Germany four years ago, was a great moment for the German identity. You would have seen in the streets of Germany, cars with a German flag, and that, one or two years before, you would never have seen. People became

proud of being Germans. And we have now a new Germany in Europe. And the question is, is it a European Germany or German-Europe and of course as non-German, we say, that has to be European Germany, European UK, European…and so-on. Let's do it together.

Michael Shirrefs: For a slightly different outside perspective on Germany, I'm heading a bit further south in Brussels to the office of one of the oldest European think tanks, the Robert Schuman Foundation.

Pierre Thibaudat: Okay so my name is Pierre Thibaudat. I'm French and I'm working for the Robert Schuman Foundation in this Brussels office. So, the Robert Schuman Foundation is a think-tank on European affairs with a very general approach. So, we deal with industry matters, with economic matters, with institutional matters—with whatever is European. Germany is formally represented here at a European level not only in the institutions because of that demographic power, but also in the private sector. For example, companies have, most of the time, dozens of people working for them in the field of public affairs, European affairs. But you also have the same for the regional representation. So, Bavaria representation in Brussels has more than 80 people working full-time.

Michael Shirrefs: Well, they've got their own building they call the Castle.

Pierre Thibaudat: Yes, absolutely. On their…

Michael Shirrefs: Which is right in front of the European parliament.

Pierre Thibaudat: They have a castle between the European Parliament, the European Committee for Regions, the European Committee for Social Affairs, and very next to the commission and to the consul. And they are always organising huge events with 100 or 200 invitees. So, they're very proactive, but it's the same for all the German regions. But for example, the French regions, which also have less power anyway, have also far less people working there—I used to work in the French representation of a region; there were two people working full-time.

Michael Shirrefs: So, what sort of message does that send to Europe? What sort of…does it…I mean, is that seen as being too pushy, too sort of aggressive?

Pierre Thibaudat: I don't think it's too pushy. They just understood what the rules of the game are. So, they know they can influence thanks to their demographic power and the representations to the European parliament because they are the ones having the most MEPs of course. And Germany is very used, anyway, to soft power. I mean you can see it also in, also international affairs. They have this willingness of having a more soft approach, maybe more business oriented sometimes.

Michael Shirrefs: What we call soft diplomacy.

Pierre Thibaudat: Yes. It's soft diplomacy. I wouldn't consider it as aggressive because we could do the same if we wanted.

Michael Shirrefs: However, this strong identity abroad as a confident and sustainable economic entity masks one of the realities of post-war Germany. Much of the momentum of German industry has been fueled with migrant labour. In fact, migration is one of the biggest issues for a German identity that's in a state of flux.

Martin Grabert: The function of the melting pot certainly continues in the unified Germany because it is still mixing up, but different cultures as from the past.

Michael Shirrefs: That's Berlin-born Dr Martin Grabert who also worked for some years in Brussels before moving to Australia.

Martin Grabert: If you would visit for instance, a factory in, let's say, in Swabia or Stuttgart area or in Munich and Bavaria, you will see very…or hear very few German speakers. In the production line you will hear a lot of Turkish. You will hear Iranian dialects, Polish dialects, Russian dialects.

Michael Shirrefs: In fact, the sort of figures on indigenous German to immigrant population is quite remarkable. It's in some areas, it's like one-in-three is not German origin.

Martin Grabert: Yes. Yes. Absolutely. There were times where this quarter in Berlin called Kreuzberg was the third biggest Turkish city. Those who come to Germany of course change the aspects and the prospects of this region. For instance, you will obviously find a lot of now third generation Turkish people elected into parliaments, just to name one. This is…might be a normal thing in Australia but certainly, in Europe, the national identity for a very long time was focused on the... well, what you look like, and what the name sounds like. But this is changing.

Lars Klein: I'm Lars Klein. I'm from Germany obviously. I work in Göttingen and *Göttingen* is kind of in the middle of Germany, and I grew up a few hours from there, a bit to the north.

If there were a larger group of cosmopolitan Germans to put it that way, then I'd be very happy, and I certainly think there's such a group. But what was more visible in these last years, and you've probably heard about them, or heard a bit, was the German Germans that were talking about integration and the efforts it would take to become German. That was in the course of the Sarrazin debate.

> **Thilo Sarrazin**: *Hello this is Thilo Sarrazin. I am glad to speak to you on the BBC. What we need is immigration of the qualified professionals. But what we get is immigration from countries with no…*
>
> **Voice**: *…but I'm really irritated by the fact that with his book, Mr. Sarrazin is actually dividing this country instead of unifying it. So, Mr. Sarrazin, why are you actually dividing the country?*
>
> **Thilo Sarrazin**: *I'm not dividing…*
> [*Excerpt from BBC's 'World Have Your Say' program 18th January 2011*]

Lars Klein: And there had been this debate on a book by Thilo Sarrazin that was called *Germany Does Away With Itself.* And it's been a book on a lot of issues but one of the issues was integration. And Thilo Sarrazin is a banker; he has been a politician, has been a quite important figure in politics around and after reunification, has been senator of finance in Berlin. So that's a job you don't want to have because Berlin is heavily in debt.

Michael Shirrefs: Bankrupt.

Lars Klein: Bankrupt, yes. And you could tell all his frustration in an interview he gave in the windup to the subsequent book. And there he said things like, the 'Arabs and Turks'—he didn't bother to qualify that in any way, he just said the…that many Arabs and Turks had no significant role to play in this society other than selling vegetables on the market. So that's quoting him from the interview. And he went on becoming very racist about them being not as intelligent as, for example, eastern European Jews and if they were coming to Germany everything would be fine, but…and now it's the Arabs and Turks and what do we do with them? And so on. And what I find striking about the whole debate is, again, that citizenship doesn't matter.

So, I would assume that many of the Arabs and Turks, I mean those people that he mentioned as…named as Arabs and Turks, were indeed Germans. But he didn't bother. And nobody asked. So, this whole debate was not about being German; it was about who contributes to economy and society. So that's a whole different issue that was played out on the backs of Arabs and Turks—to use his words again. And in that sense, it wasn't really an honest debate. And of course, a racist one at the same time.

Kenan Kolat: My name is Kenan Kolat. I am president of the Turkish community in Germany. I am living since 32 years in Germany. I have studied in Germany and since 2005 I am the president of the Turkish community.

Michael Shirrefs: Kenan Kolat's Turkish community is indicative of changes that were made to German immigration law in 2004, finally allowing guest workers and their families a greater opportunity to gain citizenship in the country that they'd helped to prosper. The result is that on top of 1.6 million Turkish citizens, there are also one million German citizens of Turkish origin. And there's now an entire generation of children born into German citizenship. But as the Thilo Sarrazin debate has shown, laws may change but attitudes can be intractable.

Kenan Kolat: This is the problem of oldish German people who are saying, this is not our Germany now; this is our… here are a lot of Turkish people who are making business, Turkish business over all. In the '70s, '80s, they said, the Turkish people want not to make job and various business gets, the people say, out of business now. There is no Germany now. There is Turkish, Arabic and so on. This is the…changing in Germany and we are seeing now, in Germany, kids under six-years now, 35 per cent of them are non-German origin. In 20 years, 60 to 80 per cent. The future belongs to the people of migration background. And if you make from this people, non-German people, then you have a problem; you will have a minority problem in Germany. Therefore, we are seeing participate, these people, take these people as people—German people—but accept the culture of these people. Accept the double citizenship. Accept the Turkish, Kurdish and so-on culture of these people. These people belong

to Germany. The people are saying now, we are Turkish, we have German citizenship. I want they say in 10, 20, 30 years, we are German people, we are Turkish origin—or, we are German.

Michael Shirrefs: Meanwhile back at City Hall… Yesterday and the day before we spent some time in Kreuzberg. We spoke to Mr. Kenan Kolat and the overwhelming message I got from that is that the Turkish community, quite apart from its size, is a very willing partner for the city. And it's facing obstacles—there've been the controversies with people like Thilo Sarrazin and the, sort of, reflex against diversity. But do you feel that those minority groups are helping you in government to reinvent the city? Is that an important part of that?

Richard Meng: This is what we say—not everyone in the city may agree, but this government says yes, the majority says yes. We have now a Turkish generation in Berlin with young people who are well educated, more than their parents were. Their parents came as workers. But important for us would be that our migrant, young generation will have the same chance that the German-born generation has; that in a certain way our society must still get more open than it is.

Michael Shirrefs: Dr Richard Meng, spokesperson for the Berlin government, speaking to me in the Berliner Rathaus—the town hall.

For information on all my guests today, including links and images, just go to the website, abc.net.au/radionational and follow the links to *Creative Instinct.*

Many thanks to the German Foreign Office and the Goethe-Institut in Berlin as well as the German Embassy and the National Press Club in Canberra, for all their help in making this trip possible through the German grant for journalism. I'm Michael Shirrefs.

Next week in Part 2 of this three-part series on German identity, we'll be stepping away from the politics of identity and looking more at the cultural texture of Germany. So, join me then.

Guests

Prof Dr Gesine Schwan—Political scientist and Director of the Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance in Berlin

Dr Richard Meng—Secretary of State and Speaker in the Berlin Senate

Pierre Thibaudat—European Affairs Adviser with the Fondation Robert Schuman, based in Brussels

Michel-Eric Dufeil—Head of the German & Netherlands Desk of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy with the European Commission

Dr Martin Grabert—Director, International and Business Relations with the Group of Eight in Australia

Dr Lars Klein—Senior Lecturer with the Euroculture Programme at the University of Göttingen in Germany

Mr Kenan Kolat—Head of the Turkish Community in Germany

Further Information

Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance

Gesine Schwan website

Dr. Richard Meng—Berlin Senate

Fondation Robert Schuman

European Commission

Erasmus Mundus Programme on Euroculture at the University of Göttingen

The Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland)

Goethe-Institut

German Diplomatic Missions in Australia

National Press Club of Australia

European Delegation to Australia

Centre for European Studies (CES) at the Australian National University (ANU)

European Union Centre at RMIT University

European and EU Centre at Monash University

Credits

Producer and Presenter—Michael Shirrefs

Sound Engineer—John Jacobs

Who is Germany? episode 2

First broadcast 24 November 2012 on *Creative Instinct*, ABC Radio National[321]

Michael Shirrefs: Hello. I'm Michael Shirrefs and this is *Creative Instinct* on RN, RA and the web. And the second in our series, *Who is Germany?*

We've already had a glimpse of the way Germany is perceived and thinks of itself in the political sphere. But the view at street level has more to do with the day-to-day life of most Germans. We ended last week with the leader of the Turkish community in Germany. And today I'm on my way to Köttbusser Tor in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin to meet father and daughter Hasan and Nele Togrulca, two generations of the Turkish German experience.

Hasan grew up as an outsider. He's now one of the most sought-after DJs, both in Berlin and across Europe—known in the music scene as Zigan Aldi.

Nele Togrulca [translation]: I'm Nele. I'm 22 years old and I live in Kreuzberg and I've been growing up in Kreuzberg.

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: I'm Hasan. I'm 44 years old and I live in Kreuzberg, Berlin.

Michael Shirrefs: Were you born here Hasan?

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: No. I came as a child to Berlin. I'm here since the late 70s—'79 to West Berlin, back then.

Michael Shirrefs: What's your strongest memory of moving from Turkey to Berlin? Because it would have been a very dramatically different place to what it is now.

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: Yes. When I came…when you come as a child you have different memories and dreams. And what I remember as I came here, in November, and was really cold and I didn't have long underpants. And what I remember best is being cold, freezing, all the time.

Michael Shirrefs: Nele, you grew up in Berlin. You didn't have another memory of another place, do you talk to your father about how it was when he grew up, and do you, sort of, compare what it was like for you growing up here in Berlin?

Nele Togrulca [translation]: Yes. He has told me a lot of stories about his childhood, which of course, was very different from mine here and it's impossible to compare. And I sometimes imagine how it would have been if I had grown up in Turkey as well.

[321] Michael Shirrefs, *Who is Germany? Pt.2*.

Michael Shirrefs: Growing up with that, sort of as a story behind you, because it's part of your family story, but being thoroughly German yourself, what does that feel like for you? What does it feel like being a Berliner with sort of multiple stories?

Nele Togrulca [translation]: I don't feel 100 per cent German naturally or what means naturally, since I have different roots and a different culture that I grew up with as well.

Michael Shirrefs: But does Berlin feel like a place that is comfortable to have those multiple stories; to be, with layers of your history?

Nele Togrulca [translation]: Yes. This is a good place to be since you are not alone with this history; you share it with many people around, which is something very beautiful.

Michael Shirrefs: Hasan, this is a very different world that you see your daughter growing up in now. Berlin is now a much more comfortable place to be part of a migrant community. Do you look at that and are you pleased that it was easier for Nele to grow up in this environment compared to what you had to go through?

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: Yes, of course it is easier today. Back in my time the wall was still standing, and we lived here together with the allied forces. And I wish I had a papa, a father like Nele has, who was part of the scene.

Yes, my childhood was more difficult also. Back in Turkey already and coming here of course, first of all having to learn the language and also deal with the longing for heimat, a home. And it took a long time until my heart, sort of, moved from one side to the other and arrived here.

Michael Shirrefs: How important was it also that you seemed to make your own success? Because you've become phenomenally successful in Berlin in the music scene, and in Europe. I mean, it seems that you are very much the product of your own innovation.

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: Yes. Music connects. Music has no borders. Music has no culture, and it is diverse. And it entertains even if you don't understand, and people can let go. Yes, it started with my own parties after the Wall came down, being illegal parties. And I realised that the audience is neither only German nor only with a migrant background, but it's a mix of German, Turkish, Greek people coming. And these so-called Kreuzberg nights became really cult in these days. And I realised that there's no need for politics but the real integration and accepting each other comes through the music.

Yes, thinking of my personal experience, 20 years ago when I started going to clubs, I wasn't…I didn't get in 90 per cent of the time and now my success is that I'm playing in clubs, being one of the most popular DJs in Germany, and having people ask me to put them on the guest list. But these doors you have to open for yourself to become successful.

Michael Shirrefs: Well, we've finished our cup of tea and we're heading downstairs. Because Hasan says he wants to show me his neighbourhood, his Kiez. This is Köttbusser Tor in Kreuzberg, and this is Hasan's patch. This is where he grew up. And this place is really important to him.

Hasan Togrulca [translation]: This bank in front of us is one of the first banks that was opened in Germany in the beginning of the 80s. This bank was a…meant a great relief to the immigrants because they still transfer a lot of money home to relatives and that made it easier to do that.

We are standing in front of one of the *Gecekondus* at Köttbusser Tor and they're demonstrating against the rising rents and its people and women who were never ever involved into politics before they come here and sit here every second week and they organise a demonstration. It's not only politically motivated but it led to an exchange among the people living here, the women being neighbours and now having a chance to meet and exchange stories and share their experiences. So, it's also…so it became a social meeting point.

Michael Shirrefs: This German idea of the Kiez or neighbourhood has a lot in common with the wider notion of German regions. So now I'm travelling south to Munich in Bavaria where I'm going to visit a couple who many years ago moved to Munich from the heavy industrial region of the Ruhr Valley in North Western Germany.

Ute Philipp: We are here in Munich and my name is Ute Philipp and this is the, you know, western of Munich and it's called Untermenzing.

Christian Philipp: Yes, my name is Christian Philipp, I'm her husband. I live at the same place. We have two kids. We moved to Munich 18 years ago and we really love to be here. We're from Northern Germany but living here in Munich is, you know, it's, for us, it's a really great place compared to Northern Germany where we come from.

Michael Shirrefs: Do you feel that there is, a sort of a, a single identity for Germany? I mean, do you think there is enough that Germans from different regions have in common that makes Germany feel like a single place? Or does it feel like a whole series of separate little regions?

Ute Philipp: I don't think that there's really a…this kind of identity. The only thing I can think of is that Germans from our generation doesn't like to say they like Germany. So, this kind of national proud…they don't like that anymore. And not like other people from other states, like waving their flags and that's always a little strange for us and our generation.

Christian Philipp: I think this is true for our generation. I mean, we were born in the '60s but still the situation of the time after the Second World War was still pretty close for us. So, when we grew up, we could experience it almost every day, the people were suffering, and the Germans made all the other people in Europe suffer during this war. And when we travel to foreign countries, we could sense this. But this…what I like is that this completely changed. And the…

Michael Shirrefs: What was the trigger for a change?

Christian Philipp: Yes, I think of people travelling. So German people were travelling to all of the other European countries and the people from other European countries were visiting Germany and so they just learned that some of the clichés are just not true. And German people are more open-minded and international, and they want to live in a very good relationship with their neighbours. So, people just needed to get to know each other and to talk to each other and learn their language. So, there is a really kind of European feeling, which is growing.

Ute Philipp: Mmm. Yes.

Michael Shirrefs: So, for your generation, are you just as likely to call yourself European as you are, German?

Ute Philipp: Yes. Yes, I would do this. And for example, the world championship in football…

Christian Philipp: Yes, the Soccer World Cup of 2006.

Ute Philipp: Soccer World Cup; that was a very good example for this movement towards openness and…

Christian Philipp: And was a big chance to show the world that Germany is not just Oktoberfest or politics. It's an open-minded country.

[Recording from World Cup Soccer]

Michael Shirrefs: The anthemic *Ode to Joy* as well as a favourite football chant and the anthem of the European Union brings together two of the most romantic elements of the German tradition: composer Ludwig van Beethoven and poet Friedrich Schiller.

So, my journey now takes me to Weimar, the home of Schiller, the German Enlightenment, and perhaps that most romantic of German literary figures, Goethe.

Guide in Goethe's House: So, it tells Johann Wolfgang von Goethe lived in this house from 1782 until 1789, seven years. And then from 1792 until he died. It is 40 years more.

Excerpt from Goethe's *Faust*

Faust: …*Law, and Philosophy –*
You worked your way through every school,
Even, God help you, Theology,
And sweated at it like a fool.
Why labour at it anymore?
You're no wiser now than you were before.
You're Master of Arts and Doctor too,
And for ten years all you've been able to do
Is lead your students a fearful dance

Through a maze of error and ignorance.
And all this misery goes to show
There's nothing we can ever know.
(*Faust*, lines 354-365)

Manfred Koltes: We still have a single tradition that we share. That's what we learn in school, you have the canon; we all learn Goethe poems, we learn Schiller poems. Those are the things that built our heritage; that makes us German within a much bigger picture.

Elke Richter [translation]: One reason for Goethe being so important for the question of German identity is that he was active on the turn…the beginning of modernity and the turn from the 18th to 19th century, and, sort of, embracing all these universal interests: not only being a writer but a researcher, painter, political statesman, and yes, for that reason it's important to keep him alive for the new generation.

Michael Shirrefs: That's Dr Elke Richter and Dr Manfred Koltes from the Goethe and Schiller archive in Weimar, an extraordinary repository of German literature. But I'm wondering, as iconic as Goethe is, how real or relevant that tradition is to modern Germany? This is Swiss-Australian scholar Professor Hans Kuhn who's a specialist in romantic German literature at the ANU.

Hans Kuhn: That is hard to judge, I mean, generally one hears often complaints that the literary culture, the canon of works, has lost its meaning. People read parodies of classical plays, but they don't know the classical plays themselves. So, the parody in a way does not make sense. In that sense I often hear that colleagues say, somehow the education system has not yet found the right mixture of present-day issues and attitudes and solid past.

Of course, for a long time the Germans almost took pride in saying, we are a cultural nation, we are not a political nation—which they were not for a long time. But we are a cultural nation through our language and through the works that have been written in that language and the music works and so on. We are a nation on a different plane from the nations like England and France and so on.

Michael Shirrefs: So, what changed? Well, what happened is that Germany became Germany. In 1871 the original unification of Germany meant that it became a political entity as much as a cultural entity. And places like Weimar, with their tradition of people like Liszt and JS Bach, suddenly got dragged into the modern era. And so, as I sit here in the middle of Weimar, and I'm sitting opposite one of the beautiful churches, Herderkirche which houses the famous Lucas Cranach altar piece, I'm also reminded that only 15 kilometres from where I'm sitting, is the concentration camp Buchenwald. And so, Weimar takes on a whole new symbolism of all that is both wonderful and troubling for modern Germany. And I'm about to visit another icon in Weimar, the Bauhaus University, which gave birth to a whole new design ethic for modern Germany. I'm meeting the director, Professor Karl Beucke.

Karl Beucke: We have these cultural institutions here in Weimar and so then the next aspect of course. Is Buchenwald a part of Weimar or not? Of course it is. That's a dark

period. And there was this inmate of Buchenwald who had this great idea—a Spaniard—to build a path between two different sites, Ettersburg Castle which was dating back to 1850 and even beyond, and Buchenwald. And the idea was that you were able to walk from the period of the dark to the period of the light or vice versa. So that's how close these things are related. And it's part, of course, of our history and we should not negate it.

Michael Shirrefs: So, in this post-war, post-unification Germany what's life like for artists? Well, I'm heading back to Berlin and I'm off to a cafe in the west of Berlin's Mitte district. It's an area called Moabit and the cafe is called Buchkantine—part bookshop, part gorgeous place to sip coffee while overlooking the River Spree. And I'm meeting an Australian abroad.

Breandáin O'Shea: Well, who I am? I'm Breandáin O'Shea and I've been living in Germany for about 21 years now, believe it or not—I surprise myself—musician, I also study literature and for the last 20 years I've been taking care of programs at the Deutsche-Welle: producing, presenting Deutsche-Welle arts programs. These days I'm working mainly for online.

I think, Michael, you would be the first to know that the first thing that tends to go as soon as the purse strings have to be tightened tends to be culture. The big difference is, here, is that people will fight a lot more for things and if they see that their precious theatre or their precious festivals are going to be affected in some way or another, you will find that there'll be a very strong resistance to it.

Germany is a place where people, certainly artists, feel supported, understood, given the space, all of those things that you can't really define. And I think that they feel very understood; I think that they feel that this, what the Germans call Auseinandersetzung—in other words this going really into depth, into the real vernacular of certain themes and then discussing with people—artists are stimulated by that.

Just about everybody you meet is an artist. There's a bit of a joke. We always say, you always meet people, they don't actually have jobs in Berlin; they have projects, right? And you have this project, and they're working on this project, and then you think, should I ask them how they make their money? No. I'm just going to let them talk about their project and they could well be working as a cleaning person, or waiting or whatever. It doesn't matter. They've got this project.

Michael Shirrefs: One of the things that modern Germany has become incredibly skilled at is having cultural conversations with the wider world. The way they've done this is through a very familiar organisation called the Goethe-Institut, which is far more than just a program for teaching German language. This organisation hosts collaborative events in cities all over the world. And at a time when many countries are withdrawing their cultural presence abroad, Germany's Goethe-Institut keeps expanding.

Gabriele Landwehr: We are here in the Berlin head office, a representative office of the Goethe-Institut's head office in Munich, and my name is Gabriele Landwehr and I'm in charge of all the relationships to business and foundations.

When you look at our history you will never find a missionary element in what we do, you know. We are not preaching or anything; we're listening, and we discuss and there are a lot of good things that we take from other cultures. And we are very interested in all kinds of exchanges; in long lasting relationships—friendships at the best—and that will stay this way. And I think this is also a value that is held very high by people who work with us now, even by German business people who realise that when they come to a Goethe-Institut abroad, they will find a very strong relationship to the society of the cities where we live.

Michael Shirrefs: So that's the other thing too. You are an annex of a foreign office, but you don't seem to be, sort of, in lockstep with any Foreign Office policy. You seem to have, you appear to have, extraordinary independence, sort of, creative independence from any sort of policy position. So, what is the relationship between the Goethe-Institut and the Foreign Office? Do they understand and support that sort of freedom for the Goethe-Institut?

Gabriele Landwehr: We are subsidised by the Foreign Office. We have a contract with the Foreign Office since 1976. And we have, when we go abroad, we have semi-official passports. That helps us, of course, because we have to travel quite a lot. But we do not get any orders from the Foreign Office and we are not working politically. We are a cultural institution, and we are working in educational institutions and we might have differences with the Foreign Office, but who does not have differences? You know, differences of opinion create interesting discussions and sometimes you come to a solution. Sometimes you have to realise that you have different opinions and that's also okay, as long as it doesn't hurt anybody. But I can hardly remember any case where we would not work together with them.

Michael Shirrefs: Gabriele Landwehr, speaking to me in the Berlin office of the Goethe-Institut.

For more information about my guests as well as for images and video, just go to the website, abc.net.au/radionational and follow the links to *Creative Instinct*.

I'm Michael Shirrefs. Join me again next week for the final part of *Who is Germany?* where I look at the country's surprising capacity for collaboration and innovation.

Guests

Hasan Togrulca—Berliner of Turkish origin (aka DJ Zigan Aldi)

Nele Togrulca—German woman of Turkish origin

Ute Philipp—Munich resident

Christian Philipp—Munich resident

Nele Hertling—Vice-President of the Akademie der Künste—the Berlin Art Academy

Prof Dr Karl Beucke—Rector of the Bauhaus University in Weimar

Dr Elke Richter—Curator at the Goethe & Schiller Archive in Weimar

Dr Manfred Koltes—Curator at the Goethe & Schiller Archive in Weimar

Breandáin O'Shea—Broadcaster and arts specialist with Germany's public broadcaster Deutsche-Welle

Dr Gabriele Landwehr—Head of Business and Foundations Relations for the Goethe-Institut, based in Berlin

Ariane Pauls—German artist based in Berlin

Further Information

The Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland)

DJ Zigan Aldi (aka Hasan Togrulca)

Bauhaus University

Goethe House and National Museum in Weimar

Goethe & Schiller Archive

Goethe-Institut

Deutsche-Welle

German Diplomatic Missions in Australia

National Press Club of Australia

European Delegation to Australia

Centre for European Studies (CES) at the Australian National University (ANU)

European Union Centre at RMIT University

European and EU Centre at Monash University

Credits

Producer—Michael Shirrefs

Sound Engineer—John Jacobs

Who is Germany? episode 3

First broadcast 24 November 2012 on *Creative Instinct*, ABC Radio National[322]

Michael Shirrefs: Hello. I'm Michael Shirrefs and welcome to *Creative Instinct* with the final in our series, *Who is Germany?*

Now, while much of the identity of modern Germany has revolved around reflections and re-examinations of recent history, a parallel strand of self-determination for the country has been a story of innovation, excellence and counter-historical levels of global collaboration. But while the big engine of this has been in manufacturing, another very clever industry has changed the way the world makes music.

It grew out of the odd inventiveness of bands like Kraftwerk and out of the Berlin club scene that we heard about last week. And this music culture is not to be underestimated, because a particularly German mindset produced myriad companies, creating software that liberated musicians and composers from the expensive limitations of hardware.

Daniel Haver: Daniel Haver, CEO of Native Instruments.

Mate Galic: Mate Galic, CTO of Native Instruments.

Michael Shirrefs: Native Instruments are not some ethno-musicological repository. They were in fact one of the first companies to see the potential of computers in music and begin to emulate real instruments in software, invent new instruments in software and reproduce entire and utterly convincing orchestral and acoustic ensembles, all using software instruments.

Mate Galic: With the heritage of Kraftwerk and basically everything afterwards, in electronic music, and the strong interest in progressing that music, and people being part of a certain culture, which was also happening during that time, which was techno-music, which is also something that was really started to a large degree in Berlin, things came together. And then with something like the computer suddenly becoming something much more than just a typewriter, it was just a perfect place to be. And I mean, us, we were dancing in the same kind of clubs as the Ableton guys who were also producing music back in the days—a couple of us guys producing music or being DJs as well. So, it was just certain things came together.

Michael Shirrefs: So, there was a very clear climate in Berlin of a whole lot of people just in that right moment trying to liberate themselves and trying to, sort of, come up with the new way of behaving, a new way of creating.

Daniel Haver: I believe there is a very strong sense in Germany and especially in its capital when it comes to technology and music; this is two things that in Germany go very well together. You know, and especially computer environments, I mean,

[322] Michael Shirrefs, *Who is Germany? Pt.3*.

Germans invented the computer—or a German did back in the day—and we have a long history in both arenas. And to combine it was only natural because there's a lot of talent in this country and again, in its main city, that create an environment that such products had to come out of it.

Mate Galic: Yes, I think there was a revolution happening here in the 90s. And if you are a musician who is about to progress and who wants to redefine how music sounds you are automatically technically minded—at least in that time. And suddenly people who are not professionally trained musicians, or who have a lot of money, could experiment with creative possibilities that were not available before. And it was like a chain reaction. You know, it started in the very small space of nerds—people who are kind of musically driven but actually already very technical—and from this use case it has grown into something much larger and basically have redefined in the music space, in the way how music is being produced and performed.

Michael Shirrefs: So how competitive is this arena now? Because there are a lot of companies out there doing, not exactly what you're doing, but similar things parallel. Do you need that competition to keep you focused?

Daniel Haver: We don't necessarily need the competition for it. What they make us do is do it faster. This is the main thing that the competition does to us. They give us a little bit of inspiration to maybe get…straighten out things sometimes. Yes, that element is there, I won't deny it, but it's not the key component because again, the pressure comes more with others copying us, learning from us, and if we then are not already again, haven't done the next step then things get tighter.

Michael Shirrefs: However, the real grunt of the German economy has been and remains, for the time being at least, in traditional, albeit very progressive, manufacturing.

Thomas Esch: Yes, my name is Thomas Esch. I am here professor at the University of Applied Sciences and I'm the head of the Institute for Thermodynamics and Combustion—engineering.

Michael Shirrefs: So, why do you think German industry has been so successful even through the difficult times?

Thomas Esch: Yes, the German government puts a lot of money into the education because we don't have any natural resources here so we cannot sell any coal or oil or something like this. So, we have…what we can only sell is the products of our engineering capacity. And education is important in Germany and education from universities, of course. And, yes, that is one of the successes of the high export rate which Germany offers.

Michael Shirrefs: This emphasis on education and on strong skills training caught the eye of a young Australian Labor man, Bob Carr, back in the 1970s.

Bob Carr: One part of German culture is the emphasis they've got on skills development. When I went there and was so enchanted by it in the 1970s, I and colleagues looked at codetermination—Mitbestimmung—that is, worker

representation on the boards of German companies or the involvement of the works councils. We were looking at the wrong thing.

The thing that made their industry competitive was the attention to skills development. We should have been looking in more detail at their apprenticeship system, an apprenticeship for every trade—every trade. For every job there's an apprenticeship. Their focus on lifting the skills, on tending to the skills of their workforce, I think, has given them a competitive edge and I think that needs to be attended to more.

Michael Shirrefs: One of the mainstays of German manufacturing has, of course, been the car industry, with premium German marques continuing to hold high status, even in the explosive economies of Asia. And a perfect example of a car brand that has continued to stay ahead of the game, and of economic pits that have swallowed so many other motoring giants, has been BMW. So, I visited their Munich plant and sat down with one of the head honchos of their BMW i Division. It's the division that's aiming to reposition the company at the head of the sustainability pack.

Manuel Sattig: My name is Manuel Sattig. We're right now at the BMW headquarter in Munich. And I'm responsible for the communication of Project i which has been the basis, the think tank which brought up a brand and products such as BMW i or BMW i3 and i8 concepts.

Michael Shirrefs: There are a lot of automotive manufacturers that are working very hard on exactly this. They're trying to find the new paradigm for a car, a new paradigm for how cars work in an urban environment. So, you're not alone in doing that. So, what does that do in terms of the way you engage as a company? Because BMW seems to be very good at collaborations, not just with other corporations, but with universities. Is that the way a company in this era has to work?

Manuel Sattig: Yes, absolutely. Adding new concepts, new ideas and new services to our original business models means you have to also find new partners. And as you already mentioned, universities have had a long tradition in partnerships with BMW and this is extended to a specific way; looking back at the Mini E project for example, when we started in the year 2009, we ran the Mini E as a test fleet of around 600 cars in countries where…

Michael Shirrefs: So, these are electric Mini, Mini-Minors.

Manuel Sattig: Pure electric Mini models which have only been test models. We produced 600 cars to find out how customers would behave while driving an electric car; so, to actually find out what people need while driving an electric car. And what's striking about that project is that we… in every country we launched the Mini E for a specific test trial, we integrated every partner that has a stake in electro-mobility. We integrated the governmental side, we integrated energy and infrastructure companies, real customers; we didn't have only BMW engineers driving the cars…want real customers. And we integrated as a research partner, a university in each of those countries. So, by bringing everyone who has a stake in electro-mobility to the table and supporting… having a support on scientific research by universities,

you actually make it very transparent, very clear, what electro-mobility needs for everyone who has a stake, or everyone who plays that game.

Michael Shirrefs: Do you feel that this is a significant characteristic of German thinking? Because it seems like not just BMW—companies like Siemens and Bosch—there are a lot of technology companies that are changing the way they operate and seem to be quite trusting of the future.

Manuel Sattig: I mean, I certainly think that we in Germany have a very long tradition of working internationally; looking at how…in how many different countries German companies are producing for example. We are not producing all of our goods in Germany and then export it. Some of our goods are produced locally for that specific reasons, or specific demands in the market. So, this has a very long German tradition. But I would say specifically for BMW this is…you have to accept that the world is changing. You have to…I mean, everyone says, yes, the world is changing, but the striking thing is, yes, the world is changing.

Michael Shirrefs: What does that do to the products…you are involved, as we said, not just in the cars themselves but mobility thinking and I imagine that you are talking to cities and the way cities, new cities, are developing in public policy, in urban planning. I mean, is that also the thing that you need to be involved in those bigger conversations?

Manuel Sattig: It is very important, especially for electro-mobility, to have stakes in the development of infrastructure of course. If you would look back at combustion engine cars and how you would refill your cars at a gas station, you would never actually think that your…the car company has any obligation or anything to do with how you fill up your car. The game completely changes with electro-mobility. People think you cannot just sell me an electric car, you have to guide me through how I'm going to manage electro-mobility because there are so many uncertainties yet at this point for customers.

So, the game actually changed. And by doing that, in order to provide the best solution and the best situation for the customer to really make electro-mobility hit off—or any other forms of future alternative drive-train solutions—you have to talk with people who have all the stakes in electro-mobility. That is, of course, how cities going to be developed. You have to keep a close contact to people, to governments, to city planners, to mayors, but also to companies who are building up infrastructure like energy companies to make that work. If you would cut that rope, electro-mobility would not be as successful as we see it in all the corporations with everyone we work together with.

Michael Shirrefs: Of course, innovation comes in many forms and one of the most striking aspects of Germany is the way it keeps having to deal with the complexities of difficult transition. Now it's not alone in this. But there's a directness with which it seems to face incredibly confronting issues within its own universe. For example, the triumphalism from the West at the end of the Cold War hid what was, for many, a far more complicated reality. Just as not everything in the West was perfect, not everything about life in East Germany was intolerable.

Petra Prieß is a classical musician who grew up in East Berlin. And she still lives close to the old border with her Australian partner, composer Tim Florence.

Petra Prieß: So, of course, the world is much more open now for me and for all of us. What means, especially for me, that I can get all this, especially older music, what I could not because we had not these libraries like I have now in…especially in Berlin. And I can do music with much more people what I found here. And I can listen to more music so, yes. For me, it's…the world is much more open.

Tim Florence: Petra's parents actually just live down the road but since Kreuzberg was the old dividing line with the East, if we drive down our street and keep going, there comes the old border, and we drive a bit further and we come to the house in which Petra grew up—which is actually not very far away in Treptow.

Michael Shirrefs: What about for people of your generation and of your parents' generation? Because I know of one friend whose parents were very well employed, very highly respected in the East and when the Wall fell, they lost their jobs, and the pensions that they had worked their whole life for became worthless. So, they went from being well-respected members of the society to having no real place in the new Germany. And all the wealth, all the sort of security for the future had gone. How common is that?

Petra Prieß: I think these problems are discussed much more in the East German parts, not in the West. I think these are problems…they are not so… [responds in German.]

Tim Florence: They're not gladly heard about. You know, people don't want to listen to them, you know. But they're certainly there. Yes.

Michael Shirrefs: Dealing with these sorts of complexities requires a particularly nuanced level of social innovation. This is powerfully evident in a small area of Berlin around Bernauer Straße on the border between Mitte and Wedding. It centres around the Chapel of Reconciliation, a modest little church with a big Cold War history.

Manfred Fischer: And so, my name is Manfred Fischer, and I am a Father in the Chapel of Reconciliation in Berlin.

When the Wall was built it followed the lines of the borders of the old districts. And so, there was a border between the district of centre Berlin and Wedding. And it…normally it is in the middle of the street. But there they made it along the front of the houses. So, the houses were on Centre district and the pavement and the street was Wedding district. And then in 1961 when the Wall was built and this wall followed the districts, so it ended up that the people living on one side of the street came to another world but the street in front of them are already on this other world. And this is a very special situation because, how can you build a wall between the front of the house and the pavement before? There is no space for building a wall.

So, this street was very special when the Wall was built. What they did was, they closed with bricks, the door. But then you could just jump out of the window. And if you jump, you are already in the West, you are already in the other side. So, then they

closed the windows and therefore this street was so well known because you just could stay and look and take photographs of people who tried to get out. So, this is a very famous…it became a very famous street for something which was all over in Berlin. But it was so extreme in this street. And well, then they put out the people and then they destroyed the houses. The only building which was left was our church and it was called, the Church of Reconciliation.

> **Recording**:
> *In the beginning many people escaped in broad daylight by jumping out of windows facing the western sector of the city. Our firemen were there to help. We remember the woman being held by communist guards to prevent her from joining her family. They even threw tear gas at those who were below ready to catch her.*
>
> *That's when they decided to extend the Wall and cut access to the buildings facing West Berlin. They sealed every window…*
> **(excerpt from *The Wall*, a 1962 American propaganda film)**

Manfred Fischer: So, this street was so…so…so extreme and so famous because we have this special situation, and the Wall was just the front of the houses.

Michael Shirrefs: And you said the church…

Manfred Fischer: Well, when all the houses were destroyed, all the people were thrown out and the houses were destroyed, then the church was the only building left and it was a church in the middle of a death strip and the Wall before and behind. And the name was Reconciliation. So, this was a very symbolic thing. Although it was not built as a symbol, it became a symbol. This is a very important thing for the whole story of the parish, because we always became something which we didn't want to become. It happened.

For me, I never thought that even in summer 1989, I thought it is really impossible that this change will come because right in the summer we saw, in TV, we saw this Chinese tragedy.

Michael Shirrefs: This is Tiananmen Square?

Manfred Fischer: Right. And that if people stand up these systems always strike back, and then the tanks is the answer. And this happened in all the years in Hungaria, in Czechoslovakia, in Berlin before in the 50s. And so, this is always the answer. And what is Berlin? Berlin is a city full of destructive energy. The 20th century for Germany is terrible and Germany was terrible for Europe. So that in Berlin, will happen such a thing, like a peaceful revolution? It's…you couldn't expect this. And you couldn't even… you couldn't…I thought we couldn't hope this as Germans.

Michael Shirrefs: Sadly, the original church, marooned in between the two sides of the Berlin Wall, was destroyed in 1985, only four years before the Wall itself came down.

This left the Reverend Fischer and his congregation with a dilemma. What to do next? Well, what they did achieve was amazing. A modest new chapel on the site of the old church built from the rubble of the old church and set in a field of rye. All of this in the old death strip in the centre of Berlin. But like the reality of unification, the rebirth of this parish was not without its problems.

Manfred Fischer: And so, you will succeed somehow and somehow you will fail. And the moments of failing are oftentimes the starting point for the real solution. So, we failed to get money. So, we found clay. So, we failed to have so much people who followed us. So, we find the good size—only 100 people. The old church had 1,000 places. But at the end; now we have one million visitors, and it shows that this should…could be very interesting for a lot of people.

So, you do something with a minimum on energy and resources, just to have enough brain energy that you can avoid to use too much oil energy. And therefore, we have…in this chapel, we have no heating. It's just a sculpture where you can go in and out and can go in and pray. So, this is the Chapel of Reconciliation as a statement for a minimal use on resources. And this is important for mankind, I think.

Michael Shirrefs: The Reverend Manfred Fischer speaking to me in his office on Bernauer Straße looking out across the Berlin Wall memorial space.

And that's the final in the series, *Who is Germany?*

As well as thanking the Goethe-Institut and the German Foreign Office for making this series possible, I'd also like to thank my three very smart and engaged guides for whom nothing was too difficult; Katharina Daun, Annette Diepenbrock and Ariane Pauls. And Ariane was also my translator in Program II.

And I'd especially like to thank the two women in the Goethe-Institut's Berlin office who aided and abetted me in my crazy schedule: Nisha Anders and Friederike von Saß.

For more information, images, links and details of my other guests, just go to the website abc.net.au/radionational and follow the links to *Creative Instinct* where you'll find a special feature page for all three programs.

I'm Michael Shirrefs. Thanks for your company.

Guests

Mate Galic—CTO of Native Instruments in Berlin

Daniel Haver—CEO of Native Instruments in Berlin

Prof Dr Thomas Esch—Vice Dean and Head of Thermodynamics & Combustion at the University of Applied Sciences in Aachen

Senator Bob Carr—Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs

Manuel Sattig—Project Manager for BMW i Division in Munich

Petra Prieß—German violinist and specialist in early music

Tim Florence—Australian composer based in Berlin

Reverend Manfred Fischer—Parish Minister at the Church of Reconciliation on Berlin's Bernauer Straße since 1975

Further Information

Native Instruments

FH Aachen - University of Applied Sciences

BMW i

Chapel of Reconciliation—Kapelle-Versoehnung

Berlin Wall Memorial—Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer

The Wall (1962 film)—An American propaganda film made by Walter de Hoog

Goethe-Institut

German Diplomatic Missions in Australia

National Press Club of Australia

European Delegation to Australia

Centre for European Studies (CES) at the Australian National University (ANU)

European Union Centre at RMIT University

European and EU Centre at Monash University

Credits

Producer—Michael Shirrefs

Sound Engineer—John Jacobs

Appendix II

Pre-production scripts for Crisis & Creativity

Crisis & Creativity
Episode 1—'In Europe'—broadcast script

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Earshot* program 22nd August 2016 [323]

Producer—Lyn Gallacher
Writer, researcher & interviewer—Michael Shirrefs
Narrator—Helen Morse
Technical Producer—Tim Symonds

INTRO: Hi there, Kirsty Melville here with you this morning—welcome to Earshot. Like many Australians, I'm fascinated by Europe. European stories, history, ideas and culture are so much a part of who we are as Australians. But anyone who's been to Europe in the past year or two will have seen firsthand that it's changing. So, how does that change us? Today, the first of a four-part series we'll be playing every day this week about Crisis and Creativity in Europe.

We're all familiar with the crisis part—the GFC, Brexit, the rise of the radical right, and unprecedented waves of refugees.

But what about creativity in the midst of crises? Can Europe innovate, invent and imagine the way ahead, without falling apart in the process? Because the very idea of Europe is on a knife edge. Actor **Helen Morse** is our narrator and travel guide, and she begins in the heart of it all—Brussels.

Opening question: What does it mean to be creative in a crisis?

LINK 1: Welcome to the European Parliament. We're in the tunnel of languages where the welcome comes in each of the European Parliament's 27 official languages.

This tunnel is in Brussels where the city and the European Parliament is still jumpy after recent terrorist attacks. Security is tight and a microphone attracts attention.

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[323] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, 'Crisis and Creativity—Part 1: In Europe', *Earshot* [Radio documentary and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 22 August 2016) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/crisis-and-creativity-in-europe-immigration-part-1/7658414>.

But what are these walls really muttering about The Brexit? Refugees? The financial crisis?

(GRABS to illustrate all of the above: do not come to Europe.)

(Mix with the video of voting. End with 'take part in shaping Europe's future.')

LINK 2: Europe's future is being shaped, but not just by people inside the European Union who have a vote. It is being shaped by people on the outside—by migrants of all kinds who stand at the border and ask, 'Where are your values?'

(SFX kids laughing)

It's a beautiful day on the Italian coast. Children in Trieste are running in circles around the central Piazza while, in the background, the tourist industry dominates the landscape in the form of a giant cruise ship looming over the traffic and pedestrians along the waterfront. If you stop and listen, you can hear the church bells and the sparrows. And if you turn away from the main-square and head down the windy medieval streets, you can find a Trieste beyond the picture book cliché. You can find people with complex histories and torn identities, like writer and journalist Kenka Leković [pron. *LEK-o-vich*], who was born the Yugoslav city of Rijeka [pron. *re-YAY-kah*], now a part of Croatia.

In fact, these are traditionally Italian speaking regions, from Trieste, south through Slovenia to Pula [pron. *PUH-la*], in Croatia—an area known as Istria [pron. *ISS-tree-ah*]—and then across to Rijeka further east—all this has a fluid history. Borders and control kept changing, from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to Italian rule, to Tito's Yugoslavia and then finally under Croatian and Slovenian rule. In previous times, Rijeka was known as Fiume [pron. *fee-YOO-may*]. In fact, this whole corner of the Balkans is blurred and confusing. But to make matters worse for Kenka Leković, while her books are all written in Italian, they're published in German. So, whatever you do don't ask her where her identity lies.

(GRAB: Kenka: Maybe it doesn't have to do with where I was born... I don't know what I am and don't know if this Europe really really exists.

(drone music)

LINK 3: Even though, for Kenka, Europe may not exist, refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants remain at the border firmly convinced. They are standing there waiting to inherit European values that maybe more of a fantasy than anything else. It's a strange and confusing situation involving more migrants than any previous period of history. But they are organized. They even have their own news service.

(GRAB: Rachel: My name is Rachel... debunk rumours)

LINK 4: One place that offers access to these services is the Hauptbahnhof in Vienna, the central train station, which still offers free Wi-Fi for refugees.

(SFX train station)

(GRAB: Rachel: I spent the week 6th march in northern Greece... very profound time.)

LINK 5: Profound and bewildering. Most migrants can't understand the messages coming their way, as Europe itself seems to be lost.

(GRAB: Rachel: One of the things... where is the country Kosovo? Is it a district?)

(SFX train station)

LINK 6: Despite the confusion, over a million refugees from Syria, in the last year alone, made it to Germany. Already, it's an unprecedented historic movement of people, which played firmly into Britain's recent decision to leave the European Union.

(perhaps insert GRAB: of Nigel Farage)
(could include some Syrian wailing music and then kitchen sounds)

LINK 7: We're now in Northern Bavaria, visiting one group of Afghani refugees in their new home. These boys have travelled here alone and are now being looked after in a rural community not far from Nuremberg. Hazaras and Pashtuns live together here and share a communal kitchen. Back home they would be on opposite sides of seemingly perpetual violence, but instead here they argue about kitchen duties. They are, after all teenage boys.

(SFX)

LINK 9: The rules of freedom are hard for everybody.

(GRAB: Monika: if we want to be convincing... we will already have lost.)

LINK 10: This is Monika Hoenen [pron. *HER-nen*] who coordinates the volunteers in Dinkelsbühl [pron. *DIN-kels-bool*]. She's a local who's embraced the challenge of the new arrivals. She says she has no choice because of stories told to her like this one from a refugee, who wishes to remain anonymous

(GRAB: Mae 'for me …– remember to change voice)

LINK 11: Fear and mistrust haunt many refugees, despite the fact that they seem to have reached safety. This woman from Damascus needs the security of anonymity, but she also needs to tell her story. Which is why we've changed the sound of her voice. When the situation in Syria began to deteriorate this former schoolteacher thought she would take her elderly mother to Jordan, maybe for a month or two until things blew over. That was two years ago, and now she is simply not able to go back. She was eventually forced to make the journey to Europe with her mother and

a brother who suffered two heart-attacks and a stroke. The whole trauma of that trip was so great that it remains a blank.

(GRAB: Mae – Change voice I can't remember getting here... bigger than human brain to understand it)

(SFX Hungary mix from EU Parliament)

LINK 12 –The motto of the European Union is 'unity in diversity'. It's a motto, like the EU, that's under extreme pressure. When countries join up, they voluntarily agree to a range of treaties and charters—such as the Lisbon Treaty and the European Charter of Human Rights. These documents enshrine European values, but when push-comes-to-shove member states can be deceitful. They can and do undermine the grand idea of Europe from within. It's a sleight-of-hand that is extremely difficult to police.

(GRAB: Kenka: the European court... the erased)

LINK 13: Slovenia's erased are one example. The term 'the erased' refers to a group of people whose residencies were cancelled when the country became independent in 1991. After the Balkans war it was a relatively small act of ethnic-cleansing, which Slovenia thought no one would notice.

(GRAB: Kenka: the sentence... from former Yugoslavia)
(drone music)

LINK 14: Slovenia was found guilty of deception because it did not give the erased a fair enough chance to re-register their citizenship. But finally, writer Kenka Leković does not see these instances of state-sponsored cruelty as a reason to give up. For her the European project is in free-fall, but it is still one which aspires to care. And she herself must care. It is an essential part of her spirit. It is the source of her creativity, even when there is no hope and no point.

(GRAB: Kenka: to care... worried what will be)

LINK 15: This feeling is best described by Vladimir Nabokov who, in his essay on common sense writes:

(READING: ... essay on common sense)

I remember a cartoon depicting a chimney-sweep falling from the roof of a tall building and noticing on the way that a sign board had one word spelt wrong and wondering in his head long flight why nobody had thought of correcting it.

This capacity to wonder at trifles, no matter the imminent peril, these are sides of the spirit, these footnotes in the volume of life, are the highest forms of consciousness. In the end it is this childishly speculative state of mind, so different from common-sense and its logic that we know the world to be good.

LINK 16: This... is the wonderfully absurd human capacity for creativity in a crisis.

Crisis & Creativity
Episode 2—'Draw me a sheep'—broadcast script

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Earshot* program 23rd August 2016 [324]

Producer—Lyn Gallacher
Writer, researcher & interviewer—Michael Shirrefs
Narrator—Helen Morse
Technical Producer—Tim Symonds

INTRO: Have you ever read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupery? It famously begins with a childlike drawing of an elephant inside a boa constrictor. To adults it looks like a hat. But years later this drawing turns out to be life-saving, because childlike perception is what helps the narrator escape death in the desert.

Hello, I'm Kirsty Melville—this is Earshot, and today the second in our four-part series on Crisis and Creativity in Europe. This episode is called 'Draw Me a Sheep'—a quote from The Little Prince. But now, it's not the narrator who's struggling to survive, but Europe. And it could be, that childlike perception is the answer. Europe is, after all, an act of collective imagination that needs the help of its citizens to see something that isn't there.

Helen Morse is our travel guide on this extraordinary journey. Standby for a visit to the surrealist museum in Brussels, the refugee processing centre in Berlin, and some passionate use of the vernacular.

IN: (SFX old vinyl) Once when I was 6 years-old
OUT:
DUR:

> I saw a magnificent picture in a book called *True stories from Nature*. It was a picture of a boa constrictor in the act of swallowing an elephant.

Link 1: This is the *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupery [pron. *ex-OOP-er-ree*]. It begins with a description of the difference between adult and child perception. Where an adult sees a hat, a child might see an elephant inside a boa constrictor.

> (SFX vinyl –child can you draw me a sheep)

[324] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, 'Crisis and Creativity—Part 2: Draw me a sheep', *Earshot* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 23 August 2016) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/crisis-and-creativity-in-europe-immigration-part-2/7658422>.

Translation: 'If you please—draw me a sheep!'
'What!'
'Draw me a sheep'
When a mystery is too overpowering, one dare not disobey. Absurd as it might seem to me, a thousand miles from any human habitation and in danger of death I took out of my pocket a sheet of paper and my fountain pen.

LINK 1 cont: The little prince greets a pilot who is lost in the desert because his plane has just crashed, with the question, 'Can you draw me a sheep?'

Translation cont: He looked at my drawing carefully, and said:

(voice from record 'no this sheep is already very sickly. Make me another.')

Link 2: Finally, like a boa constrictor inside an elephant, the pilot, frustrated draws a sheep inside a box. The prince is delighted. This sheep will populate his planet, which is a tiny rock in the sky. On this rock the Prince has rose, a rose that is the love of his life.

(music and sound of Reynold's shop)

LINK 3: On this whirlwind trip around Europe a change in perception is needed. This is a time when an unusual set of circumstances has become an unusual set of problems and where childish speculation is needed to see the sheep inside the box. So where better to start, than in a picture book.

(SFX... to the comic...)

(GRAB: [Reynold] I think at the time... soldier... killed during a mission)

LINK 4: This is Reynold Leclercq [pron. *RAY-nold le-KLERK*]—publisher and owner of a bookshop and gallery, dedicated to graphic novels. It's in the heart of Brussels and *The Little Prince* is a major seller. It comes in all forms.

(YouTube clip—film of *The Little Prince*)

After his death, Saint Exupery's book spawned stage productions, TV serials, movies and merchandise. But there is much more to this work than key rings and fridge-magnets might suggest.

(GRAB: [Reynold] He was a journalist, pilot and writer... what is your pov.)

LINK 5: As well as being home to the European Commission, surrealist painters and terrorist cells, Brussels is known for graphic novels. There's a long tradition here of learning about the world through comic strips... and that's just the adults.

(SFX Pula light festival)

(GRAB: [Reynold] We are convinced... ANSWERS... these books are best sellers)

Link 6: No far from Reynold Leclerq's Galerie Brüsel [pron. *broo-SELL*] is another gallery of a different sort. It is the Magritte Museum... it is one of the most popular museums in the country. It contains more than 200 Magritte works. There are oils, gouaches, drawings and sculptures as well as musical scores, vintage photographs and films.

(ATMOS: Magritte Museum)

Link 7: And of course, there is Magritte's most famous painting ***This is not a pipe***. It is an image that requires a new way of seeing, one that makes the pipe definitely NOT a pipe.

(GRAB: [From Museum] This is the Belgian soul... to feel that you are part of something.)

Link 9: In the wake of the Brussels terrorist attacks, artists from around the world reached for their pens and paint-brushes to express their consternation, their anger and offer their condolences in images that made use of traditional Belgian symbols, such as that of Tintin and Magritte's pipe. Artists from Argentina, Canada, China, Colombia, Germany, France, Iran, Israel, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic and the USA—each contributed works to a web exhibition hosted by the European Cartoon Centre called ***Cartoon heart for Brussels***. One painting with a balaclava-clad, machinegun-toting fighter poking out of the mouth of a pipe was called ***This is not a terrorist*** and another had suicide bombers falling from the sky like rain... both of which reference Magritte.

(sound from Pula light show)

(airport noise)

Link 10: It is a month after the attacks on the airport and the train station and here in Brussels life is returning to a hesitant normal. There are still flowers on the street and people continue to gather at the Bourse [pron. *borss*] to express huddled concern. Parts of the airport and metro are still closed, and soldiers are back on the streets for the first time since WWII. Under these conditions daily life continues but there is a temptation to connect a fear of terrorism with a fear of migrants.

(GRAB: [Reynold] You've got people from the far right... the one about why should I give a Syrian family 200 Euro may give answers I don't know)

Link 11: In Europe right now, the arrival of refugees brings a challenge to familiar notions of nationhood, identity, prosperity and even family. This is not a pipe, but there could be a sheep inside the box. Meet Christiane Beckmann from Moabit Hilft, a volunteer organization that coordinates aid for refugees in Berlin. Christiane gave up a job, a career and a lifestyle to look after that sheep.

(GRAB: [Christiane] I have a new son now... I had more money... not all that stuff)

Link 12: This is her family now.

(GRAB: my name is Fardi...)

(GRAB: Rihad from Libya)

(GRAB: Christiane... globalized economy …)

Link 13: These refugees and volunteers are now off to a demonstration at the Brandenburg gate. They're expressing outrage over the bombing of a Syrian children's hospital where an eminent paediatrician, who was trying to save the lives of others, was himself killed.

(GRAB: Christiane... romantic... I say you are an arsehole.)

Link 14: Back in Belgium, Reynold Leclercq is facing a similar situation. Sheep are not a problem, so as long as they don't eat the rose. A change in perception is needed in order to find a balance. And like the world of *The Little Prince*, Europe's future is in the balance.

GRAB: Reynold... I have a Syrian in my apartment... this guy is just in front of me what can I say to him?

(music)

Link 15: Finally, the Little Prince is bitten by a snake. It's the only way he can return home. It's a very curious way to end a children's book and even more curious, because it parallels the author's own ending.

Antoine de Saint Exupery died in 1944, while flying a reconnaissance mission. Two months before he disappeared, whereabouts unknown, he penned these thoughts and called them 'Letter to general X'.

(Reading:)

First things first, General I agree. The war must be fought and won. I cannot bear the idea that generations of French children should be poured into the maw of the German Moloch. But when that will have been made secure, we will face the problem that is fundamental in our time: what is the meaning of man? To this question no answer is being offered and I have the feeling that we are moving toward the darkest era our world has ever known.

I tell you all this by way of explaining to you how herd-like our existence is here in the heart of this American air base. We wolf our food, standing, in a matter of minutes; 2600 horsepower planes buzz incessantly overhead; we are boxed into sleeping cubicles, three to a cell—but what really matters is that we live in a frightful human desert. Nothing here lifts the heart. […] I am sad to the depths of my being—not for myself but for my generation, which is so miserably impoverished. It is a generation that has known bars, calculating machines, and Bugattis exclusively as the forms of spiritual life, and now

finds itself caught up in herdlike action that has lost all human meaningfulness. […] today we are as dehydrated as bricks.

It does not matter to me that I may be killed in this war. What does matter is a certain ordering of things. Civilization is an intangible possession; it does not reside in things but in the invisible bonds that link them one to the other in this way and not in that way. Suppose we do achieve the mass distribution of perfectly machined musical instruments where will the musician be?

I am less and less sure why I am writing you all this. Probably in order to say it to someone, since I have no right to write about such things. We must not disturb people's peace of mind, we must not muddy the issues. No, for the moment, the best we can do is to turn into bookkeepers and stick to our warplanes.

Since I began to write you, my two companions here in the room have fallen asleep. I shall have to go to bed, too, for I suppose my light disturbs them. (How I miss a corner to myself!) In their way they are marvellous comrades. Upright, generous, decent, loyal. Still, when I see them asleep like this, I don't know why but I feel a kind of impotent pity. If they are unaware of their own anxiety, I feel it. Upright, generous, decent, loyal-yes, but so terribly poor. They so badly need something to believe in.

Forgive me if this dim flashlight, that I will now snap off, has kept you from sleeping too...

Your friend Antoine

(SFX record)

Link 16: Both Antoine de Saint Exupery and the Little Prince recognise their responsibilities. Antoine wants to do his bit for humanity in the same way that the Little Prince wants to look after his rose.

Translation:

'He said: "You know—my flower... I am responsible for her. And she is so weak! She is so naïve! She has four thorns, of no use at all, to protect herself against all the world …" ... "There now—that is all …"'

Link 17: The book ends with the pilot looking into the sky and wondering about his encounter with the Little Prince and wondering if his rose survived or not.

Translation:

Here, then, is a great mystery. For you who also love the little prince, and for me, nothing in the universe can be the same if somewhere, we do not know where, a sheep that we never saw has—yes or no?—eaten a rose... Look up at the sky. Ask yourselves: is it yes or no? Has the sheep eaten the flower? And

you will see how everything changes... And no grown-up will ever understand that this is a matter of so much importance!

Crisis & Creativity
Episode 3—'The unbearable lightness of borders'—broadcast script

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Earshot* program 24th August 2016 [325]

Producer—Lyn Gallacher
Writer, researcher & interviewer—Michael Shirrefs
Additional recordings—Angela O'Donnell
Narrator—Helen Morse
Technical Producer—Tim Symonds

INTRO: The road ahead for Europe is stark. Germany, France and Belgium have become key terror targets, Turkey's in a state of emergency... and the fallout from Brexit is just beginning.

But in spite of this Germany, for the most part, remains welcoming of Syrian asylum seekers. Hello... Welcome to Earshot. I'm Kirsty Melville and today it's the third in our series about Crisis and Creativity in Europe.

Today we're talking about borders... and how the refugee crisis in Europe is affecting the way the whole world thinks about them. Some would say borders are now the point at which democracy comes to a halt. The brave boundary rider leading us through this difficult territory is Helen Morse. Here is *The unbearable lightness of borders*.

In: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is a novel
Out: ... his art proves this to be true.
Dur:

Link 1: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is a novel by Milan Kundera [pron. *me-LAN KUHN-derr-rah*], which takes place during the Prague Spring in 1968. In that same year the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia and the characters in the story witness Warsaw Pact tanks rolling through Wenceslas Square.

(SFX tanks and protests)

Link 2: The Czech Republic we know today came into being after the Cold War, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, and after the redrawing of boundaries within Slovakia. Its existence is testimony to the unbearable lightness of borders.

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[325] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, 'Crisis and Creativity—Part 3: The unbearable lightness of borders', *Earshot* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 24 August 2016) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/crisis-and-creativity-in-europe-immigration-part-3/7658424>.

(SFX Slovenian cello concert)

In Europe, it's unusual but possible to have lived in the same house all your life AND to have lived in six different countries. For this, Slovenia is the place to be. And it's where we are now, in Ljubljana during an outdoor cello festival. Feel free to toss a coin into the open instrument case.

(music cont.)

Link 3: If you were to have lived in six different countries in the one house you'd have been born during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then seen your village briefly become German, Italian, Hungarian, Yugoslavian and then finally Slovenian. You'd speak several languages and whenever another border appeared in the potato field outside your back door, you'd find yourself with a new passport, currency, and postal address.

(SFX applause)

(SFX office atmos)

As well as this you'd have a least two names for places around you and you'd be used to living with contradictory maps, like this one.

(GRAB: This is not the map here actually... remembers them)

Link 4: This map has no borders. It's a map of Slovenian places that are no longer in Slovenia and this is Dr. Zvone Žigon [pron. *za-VONE-ay ZHee-gon*], the Government Secretary in the Office for Slovenians Abroad. He's moving his finger gently over decades of bloody Balkan conflict.

(GRAB: This is a road... stay in Italy.)

(music)

Link 5: Zvone is pointing to a border between Italy and Slovenia that was only resolved 30 years after the end of WW2. Now in the wake of the Brexit, this sort of uncertainty will continue to rock Europe to its foundations. The only stability is a sense of instability. Diplomat Boris Cizelj [pron. *SEE-zuhl*] was the Yugoslav ambassador to Australia, when his country dissolved.

(GRAB: [Boris 1] I've been asked... he is a fine fellow (laugh))

Link 6: Boris compares his situation to that of Czechoslovakia. His embassy in Canberra became Serbian overnight. He warns other countries, to be careful what they ask for.

(GRAB: [Boris 2] The Czech story... we have to go now (laugh))

(music)

Link 7: When the Schengen Zone was first created, free travel within the European Union became possible. Borders between countries fell like dominoes. Now, history is in reverse and the borders are going back up. And the sense of jubilation that followed the fall of Berlin Wall, has turned to anxiety. One aspect of these new border controls, within the Schengen Zone, is that they're a gesture towards keeping the resident population happy, rather than an effective method of keeping illegal immigrants out. Nobody wants to stop trade. One example is the border between Denmark and Sweden—the one made famous by the popular TV series ***The Bridge***. Every day during peak hour, 20,000 people cross by train and a further 30,000 cars. This border now requires a passport.

(Car over border, toll beeps + passport check stamp)

Link 8: This bridge, the Öresundsbron [pron. *OO-res-suhnds-brohn*], is the longest combined road and rail bridge in Europe. The technical designer of this project was Peter Lundhus [pron. *LUHND-huhss*]. He's proud of the structure and all that it stands for, but not so impressed with the newly instigated border controls.

(GRAB: [Peter] I think we are all... back to normal)

Link 9: While bridges connect people and places, borders shut off, shut up and shut out. However, they also embrace and bind at the same time as they reject and alienate. This is the paradox of borders. They determine what we are, at the same time as they determine what we are not. We can only transcend borders, by accepting that they exist. In fact, land borders are the only point of physical contact between two disparate regions—allowing as much for the possibility of geopolitical intimacy, as for hostility.

(GRAB: [Boris 3])

Europe is feudal and that is a problem. Nation states were invented before societies were multicultural and so they don't have a sense of multiculturalism within their definition. Must now have a definition of nation states that embraces layers of different kinds of identity. Ethnic and otherwise. Daughter asks the question why is it so bad... the same question the refugees are asking Europe. It is a somewhat childlike question and so with childlike eyes we search for the answer. Boris wants to know have we changed – has Europe changed since those war-torn years? Yes, we used to go to public hanging for entertainment now we have more respect for human life – but then that leaves you with the question where does that respect begin and end and where and why? Because human beings have limitations – but this is history – what is happening now – a very historic moment.

Link 10: Since the Syrian civil war began, over 4 million people have fled the region and, in 2015 alone, 1.3 million made asylum claims within Europe. There are another 6 million still waiting to migrate. Many in Europe are afraid of these people. Stranded in Turkey they've become bargaining chips in Turkey's bid to join the European Union. But who are these people and what do they want? Do they want something that doesn't exist?

(sound of Turkey buskers on Istiklal Avenue)

How can they assume happiness will follow if they cross a border into Europe? In a sense Europe is a fantasy, even for Europeans. There is a mental border. There are other fault-lines in Europe, as in all western democracies, that exist between the rich and the poor, between the educated and the less well-educated. No one mentions these borders to the refugees, even though they are just as real.

This is Istiklal [pron. *ISS-tik-lahl*] Avenue, Istanbul's main paved pedestrian shopping mall that runs out of Taxim Square. The buskers are a rag tag Middle Eastern mob. They are playing against a backdrop of tourist tat, trams and luxury fashion stores. This is the European side of Istanbul where the artists used to live, but now more artists and artist collectives are moving to the other side of town, the Asian side of town.

(shift in background atmos)

And this is where *ArtHere Istanbul* has its base. It's a space that's run by Omar Berakdar [pron. *oh-mah ber-RAK-dah*]. He started it as an art space for Syrian refugees in Turkey, but he says is not just for Syrians and he doesn't treat them as refugees.

(GRAB: [Omar] I'm a refugee... we are all the same.')

Link 10: Unlike Syrian refugees who are stuck in Turkey wanting to enter Germany, Russian journalist Nadja Vancauwenberghe [pron. *van-COW-fen-ber-gah*] has the reverse problem. She's in Berlin, and unable to get back to her life in Russia, which she says she totally loved.

(GRAB: [Nadja] To make a long story... crazy thinking back.')

Link 10A: Nadja survived sniper bullets and land mines, but not the FSB—Russia's newly renovated federal security service. It's a modern-day equivalent of the KGB. After her story on Chechnya, Nadja, much to her surprise, found herself an 'enemy of the state'.

(GRAB: [Nadja] It happened like that... not fun)

Link 11: Instead of going home, Nadja, like Oma in Istanbul, used exile as an opportunity to begin something new. Her enterprise, founded with her and two friends, is an English-language magazine, based in and about Berlin. It's called ex-Berliner and among other things, it takes quite an unusual stance on refugees. Determined to counter the hysterics of the mainstream media, Nadja refuses to use the phrase 'refugee crisis', and last year ran a story on someone who pretended to be gay, so that he could marry an asylum seeker. All this was done over a period of years to fool immigration officials and prevent an ugly deportation. The article was called *How far would you go to help a refugee?*

(Quote article)

Link 12: Why is it, that repressive conditions produce astounding acts of creativity? Working against the odds seems to be part of the human condition. But another part of this equation is the cross pollination of leaky borders. It's seems to be a key ingredient.

(SFX ferry)

We're now on a ferry travelling between Asia and Europe. It's nothing special. It's just one of Istanbul's regular commuter ferries. Thousands of people make this journey across the Bosphorus every day. But Istanbul is the only city that exists in two continents.

(SFX ferry)

Everyone here seems to have a mobile phone. Yet, in this world of hyper-connectivity, real news remains hard to come by and the two continents that we're crossing between are actually digital and non-digital. The population of this ferry is on a technological border.

(SFX phone)

(GRAB: Engin ident 'I'm Engin... 5 years.')

Link 13: Engin Önder [pron. *EN-ghin on-DEHR*], the founder of **140 Journos** is committed to subversive social media-driven ways of communicating news in a world of state-sponsored censorship.

(GRAB: [Engin] In December 2011... (ADD grab to end... we need to use social media for news)

Link 14: The big success for **140 Journos** came in 2013 after the so-called Gezi [pron. *GAY-zee*] Park protests. These protests have been compared to the occupy movement and the May 1968 demonstrations. They involved 3.5 million of Turkey's 80 million people. And the mainstream media was silent. 11 people were killed and more than 8,000 were injured.

(GRAB: [Engin] Overnight 1,000s became citizen journos...)

Link 15: Now 140 Journos is not only twitter based but also on Facebook, SoundCloud, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp... and for the first time ever they're delivering a news service on the dating website Tinder.

(GRAB: [Engin] Imagine... moral to me)

(SFX tinder)

(sound of train)

Link 16: Finally, we are on a train heading north to Armenia—and a border that remains tragically closed while a dispute about of the definition of genocide goes on and on and on.

(sound of the border between Turkey and Armenia)

Meanwhile, children whose futures are at stake play with bird whistles. This is the Turkish/Armenian border in 2015. The sound is part of an art work by Francis Alÿs [pron. *fron-SEESS ah-LEESS*] is a Belgian-born, Mexico-based artist, whose work turns borders into performance art. This piece is a film called *The silence of Ani*.

Francis Alÿs is also a compulsive walker.

In 2004 he walked along the green line through Jerusalem with a tin trailing green paint. The Israeli general Moshe Dayan [pron. *MOSH-eh die-AHN*] famously drew this border on a map with a green pen after the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. The motto of Alÿs's filmed performance was 'sometimes doing something poetic can become political and something political can become poetic.' His art proves this to be true.

Crisis & Creativity
Episode 4—'The victory of Gernika'—broadcast script

Broadcast on ABC RN's *Earshot* program 25th August 2016 [326]

Producer—Lyn Gallacher
Writer, researcher & interviewer—Michael Shirrefs
Narrator—Helen Morse
Technical Producer—Tim Symonds

INTRO: How does an atrocity become an act of creative transformation? Hello, I'm Kirsty Melville, and it's an important question we're exploring on Earshot this morning.

The Nazi bombing of the Basque Country's Gernika in northern Spain in 1937 is an infamous moment in modern history—it was the first recorded case of deliberately carpet-bombing civilians. But some Basque people consider themselves lucky—obviously not for the death and destruction, but because this awful event had a witness in journalist George Steer, and a champion in the artist Picasso whose painting, *Guernica*, has become a universal symbol of war crimes.

But more than that, the painting's become a way to turn the story of violence into a dialogue about peace. Here's Episode 4 of our European adventure about Crisis and Creativity—with Helen Morse.

(SFX siren and church bell)

LINK 1: This is the town square in Gernika [pron. *ger-NEE-kah*]. The city is celebrating its 650th birthday, and these sounds, factory sirens and church bells, are a commemoration of the bombing. It's 79 years to the minute since the German Luftwaffe devastated this town during the early days of the WW2.

(SFX town square)

LINK 2: The aim of this moment is to reinforce a pledge taken by the citizens of Gernika, to make this small place a 'World Capital for Peace'.

(applause)

(museum REVOICE... thru to child singing)

[326] Michael Shirrefs and Lynette Gallacher, 'Crisis and Creativity—Part 4: The victory of Gernika', *Earshot* [Radio broadcast and podcast], (Melbourne: ABC Radio National, 25 August 2016) <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/crisis-and-creativity-in-europe-immigration-part-4/7658430>.

LINK 3: One of the last survivors of the bombing, who is still alive today is 93-year-old Luis Iriondo [pron. *loo-eess ir-ree-OHN-doh*]. He remembers the bells.

(GRAB: Luis... part one bells of the church)

LINK 4: And this is one of those bells. It survived, even though the church did not. (SFX bell) For eight months prior to the bombing the sound of a bell meant an evacuation drill in stuffy air raid shelters. Even on the day, Luis remembers, he was more frightened of dying of suffocation than he was of being bombed.

(GRAB: Luis: He was terrified... cannot stay here... you know)

LINK 5: Luis's friend had shown Luis a hole outside the city where he thought it would be good to hide. Thripri [pron. *thip-ree*] said, 'No bomb can get you here'. It did seem like a much better place than the air raid shelter.

(after 3 hours... lot of people dead in that hole)

LINK 6: Every Tuesday night at 6pm Luis runs an art class in the heart of Gernika. It's open to everyone, young and old, Spanish, Basque, Indian and Venezuelan. On the easels there are all kinds of images in various stages of development. One woman is even reworking a version of Picasso's famous *Gernika* painting.

(GRAB: art class sfx)

LINK 7: But there's a lot more going on here than just an art class, especially for the children.

(GRAB: art class …here this is kids to chn... catch everything easily)

(song…)

LINK 8: What links Luis, and the story of Gernika to the current wave of refugees seeking asylum in Europe, is that Gernika, in making itself into a city of peace, is doing its bit to try to stop the wars that produce refugees in the first place. It's not just children that these asylum seekers carry on their shoulders; it's the hope of a fairer world.

(song fades)

(GRAB: intro my name is Preuß)

LINK 9: We're now in Germany, in northern Bavaria, with social worker Herr Preuß [pron. *proyss*] and we're inside a hostel, for unaccompanied minors, called Sonnenhof.

(OK here is the sporting hall)

LINK 10: Faruk [pron. *fah-RUHK*] is one of the boys. He's been here 10 months, he has a work placement and he's finding life easier.

(GRAB: Faruk... small company...)

LINK 11: Another boy, Ali Hassan [pron. *AH-lee ha-SAHN*] shows his bedroom. It has football posters on the wall. Renaldo is his hero.

(SFX room)

LINK 12: Ali already plays in a local team, but one day he'd like to represent Germany.

(GRAB: I will show my talents in Germany)

LINK 13: The boys all speak German—Hoch Deutsch, formal German, but play football in the local dialect. Uli Herrschner [pron. *OO-lee HAIR-shner*], the officer for child protection services in this area is our translator.

(GRAB: all the boys are involved in the community)

LINK 14: And there is one more face peering around the corner.

(GRAB: ah Sami come here...)

LINK 15: It's Sami [pron. *SAH-mee*]. There is a quiet smile of relief on his face. He's just signed a contract for an apprenticeship with a heating and climate control company. It's for three years. Three years of security with the possibility of a real job after that.

(GRAB: so he... can stay forever in this country)

LINK 16: After the bombing of Gernika, Luis Iriondo was in the same situation as these boys. No longer able to live in Spain, he fled to France. This experience gave him a lifelong affinity for all victims of war—an affinity that became an action committee with other survivors who were determined to bring the idea of peace to a wider audience.

(GRAB: [Luis]... they met other survivors …)

READ First letter – see below

LINK 17 B/A letter: Luis knows that it's quite likely his letter never reached Kim Jong-Un, but it doesn't stop him.

(GRAB:... there was another letter... but they did it)

Read second letter to Obama

LINK 18: In Spain, during Franco's dictatorship, the bombing of Gernika could not be commemorated. Even speaking about the destruction was forbidden. The propaganda was, instead, that resistance fighters had destroyed their own village. It

took 60 years for German involvement of to be acknowledged. Even in Germany it wasn't spoken about. When the truth came out, many Germans were upset... so much so that there is, in the heart of Gernika, a German instigated peace research centre. Andreas Schäfter [pron. *on-DRAY-us SHEF-tah*] has been working there for 10 years. He came from a small village near Stuttgart.

(GRAB: Andreas... attacked in the same way as Gernika)

LINK 19: Andreas works with victims of war. The current project is with survivors of the Balkans genocide, and his job is to make room for the counter-story—like the fact that 800,000 Serbs didn't want to take part in the war. Talking is one way of doing this, but so is art. Picassos painting of the bombing of Gernika is a powerful example. Initially it was a cry against war, but it became something more. It became a potent symbol, not just for this city, but for the whole Basque region.

(MUSIC)

The actual canvas depicts uncontrollable death throws. There is the horse's scream, the destruction, the horror and there, amidst all the lies, the truth. Picasso, himself, was a sort of refugee. When he created this image, he couldn't have known it would mean lifelong exile. But what happened? Why is this painting victorious?

(MUSIC)

The upward force of this black and white composition counteracts the downward force of aerial bombing.

(MUSIC)

It's an unusual equation.

Downward violence is not as strong as upward creativity.

Victims can be victors, not in a military sense, but in a more innocent, speculative, childlike sense. This is the meaning of the painting and it's also the meaning of a poem by Paul Eluard [pron. *EL-loo-ARD*] called ***The Victory of Gernika***.

(Read poem)

The women the children have the same treasure

In their eyes

All show their blood

The fear and the courage of living and of dying

Death so hard and so easy.

Feeds the devouring fire of hope

Let us open together the last bud of the future

The day will be ours.

LINK 20: According to UNESCO, The City of Gernika is now the 'European City of Peace'. The architects of the destruction, Franco and Hitler, are dead... and Gernika continues.

Appendix III

Transcript of 'The fate of the Common Good'

First broadcast 6 May 2018 on *The Philosopher's Zone*, ABC Radio National[327]

David Rutledge: Hi, this is David Rutledge. Welcome to The Philosopher's Zone. And I have a question for you. Do you still believe in the idea of The Common Good? For most of the 20th century, most of us would have said yes. Yes, to government funded social welfare. Yes, to public health. Yes, to public education, even yes, to public broadcasting, God forbid. The idea was that by elevating everyone, you elevate yourself. And it's an idea that drove the formation of the European Union, as part of a determination to prevent Europe from ever sliding back into war. But today, the future of the EU seems less secure than it once did. And many contemporary observers are wondering if European nations are beginning to lose faith in The Common Good.

Prof. Hans Sluga: I'm a great admirer of Nietzsche, who always said nationalism is a disease, and it has led Europe into many difficulties. And I'm a good European and I really do believe in this Nietzschean lesson.

David Rutledge: That's Professor Hans Sluga, a European in America. He's a senior scholar in the Philosophy Department of the University of California, Berkeley. Born in the west of Germany, just months before the start of the Second World War, Hunt Sluga has a sort of insider/outsider view of Europe, as well as a panoramic view of the political philosophy that undergirds it. Hans Sluga is speaking with Michael Shirrefs.

Prof. Sluga: I think that we have been through an amazing period in the history of philosophy, really starting in the late 19th century and it brought forth a vast variety of different philosophical movements. Everything from Analytic Philosophy, Positivism, Scientism, Naturalism, but also Phenomenology, Existential Philosophy and Critical Theory. So, we have this broad front, and most people look at only one strand or the other. And my concern has always been let's look at this whole movement and see what it means that we have had this powerful rejuvenation in philosophy, which I think has run its course and we are now in a new situation.

Michael Shirrefs: Well, you describe yourself now as a political philosopher. But you've also written that politics and philosophy are both in a state of peril. So where does that leave you as a political philosopher? Does that make your job important or does it potentially make your job redundant?

Prof. Sluga: Well, when we are in peril, political peril, the time for political philosophy it's come, I think. So, I think this is the moment to think about it. It's more difficult of course when things are in turmoil, but this is exactly the moment where you ought to be thinking about where we stand and how to think about, how to conceive of where we are politically and socially... and culturally in the end.

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[327] Michael Shirrefs, *The Fate of the Common Good*.

Shirrefs: Never more so than at this time in America I would say...

Prof. Sluga: Absolutely, yes. So, we can see that here, but it's a crisis that has been long in coming. In some ways I feel that Obama has been an interruption in this. He would never have been elected if the financial crisis hadn't come so surprisingly at that moment, when the election was due. And it, in a way, has interrupted a process of critical dissolution of the tradition.

Shirrefs: So, one of my focuses has been very much about an idea that I grew up with, that I understood implicitly as being part of my social fabric, which we referred to as the Common Good. But it has many different names, in German I think it's das Gemeinwohl. Give me a philosophical definition of the idea of the Common Good.

Prof. Sluga: Well, I believe that being political is an attempt to find a common ground, something we can agree on and that can make us work together to some goal, right? And so, what I called the search for the Common Good is what politics is really ultimately all about. In contrast to other people who talk about the Common Good, I don't think it's fixed. It's not waiting to be discovered in some ways. We have to come to work it out together. So, it's a political process that is necessary to determine what that good is where there are many different options. So, in some societies, maybe security is the uppermost concern, right? And this is what they share as their common goal. And in others, it's more freedom, or it's more progress, or more maintaining of tradition. So, there are different goods that are not fully compatible with each other and have to make choices between them. Working those out is what politics is about.

Shirrefs: Different goods and also different Commons. So, what is geographically, socially appropriate in one area is not going to be a cookie cutter solution in another area?

Prof. Sluga: Yes, so determining who we are is something that is also essential to politics there, right.

Shirrefs: One of the things you said at the end of your book, Politics and the Search for the Common Good, is that the idea must stay fluid, it must be able to change shape. It can't be a rigid concept, otherwise it will fail?

Prof. Sluga: Yes, so I oppose it myself to philosophers like, starting with Plato or we could say and Aristotle, but also contemporaries like John Rawls and his followers, who think that they can fix, once and for all, in a philosophical manner, this is the Common Good. I think this is something that is worked out in the political process and therefore is variable, and has to be variable as long as we are political beings.

Shirrefs: John Rawls is interesting because he bundles up the idea of the Common Good into a larger concept. He talked about the Comprehensive Doctrine.

Prof. Sluga: Yes, so Rawls' conception is, you could say, a two-step one. On the one hand he believes we can agree on formal principles of justice, procedural justice, by which we work out together how to live. But then people will bring to this different conceptions of the good and we then have to still kind of determine how we agree on

those right. He says very little about the second. That's the interesting one. That's the political level.

Shirrefs: The Common Good relies, like any collective agreement, it relies on consensus. And one of the things we are seeing, in many places that were arguably founded on a concept of the Common Good, and in my case, I'm particularly interested in looking at Europe and the European Union, we're seeing those structures start to fail. Are we seeing withdrawal of consensus in the idea of the Common Good?

Prof. Sluga: Well, there's always that danger of course, and that's when, so to say, our political... capacity to be political with each other collapses. When we become totally confrontational or alienated from each other. So, I say in my book that we can distinguish two different situations, both have to do with freedom with individual liberty. We can, as a community, come to an agreement that individual liberty is a good that each one of us ought to have, right? That's an understanding of a Common Good. But we can also conceive of a society, which would not be a political society in my picture anymore, in which people just individually pursue their own liberty and don't care what others do. So, they would be not concerned if others are enslaved, or in some sense diminished. That is not their concern, it's only their own individual liberty that matters. And I think we are in a danger from moving from one to the other here—from a communal understanding of the importance of liberty, to a completely individualistic and autistic kind of understanding of liberty.

Shirrefs: This sort of brings me to one of the people that you write a lot about, Hannah Arendt. In her book, The Human Condition, which I think was 1958, she defined two concepts that I find really interesting, that sort of revolve around this idea. She talks about Worldliness and Worldlessness. Just define those two ideas as s h e saw it?

Prof. Sluga: So, World does not mean the physical environment. It means a socially agreed space in which we can coexist and in which each one of us has a place. And so Worldlessness would then be a situation in which we don't have a common understanding any more of that space, that space has dissolved, and we are therefore no longer in the world—we are world-less. This distinction of course is a Heideggerian distinction, like much else she has borrowed from Heidegger. But in an interesting way she has turned this into a political form of thinking, where in Heidegger, it's much more individualistic.

Shirrefs: There's a real tone in her writing of almost despair, because it's... at that period, 1958, post-war... it is crossing into an era where she is almost describing something that's relevant today, almost a state of being, where society or individuals have no sense of responsibility to their past, and certainly no responsibility to the future. Nothing beyond their lives.

Prof. Sluga: Yes, we mustn't forget that the book that preceded The Human Condition was The Origins of Totalitarianism, right? She very much thought about Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany as models of new ways of living for human beings, but an unworldly worldless existence for her, because it's no longer a reality in which people could freely communicate, interact with each other, but everything is organised and structured. And that's what she was afraid of was kind of a remaining potential. It

wasn't something that had been there once and had disappeared, but totalitarianism was a new possibility that we now have to face.

Shirrefs: It's funny that if you don't have that as a sort of a backdrop to it, her subsequent writing seems extraordinarily apt now. It's almost as if we've gone through a cycle, or the thing that she most feared had a hiatus and is now quite present.

Prof. Sluga: Yes. I mean I think that she has total relevance and when I read her with my students, I think they are very much alert to how much she writes then, or what she wrote then, is of significance for 21st century America, 20th century world.

Shirrefs: One of the things, talking about the idea of the individual vs. the world, the collective society, something that seems to come up a lot for me is noticing a shift, over a period of some decades, from a society of citizens to a society of consumers. So that what you have is a thoroughly commodified society where you have a credit card, you passively sit back and wait to be serviced. But there is no sense of reciprocal responsibility to the wider organism. So, whereas once upon a time you had rights, but you had responsibilities as a citizen. Is that part of what she was describing or is that a sort of a separate almost dystopia?

Prof. Sluga: No, when she talks about this emergence of society as she calls it, it's a society of labor but also of consumerism. She is very much aware of us turning into workers, on the one hand, who make money, and then on the other hand people spend money and that's all there is left to our social existence. So, yes this was definitely a concern of hers I would say.

Shirrefs: So, it's a very reductive state, it's a state that says our world exists only in purely monetary economic terms, as opposed to social economic terms.

Prof. Sluga: Yes, and of course that made her also a critic of Marx and Marxism, to some extent, because she said Marxist over emphasised this labouring side of human existence. But we have to think also of that other side, that social side that makes us worldly beings, makes us capable of acting and interacting with each other.

Shirrefs: When we look at something like Europe... I mean, I think of the Common Good as having been a foundation for many things that we've grown up to accept as normal, public health, public education, public broadcasting... European Union had one foundation firmly in the idea of the Common Good. Do you agree with that?

Prof. Sluga: Yes, so I grew up in the post-war period and in my teenage years I was a convinced committed Europeanist. I joined a group called European Youth and was very much for European unification. I still am, because I think there are things that we share that we need to, of course, look at and emphasise also, that we share and that are worth preserving and that are best preserved when we work together and have a structure in which we can maintain these goods.

Shirrefs: So, what has happened to that European project. I mean it was founded in ideas of trade, steel, shared wealth. But there was a great optimism about it which was founded in an idea of a collective optimism. What has happened since?

Prof. Sluga: Well, the economic difficulties, of course, have intervened right, of many different kinds. But it's also that we have come to realise that we can't just be Europeans, we will still be Germans and Spanish and Italians and so on. And so, the question is, how do we reconcile this duality or this diversity of our commitments? I personally don't find that so difficult. I grew up in the Rhineland, in the west of Germany and the Rhineland and has always considered itself as quite separate from Germany. So, when German unification came, the Rhineland became part of Prussia, surprisingly, and we called ourself 'must be Prussians'—muss Preußen— because we really didn't want to be part of this arrangement. So, we have always been somewhat separate, and we have that separate identity. We look at people across the Rhine in a different light. We identify maybe more with people in the Western Europe. But at the same time yes, we are also Germans so, I think Bavarians might tell you a very similar story. So, Germany is very typical for this division and these local affinities that still exist. But at the same time, you are part of this larger unity and so we need to learn how we can be both Europeans and Germans and British and so on.

Shirrefs: It is a crisis of identity for many people, to not understand that they can carry these different layers of identity simultaneously. You know, that they can be Franconian and Bavarian and German and European, all at once, and that things don't have to jar. But people do seem to feel very uncomfortable with those multiple layers.

Prof. Sluga: Yes, that's true. And of course, the European Union is inevitably also a bureaucratic structure with its rules. Rules are impositions in many ways, right, or are felt to be such. So, there are also difficulties of a practical kind, that one struggles with. But I think this European ideal is still worth kind of keeping alive. I'm a great admirer of Nietzche, who always said nationalism is a disease and it has led Europe into many difficulties, and I'm a good European and I really do believe in this Nietzsche a n lesson.

Shirrefs: And we are returning to a very bordered Europe. What has happened in Hungary, with Viktor Orban's serious challenge to the value system of Brussels, by challenging ideas of segregation, ideas of free movement, challenging ideas of freedom of the judiciary, of the media. At all these levels he's thumbing his nose at Brussels. And the idea of European Union doesn't quite have an answer for that because it assumed, once you were a member of a club, it was this sort of perpetual transcendence. And this hasn't happened.

Prof. Sluga: Yes, so we all struggle, all European struggle with their past, so the past is always present. It has a long, long kind of tail to it, right? And so, we have that difficulty, I think the British do. They still don't know how European they are, how non-European they are. So, I remember when I went to college in Oxford and my English friends. I always thought, under different circumstances, they probably would have become colonial officials at some point, they would have been going into the world. But there they were now, kind of limited to their own little island, right? And they still hadn't quite lived through this loss of the Empire. I think other European countries have done somewhat better, than Netherlands for instance, they don't hark back to the Indonesian empire anymore, they have done well, right? But I think the British, for instance, still haven't outlived this. And I think something like this is true

also in Eastern Europe in particular. These countries often haven't outlived their own past. But they will.

Shirrefs: You spoke of memory, and memory is, along with identity, is a very important thing. But it strikes me there are two types of memory. There is an historical narrative memory. But there is also a visceral memory. And the visceral memory, I don't think translates across generations. So, you may carry the stories, but the visceral memory that made European Union possible, which was this must never happen again, doesn't translate across generations, and that's a problem.

Prof. Sluga: That's a problem, yes, and we don't know how that will play out. But I'm often reminded of Sigmund Freud saying that neurotics suffer from memory, right? If you remember too much, then that's also bad, it makes you crazy. You also have to learn to forget.

Shirrefs: The problem for Brussels is that the inheritors of the European project are desperately trying to find new reasons for new generations to believe in an idea of European unity. And it is very difficult when all that is known within living memory is peace, relative wealth and well-being, mobility—that all seems normal. How do you revive a memory of a past that was always turbulent, without it becoming hectoring, without it becoming a sort of a didactic way of talking to new generation?

Prof. Sluga: Well, I think Germany and France maybe has done relatively well there. We fought for seven hundred years as you know, ever since Charlemagne you could say. But somehow, we have outlived that and have come to somehow accommodate ourselves to each other as countries. So, that's a good model. I do believe in the Europe of different speeds, of different degrees of integration. I think this idea of one kind of format will fit everybody doesn't work. So, some countries will have to have more independence, will be more loosely associated. Others are more ready to be more closely connected. I think that's the way to go. And maybe eventually that's where we will go, I think.

Shirrefs: I'm wondering then, is there that battle, between our desire for individuality and a collective state, where the collective state exists only under duress, because a collective European Union happened grudgingly for many people in Europe, because they realised that the alternative was worse. But it was hardly what you'd call a gracious acceptance of collectivism. Is that again the case, do we need something that is so cataclysmic, that just forces us to actually gather together and operate in that collective state?

Prof. Sluga: Well, I think there are many of us who live as Europeans right I'd certainly think of myself in this way, much more than as a German. So, having lived in Germany, been grown up there and then going to England, lived there, I feel as committed and as deeply interested in the English way of life and English literature. I read English novels, right? I'm constantly looking at England and seeing what's happening there. And even though they are engaged in Brexit right now, nevertheless I think we have lots in common and we can enrich each other and I'm both, right? I have something English in me and something German and that's good. And there are many people now, many younger people who are like this. You may know about the Erasmus Scholarships, they really have brought this also about. So that people kind of learn

about other aspects of Europe and they begin to understand, yes this is also part of me, but a different part. So, if Europe is anything, it's variety, right.? And we certainly do want to maintain that variety. It would be terrible if it became a uniform nation state. So, we do want this multiplicity, but we also want to be able to see that we have things in common, which we can share, and which can be the basis of acting together politically and socially and publicly as well, right? So that we have an understanding of a Common Good as well.

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