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Memories of Yesterday and Tomorrow: Familial Legacies in Titus *and* All My Sons

When soldiers return home, many people consider them heroes whether the soldiers performed extraordinary deeds or simply served their time, whether they participated in battle or worked as ambulance drivers. Whatever the case, there is a sense that those war heroes should be remembered via some kind of memorial or share their memories with others be they family members or the public. If that soldier is in a situation where he or she returns to his or her family home, what is that individual's responsibility for detailing her or his experience? What memories should that person reveal? What memories should be passed along to be re-told to later generations? What concepts, ideals, and goals do families, communities, and/or nations consider as significant war-time and postwar memories?

Many of these questions have been addressed in novels, plays, short stories, and films. Two plays, written hundreds of years apart, consider the same issues though the wars and cultures seem completely separate. The unifying theme is the concept of the hero and what legacy he leaves for his family. *Titus Andronicus*, written by Shakespeare around 1593 or 1594, witnesses the return of Titus from a war with a neighboring tribe. In 1999, Julie Taymor adapted this play to film (*Titus*); the adaptation reflects a mingling of time periods and questions the ideas of war, memory, economic consumption, and human suffering. *All My Sons*, written in 1947 by Arthur Miller, examines the tensions amidst a postwar family where one son has been reported missing in action. This play has also been adapted to film, the earliest being 1948 when Irving Reis directed it; this film, shot in black and white, uses props and extra scenes to display how memories are constructed.

Before analyzing each film, it is necessary to review some working definitions for the terms honor, heroic code, consumerism, and memory. According to Roger Dunkle, author of *The Classical Origins of Western Culture*, the heroic code, in relation to Homer's *The Iliad*, is defined in relationship to achieving honor. Dunkle says honor is gained through engagement in life-threatening activities (though the hero might be warned against this) and that heroes value honor above life.[1] Several elements determine how honor is achieved by the hero including courage, the difficulty of the test he faces, physical abilities, social status, and possessions.[2] For the purposes of this essay, all elements will be considered, but social status and possessions will be the primary focus as they seem to topple the honor of the heroic code once they receive too much emphasis.

Since social status and possessions will be focal points, the concept of money and consumerism will also be key factors in this discussion. The American Heritage Dictionary defines consumerism as "the movement seeking to protect the rights of consumers by requiring such practices as honest packaging, labeling, and advertising, fair pricing, and improved safety standards." This definition will be particularly important when considering Miller's play and its corresponding film. To this definition, I would like to consider the root word—*consume*—as consumption will become central to Shakespeare's play and Taymor's film. Consume has a variety of meanings including to do away with completely, to spend wastefully, to eat or drink in great quantity, and to utilize economic goods.

Finally, memory is possibly the least accessible term to define as it renders several connotative associations. One could talk about individual memory, collective memory, collective remembrance, or the memory of tradition or legacy. Individual memory, as defined by Pierre Sorlin, is "both the recollection of actual experiences and the recording of information learned from friends, picked up in conversation, or read in books."[3] In these two plays, we will see how individual memory is developed as well as how others work to affect someone's individual memory. Collective memory and collective remembrance are similar terms, but according to Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, collective remembrance is the preferred phrase because collective memory has lost its originality and effectiveness, causing only a "vague wave of associations which supposedly come over an entire population when a set of past events is mentioned."[4] Winter and Sivan define collective remembrance as "public recollection" and as the "act of gathering bits and pieces of the past, and joining them together in public. The 'public' is the group that produces, expresses and consumes it."[5] Both phrases will find their way into this essay; for example, some family members in *All My Sons* would probably prefer "collective memory" because of its vague associations, and "collective memory" will be a source of contention because of the discrepancies of memories.

Lastly, I'd like to consider the role tradition and legacy play in affecting or evaluating memory. Tradition is the passing along of knowledge or action either by word of mouth or repetition. Often times, traditions are those elements of family life that require the next generation to accept not only a basic act but an entire social custom or cultural belief system. Along the same lines is legacy, which is a gift from an ancestor, usually money or personal property. Each of these elements of memory require that the person receiving the tradition or legacy acknowledge their position as the new "owner" with the expectation that they, too, will pass along the tradition or forward the legacy to the next in line. Under certain circumstances, particularly in the family situations of *Titus* and *All My Sons*, this position can be burdensome, causing possible emotion strain and harm to the family members.

Considering these elements—the heroic code, individual memory, collective memory, collective remembrance, tradition, and legacy—*Titus Andronicus* and *All My Sons* represent a current and relevant concern with how families in postwar societies view themselves, their memories, and their futures. War stories handed down from generation to generation promote certain moralities, values, and beliefs. This is not new information. What we do with the memories, however, can be perceived as new each time the memories are revised and revitalized based on cultural influences and individual choices.

Revising memory also could be manipulative—a strategy to promote certain political and ideological beliefs. How would American society today define honor, heroism, consumerism, and memory in light of the prolonged military involvement in Iraq? Also, since the War on Terrorism seems to be ongoing, at what point do we define a conflict as "postwar" and begin to hand down memories and stories? Perhaps the answers to these questions aren't readily available, but they are certainly questions that should be investigated. For the purposes of this analysis, however, the focus will be on stories as living artifacts that don't stagnate; rather, the storytellers utilize memory to alter their own and other people's perspectives as we shall see in these film adaptations: *Titus* and *All My Sons*.

Titus the Hero: Misguided by Memory

Titus Andronicus is, according to all definitions, a real war hero. He has saved Rome from the Goths and lost 21 sons in battle. He has faced adversity, has courage, has physical strength, and has captured the queen of the Goths, Tamora, along with her gold and material goods. The people of Rome love him and want him to be emperor. Titus refuses due to his belief in tradition; the first-born son of the deceased emperor should wear the crown. This is the first flaw for the hero: he is thinking more about the country than of his family. The decision to elect Saturninus affects Titus' family life as the new ruler chooses to take Lavinia, Titus' daughter, for his wife. Lavinia is already in love with Bassianus, Saturninus' brother, but

Titus, as tradition and duty-bound protagonist, obeys his new emperor, offering up his own daughter. Again, Titus has ignored his responsibility to his family in favor of his duty as a soldier and citizen of Rome. When Bassianus steals Lavinia away, her brothers rush to defend her and allow her to escape. Incensed because of the dishonor shown to him by his sons, he stabs and kills his own son Mutius. Showing his loyalty to the emperor has done nothing, however, as Saturninus scorns Titus and marries Tamora. Titus the war hero has been forgotten.

Titus' heroic status at the beginning is obvious. His brother Marcus welcomes him saying, "And now at last, laden with honor's spoils, / Returns the good Andronicus to Rome, / Renowned Titus, flourishing in arms" (1.1.36-8).[6] Later, a captain recognizes his status announcing, "Romans, make way! The good Andronicus, / Patron of Virtue, Rome's best champion, / Successful in the battles that he fights, / With honor and with fortune is return'd" (1.1.64-7). Notice Shakespeare's language includes references to honor, military victories, and money. Each of these elevates his status in the community enough so that the tribunal asks him to become emperor. But Titus is dedicated to the tradition of royal succession through blood lines and insists Saturninus take the crown:

> Tribunes, I thank you, and this suit I make,
> That you create our emperor's eldest son,
> Lord Saturnine, whose virtues will, I hope
> Reflect in Rome as [Titan's][7] rays on earth,
> And ripen justice in this commonweal.
> That if you will elect by my advice,
> Crown him and say, "Long live our emperor!" (I.i.223-229)

Instead of following the guidelines of Rome's democratic process, Titus' relies on his memory of how the world was run. His individual memory is not a shared memory anymore with the rest of the tribunal; perhaps he has been away fighting the Goths for too long. Taymor's film depicts this temporal distinction through costuming, music, and sets.[8] To set Titus in a time gone by, he appears fully clad in armor from the battles. He is covered in blue mud (as are all the soldiers) as if he were stuck in time, an artifact from days past. When he enters the coliseum, he rides in a chariot while others ride on motorcycles or in tanks. The blurring of time periods places Titus in the past while the other citizens of Rome seem to be moving forward, including soldiers in his own army: they embrace new technology; he remains stagnant.

Part of Titus' processional return includes masterful music composed by Elliot Goldenthal who has taken some of Shakespeare's lines for the captain, translated them into Latin, and has them sung in operatic fashion. The impressive music and

Latin lyrics accompany Titus as he arrives home in the chariot—all elements that position him again in an older world. Later, Saturninus and Bassianus are seen arriving through the streets of Rome clad in black and red leather outfits, riding in cars from the 1940s or 1950s (Saturninus in a '40s car, Bassianus in a '50s car). They are parading through town, campaigning for the upcoming election for a new emperor. As each of them deliver their campaign speeches into microphones out to crowds of followers waving blue and white flags for Bassianus and red and yellow flags for Saturninus, the soundtrack changes from operatic old world to a jazzy 1940s swing. Again, this new world is associated with a change in music, suggesting Titus is living in a memory.

Finally, Taymor has chosen sets that contribute to the overall idea of past and present. Titus returns to the coliseum, the setting for both the opening and closing of the film. The coliseum represents an era when battles (man vs. man, man vs. animal) occurred in front of an enormous crowd of spectators. Mary Lindroth, in her article " 'Some Device of Further Misery': Taymor's *Titus* Brings Shakespeare to Film Audiences with a Twist," mentions the significance of the coliseum for Taymor who "repeats, again and again, is the first theater of cruelty and the first theater that promoted violence as entertainment."[9] Lindroth's statement is interesting, considering the opening scene of the film where a young boy acts out grotesque military battles with a variety of toy soldiers on a circa 1940s kitchen table. All the while, he wears a paper bag over his head and the nearby television casts a flickering light on the scene. The suggestion is the boy has been trained in warfare and violent images through the television. When the fictional fighting ends and the boy's kitchen is bombed, the clown (identified by Taymor in the director's commentary on the DVD) removes the paper bag from the crying boy's head and carries him down a long flight of stairs into the coliseum. A crowd is heard cheering though there is no one sitting in the audience. The pretend battle has fused with the postwar Roman arena.

The ancient coliseum is then juxtaposed with the Square Coliseum[10] in Rome, constructed in the early 1930s for Mussolini during the fascist regime. After the campaign speeches, Bassianus and Saturninus arrive at this building, greeted by the tribunal who has just exited from within. The Square Coliseum represents the new political order and will be the home for Saturninus and his minions, including Tamora, her two sons, and Tamora's lover, Aaron. Once Saturninus is crowned, the action moves inside where the new emperor sits in an oversized armchair made of metal, silver solder and gigantic, solid rivets. The location choice and the use of the modern (cubist looking?) chair remind the viewer that this situation is occurring in the present (or Saturninus' present) where Titus is lingering in the past and Saturninus is in power.

In this setting, Titus is called in front of Saturninus who claims Lavinia for his wife:

Saturninus: And for an onset, Titus, to advance
Thy name and honorable family,
Lavinia will I make my emperess,
Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart,
And in the sacred [Pantheon][11] her espouse.
Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee? (I.i.238-43)

Saturninus negotiates by offering status to Titus and his family. By marrying his daughter to the emperor, the Andronicus family name will be associated with the power of the state. Because Titus is locked into his notion of tradition and believes, as the patriarch of the family, that he must surrender to the emperor's wishes to maintain order and peace: Titus replies,

Titus: It doth, my worthy lord, and in this match
I hold me highly honored of your Grace,
And here in sight of Rome to Saturnine,
King and commander of our commonweal,
The wide world's emperor, do I consecrate
My sword, my chariot, and my prisoners,
Presents well worthy Rome's imperious lord:
Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,
Mine honor's ensigns humbled at thy feet. (I.i.244-52)

In giving Lavinia to Saturninus, it is as if he is offering her as a spoil of war along with the gold and the prisoners. Certain elements of honor within the heroic code have suddenly taken more precedence, offsetting the balance assumed between the elements. Instead of focusing on the needs of the family, Titus is more concerned with keeping his social status and presenting his war spoils to "Rome's imperious lord." His misplaced emphasis on status and possession has created an imbalance, which causes a fracture in his family life.

To further emphasize this focus on status and wealth, Taymor includes a post-wedding orgy after Saturninus takes Tamora for his bride. Party-goers gorge on a floating cake (shaped as the upper torso of a naked woman), guzzle champagne, and consume the bridal feast with recklessness and greed. The banquet is elaborate; Tamora is clad in a gold lamé gown with a gold headdress, Saturninus is painted with gold eye shadow and dark purple lipstick, most of the guests wear gold clothing or jewelry or make-up, and Chiron and Demetrius (Tamora's sons)

thrash about the room, throwing trays of food into the indoor pool. It is wasteful and extravagant: a visual representation of the gluttonous consumption of food, money, lust, and power. During the party, Taymor cuts to a shot of Titus sitting alone amidst some old ruins. Again, we have the division of time between the new political order and the old: Titus' memories of Rome, its tradition, and its political structure are in ruins.

Titus is alone. No longer the recognized public hero, he sits and contemplates his misguided decisions. Chris Hedges, author of *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, says that in postwar, heroes are forgotten. They go off to defend a nation at war, often times killing people in mass and "only have time to reflect later. By then these soldiers often have been discarded, left as broken men in a civilian society that does not understand them and does not want to understand them."[12] The same is true of Titus. His actions are, by his standards of honor and heroic code, justified. He is simply following the rules he recalls where men obey their rulers and children obey their fathers. In following these rules of conduct, he has alienated his daughter, irritated the ruler, and killed one of his own sons. Everyone else seems to be moving on, embracing the new administration including its desire for wealth and power. A new memory is being created.

What was the old war hero to do?

Titus' Legacy: A Tradition of Revenge and Sorrow

Taymor's film enhances the role of young Lucius, Titus' grandson, in the film. Though textually he doesn't speak until the end of the play, in the film, he is the first character the audience sees, and he sees almost everything in the play. As the constant spectator, young Lucius is part witness and part participant in the ritualistic events carried out by Titus. First, Lucius stands alongside Titus as Titus makes his return speech. Lucius accompanies his grandfather to the Adronici catacomb and takes part in several traditions: preparing the tomb, sacrificing the entrails of Tamora's first-born son, burying the dead, and lighting remembrance candles for those buried.

Part of this process could be considered collective remembrance. Titus lines up the boots of his dead sons and sprinkles dust into each one of them prior to their entombment. He brings forth his individual memory and combines it with the past lives of his sons saying, "There greet in silence, as the dead are wont, / And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars" (I.i.90-1). Presenting those symbolic images to the public, in this case his remaining sons and grandson, Titus is creating a solemn memory to be shared and passed along to future generations. It's as if he's saying, recognize these boots as symbols of my children whom I have lost; they are heroes. Young Lucius is a part of this ceremony, helping Titus to remove the covering of the boots and remaining present while Titus speaks.

Later, Titus calls for the eldest Goth son, Alarbus, to be sacrificed. As Tamora begs for mercy, young Lucius stands above a fire with his father directly behind him and helps heat the blades to be used in the sacrifice. Titus uses one blade to cut Alarbus' chest, and the elder Lucius leads Tamora's son off-screen to be killed. While Titus and young Lucius wait, Titus stands behind an altar, passes the bloody blade to his grandson who wipes it with a white cloth, and sips from a goblet. Resembling communion, Titus acts as the priest and Lucius as the altar boy, learning the ritual in order to enact it later. Though young Lucius is not on screen when Alarbus' entrails are dumped into the fire, his presence prior to this step is felt. The audience knows he has been party to the ritual thus far and has no reason to think he closed his eyes at this point.

After the sacrifice, each of Titus' mummified sons is placed on a metal bed, similar to something one might find in a morgue, and is pushed into the wall of the tomb. As the bodies are placed to rest, young Lucius either lights candles or stands next to the morgue-like trays in the arms of his grandfather. As a witness to all steps of the ritual, young Lucius is being trained to believe that this social custom is a natural part of his future. It is expected that should he ever be in a similar situation, he, too, would sacrifice the enemy's first born as retribution for the losses he has endured.

After Titus kills his son and alienates his family, one would think his grandson might abandon him, the tattered old war hero, just as Saturninus and his court have. However, it seems the heroic code has successfully been instilled in young Lucius as he stays with his grandfather (placing family above the state) until the end, even helping Titus serve meat pies, made from the flesh of Tamora's sons, to Tamora (who, disgustingly, eats it before Titus reveals the ingredients). Titus' memories, his traditions, his belief system, and his lust for revenge are the legacies he gives to his grandson. It is now up to young Lucius to carry on the tradition, passing along the memories to the next generation. What collective memory has been called up for young Lucius (and for the audience)? The final scenes of the film attempt to answer this question.

In this scene, the final banquet, Lucius watches as Titus snaps Lavinia's neck then uses a knife to stab Tamora in the neck, as Saturninus gores Titus with a candelabrum, and as the elder Lucius drags Saturninus down the banquet table into his chair and shoves an oversized serving spoon down his throat. At this moment, Taymor freezes the action in a time slice, rotating the camera left to right in a semicircle so the audience sees young Lucius watch his father spit on Saturninus and shoot him, at close range, in the head. Immediately, the camera pulls away to an extreme long shot from one of the upper rows of the coliseum, looking down at the stage floor where the banquet scene has just been played out.

The play has come full circle, back to the old world of the coliseum, but now it is filled with spectators. This is a defining and difficult moment for viewers of the film. Mary Lindroth says, "the real challenge for both the play and the film is to show audiences that it is not so much about violence as it is about how audiences promote and encourage and demand violence. The film does not simply display violence, it also asks audiences to think about their role in promoting that violence."[13] There are multiple layers of voyeurism at work here: Lucius watching his father, the spectators in the coliseum watching the play, and the theater audience watching the film. These are frightening events to be witnessing, especially considering the contemporary issues surrounding the film.

Taymor used a Roman coliseum in Croatia for her setting; the soldiers at the beginning of the film were Croatian police officers; the extras in the audience were Croatians who, one month after filming ended, witnessed the Balkan War. The extras watched, as Taymor states, the "barbaric but so human slaughter of one tribe to another, of one religion to another, witnessing it, silently" and viewed it first hand soon after.[14]

The Future of Titus' Memory

What are the spectators to do with the visual information they receive? Part of collective remembrance, according to Winter and Sivan, is the joining together of "bits and pieces of the past" for a public who "consumes" it. How are those bits and pieces chosen? What will be remembered and passed along to future generations? Taymor's film offers a suggestion.

Young Lucius' home is within the walls of the coliseum. He is trapped in the old world of Titus' traditions and the new world of Saturninus' fascist dictatorship. Lucius has been gathering information throughout the entire play, watching his grandfather perform these rituals, participating to a certain degree, and watching the players of the other administration (Aaron, Chiron, Demetrius, etc.) abuse their positions of power and influence. In the final scene of the play and film, the elder Lucius, now emperor, places Aaron in the ground to starve and die and places his baby in a cage, promising to let it live. In the film, young Lucius frees the child.

He slowly opens the cage as the single baby cry multiplies and morphs into cawing birds and chiming bells. Cradling the baby in his arms, Lucius walks slowly to the edge of the coliseum. Taymor, in the DVD director's commentary says, it "takes a long time to go to the exit." Had the credits rolled over the image, Taymor felt it would have "released the audience." Instead, the audience members must sit and watch this slow motion walk to the coliseum's exit. It is a little uncomfortable. However, the impact and message needs this time to process and sink in: it will take a long time to move away from damaging memories toward a more optimistic future. Once Lucius exits the coliseum, still holding Aaron's baby, the image in the

distance is of a vast, barren landscape and the sun peeks over the horizon. A new day is beginning and Lucius has the next generation in his arms. What he does is undetermined yet hopeful.

What we, as citizens of the twenty-first century and witnesses to war and atrocity, do with our memories and traditions is undetermined. Perhaps we, too, will have the opportunity to exit the coliseum and stride toward a new day.

Joe the Phony Hero: Manufacturing a Memory

Joe Keller envisions himself a hero who has faced a life-threatening situation and prevailed. He, too, encountered battle during war, but he was not on the front line. Instead, Joe worked from his home town, manufacturing airplane parts for United States bombers during World War II. Both of Joe's sons were active soldiers during the war; one came home, one went missing in action. The play begins two years postwar as Joe and his family work through the pain of losing Larry. Though Joe has lost his son, he is clear about one thing: the life-threatening situation he encountered—losing status and possessions—has passed and Joe maintained a thriving business despite the war.

The problem is that Joe not only manufactured airplane parts, he manufactured a memory to hide the fact that he built faulty airplane parts, shipped them out, and consequentially killed almost two dozen American fighter pilots. The mask of memory begins with Joe but filters through his family. His wife, Kate, refuses to acknowledge the possibility that her son Larry is dead. His son, Chris, believes in his father's sense of honor without question. And the neighbors propel this myth through silence to maintain the status quo. The manufactured memory is sustained by all involved. Except Joe's partner, Deever,[15] who is in jail, serving time for the death of the pilots. Deever's children play a role in breaking down the myth and revealing Joe's culpability. Quickly, Joe goes from the family hero to the family villain. The family learns that Larry intentionally crashed his plane because he was shamed by his father's actions, Chris leaves the family home, and Joe commits suicide. Joe the phony hero has fallen.

It is evident from the beginning that Joe is concerned with his material wealth and his neighborhood status. He believes that living the American Dream and earning money and reputation is the best thing he can pass along to his children. He continually mentions earning money to leave as a legacy to Chris. Joe says, "what the hell did I work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' match is for you."[16] The 1948 film, starring Edward G. Robinson as Joe and Burt Lancaster as Chris, adds props and details to emphasize Joe's wealth.[17] Chris enters the backyard from their house wearing a new suit on which Joe comments. They walk to their two-car garage; parked within are two new cars including one convertible. The Kellers have a grand piano in their living room, and when Annie comes to town, Deever's

daughter, they go to an expensive restaurant where everyone acknowledges Joe and the money he brings in. ("Nothing but the best for you, Mr. Keller. Anything you want, just holler for it," says the waiter.) During dinner they eat lobster and drink champagne. Joe's spoils from the war appear vast. Later, Annie visits Joe and Chris at the factory. Annie says to Chris, "Let's leave him [Joe] to his money making," to which Joe replies, "Ah, don't knock it; it comes in handy."

With the exception of the first example mentioned ("the whole shootin' match is for you…"), each of these visual and verbal signifiers of Joe's wealth are additions to the film. Also, the symbolic tree from the play, planted in memory of Larry, has been omitted. Adding these symbols of wealth re-directs the emphasis from the tree as a memorial to money and consumerism as the objects to be recalled and remembered. It seems Joe, along with Kate, hope that the obvious visual reminders of money will overshadow and inquiry into the reality of the past. Both Joe and Kate are hiding behind this manufactured memory.

Kate, in addition to avoiding Joe's shady business dealings, refuses to believe Larry is dead. Her reluctance to let go of Larry infects her entire family so that everyone remains silent to appease her, thereby feeding the myth. Chris is desperate for his mother to let go so Chris can marry Annie, Larry's (ex) fiancée. Chris questions Joe about the situation:

> CHRIS: You know Larry's not coming back and I know it.
> Why do we allow her to go on thinking that we believe her?
> …Do we contradict her? Do we say straight out that we have no
> hope any more? That we haven't had any hope for years now?
>
> JOE: (frightened at the thought) You can't say that to her.[18]

Joe is not willing to dismantle the myth as he wants to keep the forced collective memory in tact, which frustrates Chris. He says, "… we never took up our lives again. We're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never comes in."[19] Chris feels that because this false hope has been pressed upon him, he can't move forward with his life; he is stagnant, weighed down trying to sustain the myth.

Chris Hedges believes that this kind of postwar memory that prolongs hope is eventually detrimental to the individual and the family. He writes, "Memory, even manufactured memory, seems better for awhile than silence. Hope, however farfetched, is prolonged. But the ache over the missing eventually evolves into a single need—the recovery of the body."[20] Kate will not be satisfied until Larry comes home or until someone produces the body. Her family, and especially Joe, is an accomplice in creating this shared memory. This is the memory they will cling

to and tell others, passing it along to whoever will listen and further perpetuate the myth.

Just as Joe aids Kate with her false hope, Kate protects Joe's manufactured memory and goes along with his proclaimed ignorance. Joe continually makes comments about how ignorant he is: "You look at a page like this [the want ads] and realize how ignorant you are."[21] Later, Chris says to Joe, "You have such a talent for ignoring things" (287), and Kate says to Chris, "Dad and I are stupid people. We don't know anything. You've got to protect us" (298). Joe's supposed ignorance is recognized by his family and overlooked by the neighbors. Through silence they support the myth as status quo, yet most of them seem to realize they are creating the myth on a daily basis.

For example, when Annie comes to visit, Joe, Kate, Chris, and Annie discuss the past events when Annie's father was sent to prison. Annie asks Chris if they still talk about her father and the Kellers all say no. Joe then tells of his "homecoming" from jail:

> Everybody knew I was getting out that day; the porches were loaded. Picture it now; none of them believed I was innocent. The story was, I pulled a fast one getting myself exonerated. So I get out of the car, and I walk down the street. But very slow. And with a smile. The Beast! I was the beast; the guy who sold cracked cylinder heads to the Army Air Force; the guy who made twenty-one P-40s crash in Australia. Kid, walkin' down the street that day I was guilty as hell. Except I wasn't, and there was a court paper in my pocket to prove I wasn't, and I walked… past… the porches. Result? Fourteen months later I had one of the best shops in the state again, a respected man again; bigger than ever.[22]

Because Joe called in sick the day the cylinder heads were shipped, he could claim ignorance and innocence of the entire debacle. His lie morphed into what was understood by all to be the truth of the incident. In this situation, the collective memory Joe and Kate hope people have of this time period will be vague enough so no one asks any specific questions. Even hints at continued suspicion of Joe are displaced. This collective memory then allows the Kellers to continue their life in the same house with most of the same neighbors and in the same lifestyle (if not better). To illustrate this, Reis added the restaurant scene to the film.

At the restaurant, a public place, another version of the story is added to the collective memory. Reis adds a character, Mrs. H, who is getting drunk at the bar, looking at Joe and murmuring "murderer." The bartender tells her to settle down,

but after taking another drink, the woman makes her way over to the table. Kate notices her and warns Joe who says, "Just pay no attention to her; she'll go away." Mrs. H. begins to shout, "Murderer!" and the restaurant staff escort her out of the building. Joe and Kate continue to ignore the accusations and everyone else simply complies with their façade to maintain the status quo.[23]

These additions are made in the film to intensify the uncomfortable and uneasy feelings this play elicits. Chris would like his father to be a hero and so does the audience. Edward G. Robinson plays Joe as a robust, friendly neighbor, one who is quick to smile or offer a hug. He is genuinely concerned with the welfare of his family and believes he has worked hard to provide them money to sustain, and even pamper, them. However, he, like Titus, has placed too much emphasis on status and possessions, tipping the scales of the heroic code out of proportion. In the film, it takes an additional outside character to dismantle the myth.

Mrs. H. is the first person willing to step forward and place blame on Joe. The second is Annie's brother George. Neither Annie nor George visited their imprisoned father in years, too ashamed to make any further connections with them. George, believing his father should know about Annie's intentions to marry Chris, finally visits his father who tells him his version of this obscured memory. Incensed, George flies to the Keller home to take Annie away. When Chris refuses to believe George's story, he flies to see Deever, another filmic addition to the play. Only when Chris confronts this outside source does he believe his father is guilty. Joe has been found out. The false memory has been disbanded and a revised memory is about to be formed.

Joe's Legacy: A Tradition of Money and Lies

Joe wants Chris to build a house with the family money; this is the legacy he wishes to pass along to his son. Joe says, "it's good money, there's nothing wrong with that money."[24] Yet there is. It is covered with the blood of the dead pilots, with the guilt of the father, with the feigned ignorance of the mother, and with the shame of the children. Even when Chris finds out the truth, Joe continues to defend his actions with statements like, "You're a boy, what could I do! I'm in business, a man is in business; a hundred and twenty cracked, you're out of business."[25] Still, his focus is on material wealth and what will become of it. His idea of a life-threatening situation is the risk of losing his money, not his family or his honor or his freedom—his money.

Joe transfers his guilt to Chris and Kate, insinuating that they coerced him into making these decisions. He says to Kate, "You wanted money, so I made money. Why must I be forgiven? You wanted money, didn't you?"[26] Becoming even more defensive, Joe says, "I spoiled both of you. I should've put him out when he was ten like I was put out and make him earn his keep. Then he'd know

how a buck's made in this world. Forgiven! I could live on a quarter a day myself, but I got a family...."[27] Even near the end, he is unwilling to give up on his false memory of what really happened, convinced that the new information from George has virtually no bearing the events or what should be remembered. A distinction could be made here between collective memory, which implies the memory has been sealed, and collective remembrance, which suggests an ongoing memory that could be altered dependant upon who is adding to the memory. In Joe's case, he wants that memory sealed.

Joe would like the memory and his monetary legacy left in tact. What Joe wants is what Hedges calls "normalization." Hedges writes, "In the wake of war comes a normalization that levels victims and perpetrators. Victims and survivors are an awkward reminder of the collective complicity. Their presence inspires discomfort."[28] Joe, in this situation, is the perpetrator who is being leveled with the victims. Mrs. H. feels discomfort as do the viewers of the play and film. The other characters do not reveal their discomfort as it might suggest their own complicity. Therefore, those who ignore the truth promulgate the myth, a complicit action of its own.

The Future of Joe's Memory

In the final scene of the play, Joe goes into the house to get his jacket so he can drive with Chris to the police station to surrender. Once inside, a shot is heard and Joe is dead. In the 1948 film version, however, Joe makes no comment about turning himself in. He simply retires to the bedroom where the shot is heard. Moments later, Kate opens the front door to watch Chris and Annie leave the house, saying, "Live." This is a similar message received at the end of Titus: that one must move away from the enclosed arena of tragedy to escape the pressures of maintaining a memory or tradition that is flawed and harmful.

When one hears the term memory or the phrases collective memory or collective remembrance, often times the connotation is positive. Even memories of war tend to have a positive spin. Our soldiers were brave. They fought the good fight. They came away with their honor. They will be remembered for their valor. They protected our country. They fought for what they believed in. They did their job. We will always remember their spirit.

But these kinds of memories, though often true, seem to create a mask to cover the other atrocities that go along with the war. Postwar, people seem to want to forget the nastiness and move forward, to create a better memory that can be passed along to their children, like Joe in *All My Sons*. Twenty-one pilots died, Joe lied, Joe's partner went to jail, and Larry killed himself out of shame, yet the survivors continued to ignore the hurtful memories in order to create a screen of memory to

hide behind. Only people on the outside felt compelled to tear down that screen, and only the people who flee to the outside can break free and begin again.

As the United States, and other countries, pass through this current war, we may want to ask what memories are being created on the inside to screen the atrocities and how people can break away from that inner circle, that vague collective memory, that coliseum, or that house to evaluate the memories and move forward in a hopeful, realistic, and honest way.

Notes

1. Roger Dunkle, *The Classical Origins of Western Culture* (New York: Brooklyn College, 1986), <http://ablemedia.com/ctcweb/netshots/homer.htm> (15 December 2003), 5.
2. Dunkle, 5.
3. Pierre Sorlin, "Children as war victims in postwar European cinema," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 105.
4. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, "Setting the Framework," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Winter and Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9.
5. Winter and Sivan, 6.
6. William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, eds. G. Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin, 2d ed. (1593-1594; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997).
7. Evans and Tobin use brackets to note their editorial decisions. In this instance, they are using 'Titan' from Folio 1 rather than 'Tytus' from Quarto 1.
8. *Titus*, prod. and dir. Julie Taymor, 162 min., Twentieth Century Fox, 2000, DVD.
9. Mary Lindroth, "'Some Device to Further Misery': Taymor's *Titus* Brings Shakespeare to Film Audiences with a Twist," *Literature Film Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (April 2000): 110.
10. For an amazing virtual tour of the exterior of this building, see the following website: <www.hotelstendhalrome.com/rome_vt/palazzo_della_civilita.htm>
11. Evans and Tobin are using the Folio 2 version for the spelling of this word.
12. Chris Hedges, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 86.
13. Lindroth, 110.
14. *Titus*, from the DVD Director's Commentary.
15. To avoid confusion, I will be using this characters last name rather than his first. In the play, the character's name is Steve, but in the film it is Herbert.
16. Arthur Miller, *All My Sons*, 1947, printed in *Best American Plays: Third Series*, 1945-1951, ed. John Gassner (New York: Crown Publishers, 1952), 288.

17. *All My Sons*, prod. Chester Erskine, dir. Irving Reis, 95 min., Universal Pictures, 1948, videocassette.

18. Miller, 287.

19. Miller, 290.

20. Hedges, 133.

21. Miller, 284.

22. Miller, 294.

23. *All My Sons*

24. Miller, 297.

25. MIller, 311.

26. Miller, 313.

27. Miller, 313.

28. Hedges, 117.

29.

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