

PLACES OF PEACE AND MEMORY: ACHIEVING INTERFAITH DIALOGUE
IN MALTA

by

Pete Farrugia

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Pete Farrugia
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Director: Richard Rubenstein, Professor
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the peacemakers.

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I acknowledge my family, friends, and colleagues, whose support and readiness to enter into fruitful dialogue made the writing of this dissertation such an engaging experience. I thank the core team of the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, for allowing me to volunteer and participate in the groundbreaking work they have begun in Malta. Finally, my thanks go to our program coordinator Thanos Gatsias, for his patience and kindness throughout the process, and my dissertation supervisor Rich Rubenstein, whose commitment to the work of peace among communities of faith is a source of enduring inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	6
Chapter One: Finding a Place for Interfaith Dialogue.....	1
Chapter Two: Malta’s Imperfect Modernity	22
Chapter Three: Modes of Memory	44
Chapter Four: Emplacing the City.....	57
Chapter Five: Places of Mourning.....	75
Chapter Six: Catholic Encounters.....	94
Chapter Seven: Towards a Cultural Diplomacy in the City.....	111
References and Bibliography.....	129

ABSTRACT

PLACES OF PEACE AND MEMORY: ACHIEVING INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN MALTA

PETE FARRUGIA

George Mason University, 11 December 2015

Dissertation Director: Professor Richard Rubenstein

The attainment of meaningful dialogue between diverse faith communities is increasingly necessary in securing peace and stability, both nationally and internationally. This comes in response to processes of globalisation that continue to bring groups from different cultural and faith traditions into proximity. These processes have created opportunities for mutual enrichment, and concurrent risks of conflict escalation.

The goals of interfaith dialogue fall within the larger work of cultural diplomacy, which has traditionally been concerned with cultural relations between nations and regional groups. This dissertation shall show that the aims of cultural diplomacy must expand to include programmes of ‘internal’ cultural diplomacy. These must address the presence of non-dominant cultural communities within a nation, accompanied by a re-assessment of national identity.

By focusing on Malta, particularly the capital city of Valletta, the dissertation explores ways in which Maltese culture has rendered certain spaces culturally inhospitable

to such communities. Examining this phenomenon, the dissertation analyses Malta's historical experience of modernity and its impact on Maltese Catholicism. This is followed by an exploration of the construal of national memory and its emplacement within the capital city, with repercussions for the remembrance and emplacement of the non-Christian in Malta's cultural spaces.

The results of this study uncover the need for Valletta, and by extension Malta, to engage dominant Catholic narratives more fully within contemporary discourses of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Such an engagement must be accompanied by a secular commitment to the work of cultural diplomacy. Ultimately, these goals may only be achieved by a transformation of national policy strategies, acknowledging a responsibility to foster interfaith dialogue and prioritise the inclusion of diverse faith communities in Malta.

“Consider the nature of a city. It is a vast repository of time, the discarded times of all the men and women who have lived, dreamed and died in the streets, which grow like a wilfully organic thing, unfurl like the petals of a mired rose and yet lack evanescence so entirely that they preserve the past in haphazard layers, so this alley is old while the avenue that runs beside it is newly built, but nevertheless has been built over deep-down, dead-in-the-ground relics of older, perhaps the original, huddle of alleys which germinated the entire quarter.”

The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman,
Angela Carter

CHAPTER ONE: FINDING A PLACE FOR INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The work of interfaith dialogue¹ is an “unquestionably... imperative practice.”² It comes in response to processes of globalisation, which continue to bring groups from diverse cultural and faith traditions into proximity. This closeness creates opportunities for mutual enrichment and concurrent risks of conflict escalation, as different ideologies interact and come to share limited resources. It is also responsible for the resultant phenomenon of religious pluralism, the practice of coexistence among a diversity of religious systems,³ experienced across the globe.⁴ It is therefore incumbent on nations and communities to find ways of both valuing the individual contributions of each tradition, and discovering places wherein mutual and peaceful communication can be made possible.

By acknowledging religion as a “vital force in the world”,⁵ we must also accept the need for meaningful interfaith dialogue. Such dialogue involves a commitment to engage in encounters with faith communities, frankly addressing risks of violence and dis-

¹ Where interfaith dialogue refers to sustained communication between different religions, as opposed to ecumenical dialogue between the various churches and groups of one religion, as usually used within Christianity. This dissertation primarily focuses on the former.

² H. Pinto, *Foucault, Christianity and Interfaith Dialogue*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. xi.

³ M. Silk, ‘Defining Religious Pluralism in America: A Regional Analysis’, *American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 612, July 2007, pp. 64–81.

⁴ H. Pinto, 2003, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*

covering avenues for coexistence. The recognition of challenges shared in common by faith communities, proposed as a means of coming together for dialogue, must therefore, through sustained social and cultural commitments, come to the fore. This has already begun to happen in discourses surrounding ecology,⁶ development,⁷ and issues of gender.⁸

Also of importance is the theologically and culturally nuanced concept of hospitality,⁹ which is to say the expansion of nationally circumscribed or traditionally exclusive places to reflect the growth of groups and their traditions into new spaces. This maturing understanding of the indwelling reality of the religious Other¹⁰ must, it shall be argued, come to inform our processes of dialogue and diplomacy. Places currently dominated by one group are required to develop new means of hosting, and thus being ren-

⁶ R. S. Gottlieb, 'Religious Environmentalism in Action', in R. S. Gottlieb (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 483.

⁷ See The Interfaith Centre for Sustainable Development (ICSD), and the various projects it sponsors, https://www.uri.org/cooperation_circles/detail/icsd (last accessed 7 August 2015).

⁸ C. Cornille and J. Maxey (eds.), *Women and Interreligious Dialogue*, Eugene OR, Wipf and Stock, 2013, p. 138.

⁹ For more information about hospitality and its key role in interfaith dialogue, see P. F. de Bethune, *Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfilment of Dialogue*, Colledgeville MN, Liturgical Press, 2010.

¹⁰ See M. Gopin, 'Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution', *Peace & Change*, vol. 22, issue 1, 1997, article 10.

dered habitable and hospitable to, members of non-dominant cultural groups and faith traditions.¹¹

These goals of interfaith dialogue intersect with cultural diplomacy's larger aims to bring communities (native or not) together with national institutions, through the exploration of culture as a "crucial key"¹² in addressing global conflict and directing policy. While cultural diplomacy has traditionally been concerned with cultural relations between nations and regional groups,¹³ one must accept that, due to globalisation and processes of migration and diaspora, it is increasingly necessary for a nation to invest in cultural diplomacy that looks inwards, reassessing its own national identity while open to dialogue with other (sometimes very different) cultural communities. The goals of cultural diplomacy must, therefore, include the promotion of varied expressions of culture, alongside the protection of human rights and the larger aim of prioritising global peace through cultural exchange.¹⁴

Described by Professor Joseph S. Nye, former dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, cultural diplomacy is "the ability to persuade through culture, values and

¹¹ M. W. Balcomb, 'Religion As An Obstacle To Peace?', *Dialogue & Alliance*, 2012. pp. 40-49.

¹² J. Fien, 'Culture and Religion for a Sustainable Future', *UNESCO*, http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_c/mod10.html (last accessed 7 August 2015).

¹³ B. J. Hum and B. Tomalin, *Cross-Cultural Communication: Theory and Practice*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, See Chapter 12.

¹⁴ M. J. Waller (ed.), *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare*, Washington DC, Institute of World Politics Press, 2009, p. 74.

ideas, as opposed to 'hard power', which conquers or coerces through military might."¹⁵ Religion, as a defining feature of culture, fits into this work of cultural diplomacy. It presents its own persuasive reasons to engage with core values of integration and dialogue, as one important element in a nation's domestic and international policy strategies that aim to secure mutually fruitful and civil collaboration between diverse cultural and religious groups.¹⁶

Religion is an important motivating force in the expression and transmission of culture,¹⁷ and its potential for promoting processes of peace between groups and nations has been recognised, with differing emphasis on interfaith concerns, by national and private organisations across the globe. These include the Alliance Française, the British Council, Confucius Institute, Goethe-Institut, US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the US Information Agency, and international NGO the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy. To illustrate the impact that is possible through the efforts of cultural diplomacy in securing interfaith communication by expressions of culture between faith communities, one key example from Malta's contemporary history will suffice.

¹⁵ J. C. E. Gienow-Hecht, M. C. Donfried (eds.), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, NYC, Berghahn Books, 2013, p. 21.

¹⁶ V. Depkat, 'Cultural Approaches to International Relations', in J. C. E. Gienow-Hecht and F. Schumacher (eds.), *Culture and International History*, NYC, Berghahn Books, 2003, p. 178.

¹⁷ G. van Pelt Campbell, 'Religion and Phases of Globalisation', in P. Beyer and L. G. Bearman (eds.), *Religion, Globalisation and Culture*, Leiden, Brill Publishers, 2007, p. 297.

On the 3rd of February 2015, the President’s Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society,¹⁸ through its Interfaith Forum and National Hub for Ethnobotanical Research, hosted a meeting to commemorate the International Week of Interfaith Harmony.¹⁹ First proposed by the King of Jordan at the 2010 Plenary Session of the 65th UN General Assembly in New York, the week sets out to affirm the need for “mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue [as] important dimensions of a culture of peace.”²⁰ The national commemoration of the week in Malta offered a statement of solidarity with faith communities through an expression of cultural diplomacy unprecedented in the history of the island; the presidency set out to “extend a message of reconciliation and peace”, engaging Malta’s faith communities in a “tradition of non-violent dialogue”.²¹ The Forum chose to focus “on hospitable friendship, and on that ancient site of human spirituality, the Garden... a powerful shared metaphor, found across religions and traditions [expressing]

¹⁸ A national NGO in Malta, dedicated to producing “relevant, appropriate and timely research by seeking innovative methodologies to engage with society for the promotion of peace and unity.” PFWS, *Foundation Ethos*, <http://www.pfws.org/mt/en/foundation-ethos> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁹ As a volunteer with the President’s Foundation, I was involved in formulating the Interfaith Harmony Week event. I must therefore acknowledge and thank the PFWS for allowing me to access the consultation reports from the event, and the reports from the Foundation's subsequent Interfaith Forum meetings with various faith communities in Malta.

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Sixty-fifth session Agenda item 15, Culture of Peace: World Interfaith Harmony Week*, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/L.5 (last accessed 7 August 2015).

²¹ President’s Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, *Press Information: World Interfaith Harmony Week – Message*, <http://www.pfws.org/mt/en/press-information> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

humanity's desire for peaceful and harmonious coexistence in a world of persistent conflict and unrest."²²

Held in one of the San Anton Palace staterooms and greeted by Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, the President of Malta, the event overlooked a private courtyard lush with winter foliage. The provision of food and drink was sensitive to the dietary requirements of each group, served on the palace balcony while the groups got to know one another in a more informal setting after the official meeting. Participants included representatives from Drachma, a Catholic-Ecumenical NGO for LGBTIQ individuals, and the Malta and Gozo Branch of the Anglican Mothers' Union, who sat side-by-side with delegates from the Catholic Interreligious Commission, and a Coptic monk who represented the growing diaspora community of Syrians in Malta.

Two representatives from the Jewish community were in attendance; the Chabad (a Hasidic movement within Orthodoxy Judaism) rabbi and his wife, and the (self-styled) Admor²³ of Malta and his attaché. Two delegations represented the Muslim community; one from the Ahmaddiya Muslim Jama'at, and the other sent by the Sunni imam who oversees and administers the only official mosque (the Islamic Centre of Paola) on the island. Also in attendance were representatives of the Bahai faith, the Neopagan commu-

²² Ibid.

²³ Admor, an acronym for *Adonainu*, *Morainu*, *VeRabbeinu*, and means "Our Master, Our Teacher, and Our Rebbe". The Admor of Malta represents a group called the United Order of Light, which enjoys no significant following on the island, founded on idiosyncratic principals of Jewish universalism. See Admor of Malta, admorofmalta.org (last accessed 7 August 2015).

nity, and various others. Conversations were fruitful and cordial, centring around different uses of the garden within the imagery and lore of each faith tradition, and the need for peaceful ways of connecting through themes of ecology, especially the importance of safe and healthy green spaces for children.

The methodology moved from an exploration of cultural practices and community memories that surround concepts of environmental guardianship, and images of the garden in each of the represented traditions' sacred texts, to how those practices and memories find emplacement in the living environments currently inhabited by the diverse faith communities of Malta. The first PFWS interfaith meeting was followed up by a series of individual meetings with leaders and representatives from various groups, including the extended Muslim community;²⁴ Jewish community;²⁵ Georgian, Romanian, and Pan-Slavic Orthodox communities;²⁶ African Orthodox community;²⁷ Ahmadiyya and Bahai

²⁴ Consultation held on 9/10/2014. Records available on request from the PFWS.

²⁵ Consultation held on 15/11/2014. Records available on request from the PFWS.

²⁶ Consultation held on 12/11/2014. Records available on request from the PFWS.

²⁷ Consultation held on 27/1/2015. Records available on request from the PFWS.

community;²⁸ the Catholic Interreligious Commission established by the Curia;²⁹ Hindu community;³⁰ Evangelical Christian interfaith forum³¹ and others.

In sum, this was an example of the cooperation that is possible through frank meetings, structured around shared cultural themes, between individuals who, in many instances, had never before met one another; the rabbi and the leader of the Ahmadiyya group in Malta had, for example, never spoken before the Interfaith Harmony Week gathering. Nor had the President ever met with a representative from Malta's growing Neopagan community;³² and all were moved to hear the Coptic monk, Brother Paul, describe his work with refugees and asylum seekers who are desperately trying to make a life for themselves and their families in Malta after fleeing extreme danger in their war-torn homeland.

The importance of interfaith dialogue, and the opportunity for such encounters within the parameters of a programme of cultural diplomacy, cannot be overstated. Not only were connections formed between faith groups that had never before been in contact, but these relationships were built, fostered, and nurtured in a spirit invested with the

²⁸ Consultation held on 22/3/2015. Records available on request from the PFWS.

²⁹ Consultation held on 20/3/2015. Records available on request from the PFWS.

³⁰ Consultation held on 8/5/2015. Records available on request from the PFWS.

³¹ Consultation held on 24/2/2015. Records available on request from the PFWS.

³² See K. Rountree, *Crafting Contemporary Pagan Identities in a Catholic Society*, Burlington VT, Ashgate, 2010.

values of a free exchange of ideas and attitudes, by the direct intervention of the nation's highest office. The force of such a seal of approval, in order to generate goodwill and trust among traditionally distant groups, and sustain national commitment to the project of interfaith and transcultural dialogue, is especially clear in a fissured context like Malta; an island state in the centre of the Mediterranean, caught between Christian, Islamic, and Jewish cultural and faith traditions drawn from three continents.

Therefore culture, and particularly religion, must form a concerted part of national peace-work, and cannot be reduced to a mere footnote in the larger workings of international diplomacy. Studies have consistently shown that not only is religion a growing (rather than diminishing) phenomenon,³³ but that its influence on intercultural interaction is substantial,³⁴ and its involvement in securing societal cooperation is key.³⁵ The need for creative opportunities to build connection between faith traditions, and between faith communities and the state, in processes of mutual empowerment and respect (rather than merely negotiation-style engagements where each side plays off the other in order to secure unilateral benefits) therefore motivates the hope of this dissertation.

³³ R. Aden, *Religion Today: A Critical Thinking Approach to Religious Studies*, Plymouth, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013, p. 85.

³⁴ B. C. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, London, Macmillan Press, 2002, p. 147.

³⁵ J. van Gennip, 'International Cooperation and the Christian Social Tradition', in B. K. Goldewijk (ed.), *Religion, International Relations and Development Cooperation*, Wageningen, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2007, p. 290.

For these reasons, it is important to remember that religion is, and has been since the beginning of human culture, a political and social tool with a “powerful hold on people’s way of thinking, acting, and perception of interests. Consequently, even though the main reasons and issues [behind conflict] may not be of a religious character, religion plays a significant role at times of conflict, especially when different religious systems encounter each other.”³⁶ This shall be shown to have special relevance for the unfolding and highly precarious situation among Muslim migrants and refugees entering Malta,³⁷ and the effaced history of the Jewish community in Malta. At their most basic, all authentic interfaith encounters constitute a hermeneutic³⁸ of listening³⁹ that offers ways of engaging within conflict situations to both mitigate escalation and propose collaborative efforts at securing peace; a chance to participate in the narratives of the Other, where “empathy and personal experience are the currency of interfaith dialogue”.⁴⁰

³⁶ M. Abu-Nimer and D. Augsburg (eds.), *Peace-building by, between, and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*, Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2010, p. 19.

³⁷ A. Nachmani, *Europe and its Muslim Minorities: Aspects of Conflict, Attempts at Accord*, Eastbourne, Sussex Academic Press, 2009, p. 30.

³⁸ Understood as a transformative process of interpretation. See M. Ferraris, *History of Hermeneutics*, trans. L. Somigli, Atlantic Highlands NY, Humanities Press, 1996, p. 1.

³⁹ L. M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference*, Louisville KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, p. 94.

⁴⁰ D. S. Brown (ed.), *A Communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue*, Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2013, p. 13.

Such dialogue takes place not to dismiss the convictions of one and privilege the beliefs of another, but to “uncover, refurbish, as well as innovate ‘concrete and specific practices of peacemaking’ that realistically embody and incarnate the ideals people commonly acknowledge yet too frequently ignore in their actual conduct of life”.⁴¹ It is therefore necessary to create an environment where dialogue between different religious systems and faith traditions can take place and be valued by the national context within which it operates, connected to the culture and community, the lives and experiences, of those diverse groups whose participation is imperative. In Malta, this must necessarily take into account the existing ‘lay of the land’ that has so far hampered interfaith encounters and opportunities for interfaith dialogue.

This dissertation attempts to discover and then analyse these underlying tensions, in the awareness that cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue always take place within a specific historical and cultural milieu.⁴² For this reason, the dissertation shall focus on Malta’s capital city of Valletta, and the memories and experiences of time that accrue in the City, and the ways such memories shape the inhabitation of space and the possibility of finding places for peace-oriented communion. Where the more general theme of the

⁴¹ K. D. Crow, ‘Forgiveness in Muslim Thought and Practice’, in M. Abu-Nimer and D. Augsburg (eds.), *Peace-building by, between, and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*, Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2010, p. 81.

⁴² H. Pinto, 2003, p. 131.

garden, and God's expansive economy (*oikonomia*),⁴³ helped to make the President's Foundation Interfaith Harmony Week session a success, Valletta's story is clouded by specific political expediencies and historical particularities that seem to consistently privilege the ostensible 'official' faith of the island, Catholicism,⁴⁴ to the possible detriment of interfaith communication.

The dissertation thus sets out to explore whether, and if so in what ways, the remembrance and inhabitation of space in Valletta reproduces patterns of power that effectively inhibit interfaith dialogue and possibilities of friendship among faith groups. It is clear that interfaith dialogue must occur through the medium of culture;⁴⁵ for the purposes of this dissertation, this is developed through the spatial emplacement of cultural memory in Valletta. The dissertation seeks to find ways in which interfaith encounters can be made possible within the existing Catholic narratives that dominate Valletta. Rather than unpicking the cultural fabric of the City, it shall be suggested that by expanding these narratives, through access to the Second Vatican Council's non-violent framework for renewed Catholic outreach to non-Christian religions developed during the 1960s, and the application of the community connecting tools presented by cultural

⁴³ The economy of God understood as the divine 'household', and the concurrent guardianship that humanity is called to exercise, in a spirit of stewardship, over creation.

⁴⁴ Where Article 2 of the Constitution of Malta defines the religion of Malta as the "Roman Catholic apostolic religion", <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8566> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

⁴⁵ L. Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture Shaping Institutions*, NYC, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 49.

diplomacy, new spaces for dialogue between faith traditions can be created and sustained in Malta, alongside the formulation and implementation of appropriate policy.

In order to understand this, the dissertation performs theoretical manoeuvres that focus on the underlying ‘imperfect’ historical and conceptual modernity experienced in Malta. This foundation shall be further problematised through the spatial performance of collective memory in Valletta, with resulting repercussions for contemporary negotiations between groups from different faith traditions. Spatial memory shall be analysed as both an example of cultural control, a stage for conflict, and an opportunity for change, in a situation where the lack of interfaith dialogue (and larger operations of national cultural diplomacy) in Malta remains an issue.⁴⁶

Valletta is currently undergoing a cultural renaissance of sorts, gearing up to its position as European Capital of Culture in 2018,⁴⁷ while undergoing extensive conservation and expansion works conducted by major national NGOs,⁴⁸ celebrating festivals and

⁴⁶ The fact that so many of the religious groups had not met one another to discuss common concerns, nor had they been given the opportunity to do so through official channels before the PFWS’s Interfaith Harmony Week meeting, is itself testament to the problem.

⁴⁷ See Valletta 2018, *Mission Statement*, <http://valletta2018.org/mission-statement/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

⁴⁸ Prominent examples have been carried out by groups that focus on environmental works in Valletta (<http://dinlarthelwa.org>), and projects that focus on built and material heritage (<http://heritagemalta.org>).

open-air events,⁴⁹ and instigating renewed interest (at least theoretically) in multicultural integration⁵⁰ and the building of transcultural connections.⁵¹ However, no specific interfaith work is being done with the cultural heritage of Valletta in mind, which is to say, making use of creative opportunities provided by the practice of cultural diplomacy among faith traditions and their respective communities. This dissertation argues Valletta still represents an overarching and closed religious narrative, and its exploitation for cultural heritage, principally through tourism, means that, while it is not being accessed for interfaith peace-building, it is extremely prominent in contemporary processes of cultural management in Malta. The move towards opening these cultural uses of the City of Valletta for interfaith work is therefore not only a possibility but cries out for exploration; it offers wonderful opportunities that should be explored while they are readily available.

In order to find ways of opening this access to interfaith encounters through cultural diplomacy, the dissertation begins by analysing the development of Maltese moder-

⁴⁹ Examples include the International Baroque Festival, Notte Bianca (Malta Council for Culture and the Arts), Valletta International Visual Arts Festival (VIVA), and the Malta Jazz Festival. Each of these represents a major cultural activity located primarily in the City of Valletta.

⁵⁰ See Valletta Living Together: Enriching 450 Years as a Bastion of Diversity, *The Intercultural City Strategy for Valletta 2015-2018* (migrant integration project), <http://www.-coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/Valletta-interculturalstrategy2015-18.pdf> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

⁵¹ For examples of cultural strategies adopted or proposed by the Ministry for Social Dialogue et al., see the Council of Europe, *Compendium on Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, Malta*, <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/malta.php?aid=427> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

nity interpreted in large part through the writings of Zygmunt Bauman, and the realisation that we cannot uncritically talk of modernity in Malta. This is done in order to discover whether and in what ways Maltese society, particularly in its experience of Catholicism, can be said to inhabit a modernity considerably dissimilar to that of its fellow European Union members. The implications of this experience shall be rooted in Malta's Christian foundation myths alongside the chosen glory⁵² of the Great Siege, and the comparable experience of "Fortress Malta"⁵³ during the Second World War, each of which may have made a move beyond static, monologic (one-voiced) retellings of Maltese culture problematic.

The section is followed by an investigation of how the particularity of Malta's relationship with religion conditions the performance of spatial collective memory. The dissertation provides a context for this relationship through a discussion of collective memory, as both a cultural process and bedrock of identity. The exploration of collective memory shall examine both the importance of access to memory, and its construal in social and political narratives. This will be done with particular reference to the theories of cultural and communicative memory developed by memory studies theorist Jan Assmann,

⁵² V. D. Volkan, *Bloodlines*, Boulder CO, Westview Press, 1998, pp. 48-49. Also, see G. Mueller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflections on Healing and Reconciliation*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997, pp. 49-59.

⁵³ A. Stilwell (ed.), *The Second World War: A World in Flames*, NYC, Osprey Publishing, 2004, p. 222.

reworked in order to understand their impact on the way cultural diplomacy through interfaith dialogue may be accessed within the spaces of Valletta.

The dissertation shall then analyse the adherence of collective memory to spatial configurations of place, and the inhabitation of space within Valletta. This analysis will involve an understanding of how places regulate power and the phenomenological performance of place, working through the idiom of place-as-configuration proposed by Michel de Certeau. The section focuses on the processes by which these places perpetuate and frame particular narratives, rooted in Maltese identity and a discourse of Maltese Catholicism, which exclude the integration of narratives perceived to exist outside the borders of what it means to be culturally ‘Maltese’, with resulting problems for effective interfaith dialogue.

Construed in terms of division, in order to establish what is worthy of remembrance,⁵⁴ these problematic emplacements of collective memory can be powerful channels for the enforcement of cultural violence.⁵⁵ Such violence, perpetrated by the arbiters and institutions of culture and history (enacting the role of curators of collective memory), ‘infects’ the very possibilities whereby places are rendered habitable or inhabitable, hospitable or hostile. Difficulties abound when societies privilege certain histories and identities, to give the appearance of permanence and authority while obfuscating or

⁵⁴ See J. Blustein, *The Moral Demands of Memory*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2008, especially Chapters 3 and 4.

⁵⁵ J. Galtung, ‘Cultural Violence’, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1990, pp. 291-305.

obliterating other narratives deemed to exist outside of collective, cultural remembering. This dissertation shall work to show how an awareness of these strategies of exclusion must inform our efforts to achieve substantial transformations of cultural conflict, and guide our efforts to foster dialogue between faith communities in Malta.

The exclusion of certain emplaced narratives implies the concurrent exclusion of certain bodies, through whom the phenomenological experience of memory in the City takes place. This shall be discussed with a brief focus on specific historical instances of Catholic interfaith relations in Malta, highlighting the effacement of non-Christians from Catholic-dominated Valletta. The dissertation shall place particular focus on unresolved questions of slavery during the baroque,⁵⁶ and the troubled history of Jewish-Catholic relations, both of which receive scant contemporary emphasis in apparent contradiction to Catholicism's purported reorientation towards non-Christian religions.⁵⁷

The section shall make special reference to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), from which this Catholic reorientation towards interfaith dialogue emerged, after addressing the work of Judith Butler on mournability, and Emmanuel Levinas on the precarious experience of the Other. Taken together, these themes of dialogue, precarious-

⁵⁶ A resolution, or at the least a frank acknowledgement, of the issue of slavery during Valletta's baroque period is particularly necessary when one considers the importance of the Baroque in today's cultural management, for the purposes of tourism, in the City. More shall be made of this in the sections that follow.

⁵⁷ *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Second Vatican Council, promulgated by Pope Paul VI, 28 October 1965, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nos- tra-aetate_en.html (accessed 7 August 2015).

ness, and mournability shall be read as entry points for rethinking Valletta's continued effacement, in spatial memory, of the non-Christian Other. This shall lead to an overview of the framework presented by the Second Vatican Council, well placed to expand the City of Valletta's narrative and achieve effective interfaith encounters through non-violent means.

The 'knowledge gap' that this dissertation seeks to address is therefore twofold; more generally, the need for cultural relations to expand its traditional remit beyond the sharing of culture between states, and focus on the need for cultural diplomacy to consider communities that reside within the state and yet are separated from (or obscured and effaced by) the nation's dominant narratives. More specifically, the dissertation explores the lack of a concerted response, especially in policy, to the phenomenon of Maltese modernity evinced in Malta's cultural memory, and the emplacement of a monologic understanding of Catholicism in the City of Valletta with resulting effects for interfaith communion. While the City is mined for heritage activities and narratives,⁵⁸ elements of non-Christian participation are consistently undervalued, if not completely ignored.⁵⁹ Therefore the dissertation shall set out to focus on the lack of non-Christian presence in the City's narratives. This work concludes by offering a look at how the cultural heritage

⁵⁸ With reference to the culture resources previously mentioned, given a specific shape in response to tourism-driven processes of cultural management in particular.

⁵⁹ For more about the cultural influence of Catholicism in Malta, see C. Sammut, *Media and Maltese Society*, Lanham MD, Lexington Books, 2007 (especially the notes on p. 63).

of Malta can be reoriented to overcome this lack, understood as a prime avenue for the practice of cultural diplomacy in the City. It focuses on culture in Valletta in order to identify whether, and if so in what ways and to what ends, certain bodies, identities, and memories fall outside the City's dominant narrative, and how policy strategies and cultural projects can address these issues.

This study is therefore of particular significance because it offers a meaningful and as yet unacknowledged link between the experience of modernity in Malta and the construal of Maltese cultural memory in Valletta, with resulting implications for dialogue between different faith traditions, and the practice of cultural diplomacy between institutions and faith communities. By acting on these links, it becomes clear that in order to enter into authentic interfaith encounters the cultural narrative of Valletta must be expanded, and its inhabitation must come to include a sustained commitment to the non-Christian Other. In so doing, Valletta will be capable of honouring and valuing the bodies, identities, and memories of those whose place in the City has so far been rendered forgettable and peripheral.

In summary, the theoretical progression of this study seeks to make this clear by moving through an overview of Malta's experience of modernity, to the way the construction of national memory has taken place in Valletta. This is developed into the experience of memory in place, as the extension and configuration of emplacement (of bodies and identities) within the substance of the City. The dissertation culminates with a look at the

need to acknowledge the mournability, the “putative universality” of humanity,⁶⁰ of those identities and bodies that have been excluded by the privileging of the normative Catholic narrative, before concluding with remarks on the Second Vatican Council’s potential re-orientation of the dominant narrative within Valletta, and a brief review of current policy and recommendations for potential development.

If the move beyond a monologic Catholic narrative to the expansive listening and polyvocal participation proposed by the Second Vatican Council is taken as a peace affirming corrective to the City’s present trajectory, it may transform the way the City enacts and emplaces its narrative without catastrophically undermining the role this narrative has played (and continues to play) in constructing Maltese identity. Therefore, the dissertation shall analyse whether, and if so how, the nature of the City as Catholic must be made to expand, including and sharing spaces with the non-Catholic, non-Christian Other, by an acknowledgement of all who are involved in interfaith encounters through the tools offered by cultural diplomacy.

At its heart, this dissertation asks; what it is about Maltese processes of the remembrance and inhabitation of Valletta that thwarts our ability, echoing Cicero, to find in the religious Other one who is “as it were, a second self”?⁶¹ Indeed, how can we find, through hospitable dialogue with that second self, a means of coming to know and

⁶⁰ J. Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London, Verso, 2004, p. 91.

⁶¹ Cicero, *Laelius De Amicitia*, section 80.

strengthen our shared heritage and cultural experiences? And in so doing, how may we develop policies of cultural diplomacy that aim to secure a culture of peace among diverse faith communities in Malta?

CHAPTER TWO: MALTA'S IMPERFECT MODERNITY

What is modernity? There are many ways of defining the concept, which shall here be given a temporal focus. Whether approached as a historical category or a form of social experience, modernity “entails a judgment concerning a subject’s time and place in history.”⁶² Husserl describes modernity as a particular phenomenological experience of temporal consciousness,⁶³ expressing a specific relationship with the concept of time. The experience of ‘being modern’ is suddenly predicated on a sense of release from belief systems and discourses that do not inhabit the ever present ‘now’.⁶⁴ Modernity, as a process, continues into contemporary Western culture, nourished by the need to define ourselves by the yearning to step outside of history and establish ourselves as reasoning beings, whose dominion has come to include the phenomenon of time.

Just as modernity refers to a certain consciousness of (and about) time, a sense of ‘newness’ about the present, it also embodies a systematised means of knowing. It is a

⁶² P. Nadal, ‘What is Modernity?’, *Be Late*, [web blog], 3 March 2013, <https://belate.wordpress.com/2013/03/03/what-is-modernity/> (accessed 7 August 2015).

⁶³ See M. Philippe, ‘Time consciousness in Husserl and Heidegger’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 8, 1947, pp. 23-54.

⁶⁴ S. Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights*, NYC, Routledge, 2008, p. 70-71.

way of relating to and learning about the world, a manner of conceptualising experience “such that its present possibilities and element of change are seized upon”,⁶⁵ toward the fullness of their development in the light of reason.⁶⁶ The realisation of progress produces an image of the future that serves to negate the seeming solidity and unchangeability of what has come before.⁶⁷ This implies the emancipation of historical time from the (largely ubiquitous) control of Christianity’s eschatological worldview, where the “ultimacy of being”⁶⁸ came to be seen from the perspective of the consummation of history (of time itself) in the *parousia*, the return of the saviour Christ-figure. Modernity attempts to abandon this linear trajectory, replacing “the temporality of salvation and subjection with the temporality of infinite progress.”⁶⁹

Ongoing processes of modernising transformation are formulated by Hannah Arendt as the secularisation of historical time: “now, for the first time, the history of mankind [sic.] reaches back into an infinite past to which we can add at will and into

⁶⁵ P. Nadal, 2013.

⁶⁶ Let us hear the echo of Bauman, who declares that “it was the spirit of instrumental rationality, and its modern, bureaucratic form of institutionalization, which has made the Holocaust-style solutions not only possible, but eminently ‘reasonable’”. Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1989, p. 18.

⁶⁷ R. L. M. Lee, ‘Bauman, Liquid Modernity, and Dilemmas of Development’, *Thesis Eleven*, no. 83, 2005, p. 63.

⁶⁸ C. Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West Vol. 1*, London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2005, p. 280.

⁶⁹ P. Nadal, 2013.

which we can inquire further as it stretches ahead into an infinite future. This twofold infinity of past and future eliminates all notions of beginning and end, establishing mankind [sic.] in a potential earthly immortality. What at first glance looks like a Christianisation of world history in fact eliminates all religious time-speculations from secular history”.⁷⁰

However, the fact is (and Malta shall be shown as evidence of this) that both the use and abuse of historical time may co-exist quite pleasantly with Christianity's self-critical tendencies.⁷¹ Its concentrations of memory, which adhere to the inhabitation of place, present a difficulty only compounded by Western democracies' attempts at secularism⁷² and the underlying, often unacknowledged, force of religion that manifests itself in sometimes confrontational ways. Christianity, as we shall see, is just as comfortable speaking through the language of reason as it is the voice of autocracy or prophecy. One wonders what must occur before a serious ‘turn to religion’ (to complement a human rights-based approach) is acknowledged as necessary in our late modern political and socio-cultural conversations, if authentic dialogue is to be achieved between those who enact violence (and claim sacred justification) and those to whom the role of religion is decidedly contested.⁷³ Understanding the way our historical memory is reproduced, to the inclusion and

⁷⁰ H. Arendt, ‘The Concept of History’, in *Between Past and Future* (1961), reprint NYC, Viking Press, 1969, p. 68.

⁷¹ M. de Kesel, ‘Deconstruction or Destruction?’, in A. Alexandrova (ed.), *Re-treating Religion*, Bronx NY, Fordham University Press, 2012, p. 72.

⁷² T. Todorov, *In Defence of the Enlightenment*, London, Atlantic Books, 2009, p. 70.

⁷³ See M. Gopin, 1997, pp. 1-31.

exclusion of certain individuals and groups, of certain bodies, is a fundamental first step on the part of understanding the modernity of Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, in Malta, and in determining intrastate opportunities for cultural diplomacy and the path of interfaith dialogue moving forward.

In order to delimit the boundaries within which this dialogue does (or rather, does not) take place, we must focus on Maltese religion in modernity. Rooted in Bauman's analysis, necessarily coloured by his experience of Communist anti-Semitism and intellectual interest in the post-Holocaust consumerist trajectory of capitalism,⁷⁴ we may identify four key developments within modernity that justify our dealing with today's realities as a distinctly 'late' development, what Bauman calls 'liquid modernity'. That is to say, a process whereby modernity comes to observe consciously, in fact, to monitor, itself and its processes.⁷⁵ These are "the shrinking of the national state, the spiralling of risk [the instability of the family as an institution, the unreliability of the welfare state, the ambivalence of scientific discovery], the globalisation of capital, and the collapse of European imperialism."⁷⁶ These developments issue out of the destabilisation of the great certainties that rooted Europe's institutions of culture after the World Wars, particularly in the

⁷⁴ See B. Zygmunt, *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge UK, Polity, 2000. The Introduction and Chapter 1 are especially relevant.

⁷⁵ T. Blackshaw, *Zygmunt Bauman Textbook*, Hove UK, Psychology Press, 2005, p. 46.

⁷⁶ D. Smith, *Zygmunt Bauman: Prophet of Postmodernism*, Cambridge UK, Polity, 2000, p. 11.

wake of the Holocaust.⁷⁷ Communities wrestled with the emergence of new conventions, learned to inhabit new architectures of modernity. It continues to be necessary for us to piece together new strategies of meaning-making, in order to survive. However, is it correct to assume that Malta's transitions through modernity are comparable to those undergone by other European states? And what of the place of religion in this brave new world?

I contend that Malta has not followed the same trajectory experienced in even those European nations (such as Italy and Spain) that seem closest in geographical, cultural, and religious proximity. This difference is especially evident in terms of the pervasive influence of religious culture and its images within the places inhabited and the operations enacted by the state, even at the highest levels of executive government.⁷⁸ Malta stands as something of an anomaly among European nations whose collapsing empires, legacy of communism, or well-developed participation in the historical Enlightenment sped up their own cultural separation between those places set aside for religion, and those in which the secular state assumed sole control.

Malta's eras of interdict (the ecclesiastically proscribed exclusion of certain individuals and groups from social and sacramental participation in Catholic life), during the

⁷⁷ Bauman, 1989, p. 83.

⁷⁸ More shall be made of this; for now, it will suffice to remark on the fact that every Prime Minister (with the notable exception of one, whose government barely lasted two years) in post-independence Malta has kissed a crucifix during the ceremony whereby he (there has, as yet, never been a non-male identifying PM) is sworn into office.

governments of Lord Strickland⁷⁹ and Dom Mintoff⁸⁰ respectively, stand out as periods of particular conflict between church and state. The Church in Malta insinuated itself into the political life of the country in such a way as to make their separation effectively impossible. Unlike Italy and Spain however, Maltese Catholicism was never conflated with the kinds of fascist extremism and warfare that would have rendered the persistence of a political Catholic cult of the nation completely untenable. One can only speculate what might have happened had a figure comparable to il Duce⁸¹ or Franco⁸² made use of the

⁷⁹ Where those who voted for the progressive Constitutional Party and Labour Party, between 1930-1933, were not only interdicted in life, but refused burial on sacred ground. See S. Sciberras, *Maltese History: Church-State Relations*, 2010, http://www.stbenedict-college.org/stlucija/files/Sandro%20Sciberras/Form%204%20Option%20Maltese%20History/2_%20Church-State%20Relations.pdf (accessed 7 August 2015).

⁸⁰ Between 1961 and 1969 (during the ‘modernising renaissance’ promised by the Second Vatican Council) Maltese citizens who voted for the Labour Party were interdicted. Indeed, voting for the party was construed as a mortal sin, with all the weight of social ostracism and fear of damnation that such a (literal, according to the tenets of Catholicism) fall from grace implies. See H. Grech and K. Sansone, ‘Bricked by Interdiction’, *Sunday Times of Malta*, 10 April 2011, <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110410/local/bricked-by-interdiction.359220> (accessed 7 August 2015).

⁸¹ Mussolini effectively constructed a syncretistic ideology, which empowered his fascist regime through the manipulation of religious and cultural registers in Italian Catholicism. See J. Nelis, A. Morelli, D. Praet, *Catholicism and Fascism in Europe 1918-1945*, Frankfurt, OLMS, 2015, pp. 22-23.

⁸² Where the force of modernity was allied to a Catholic national identity, exemplified by Franco’s rhetorical use of the “cause of Christianity and... civilisation” as an excuse for “nationalist brutalities”, which created a terrible rift within the cultural life of Spain. M. J. Kerlin, ‘Anti-Modernism and the elective affinity between Politics and Philosophy’, in D. Jodock (ed.), *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 328.

raw imagery and fervour of Maltese Catholicism. Such as it is, modernity and Catholicism in Malta were never torn apart so forcibly; because of Malta's position as a British colony, modernity and the Church in Malta were never made to confront one another in the darkening mirror of wartime violence.

Malta's experience of modernity is perhaps more similar to that of certain regions in the United States, in one salient way; modernity came to be conflated with religious expression, and not its undoing.⁸³ Malta remains, in its memory, as "Christ-haunted"⁸⁴ as any state south of the Mason-Dixon line; the defining difference is that Malta gains religious identity from the Catholic tradition's sense of its own timelessness, grounded on hierarchical power structures and magisterially imposed dogma, and not a Protestant sensibility of progress, renewal, and individualistic responsibility.⁸⁵ Maltese discourses are coloured by the invective of religion even as the nation puts on the costume of social progressivism; its ceremonies are linked to the rituals of the Church, its spaces crossed by the long shadows cast by church towers. Laws may change, but attitudes are far more difficult to transform. The difficulty in changing cultural attitudes is plain in the realities of space within which bodies pass, upon which narratives adhere, and by which they are

⁸³ J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 161-162.

⁸⁴ F. O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, NYC, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.

⁸⁵ A. Porterfield, *The Protestant Experience in America*, Santa Barbara CA, Greenwood, 2006, p. 106.

regulated in instances of cultural restriction and the resulting threats of violence we shall now explore.

Valletta, the capital city of Malta (commonly called *il-Belt*, the City) is built on a grid-like plan, unlike other more organic capitals. The City is a fortress "of palaces built by gentlemen for gentlemen",⁸⁶ in physical expression of the needs for conspicuous security, power, and affluence of an Order of "monk-knights".⁸⁷ It was officially named *Humilissima Civitas Valletta*, the Most Humble City of Valletta; the irony was not lost on visitors, and the City was soon known as *Superbissima* - Most Proud.⁸⁸ Indeed, the local Maltese are reported to have commented, on seeing the newly built City, that there "will come a time when every piece of land [in Valletta] will be worth its weight in gold."⁸⁹ Considering today's prohibitive property prices and rising cost-of-living, their premonitions were well placed.

To discover the processes of memory endured by places as they exist today within this Humble-yet-Proud City, we must acknowledge the ways in which it references a pe-

⁸⁶ A remark made by Benjamin Disraeli, on his first visit to Malta. See U. J. Rudolf and W. G. Berg, *Historical Dictionary of Malta*, 2nd edn., Plymouth UK, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, p. 54.

⁸⁷ C. Jones, G. Wainwright, and E. Yarnold, *The Study of Spirituality*, Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 289.

⁸⁸ F. Balbi, *Francesco Balbi di Correggio: The Siege of Malta*, trans. E. Bradford, London, Folio Society, 1965, p. 19.

⁸⁹ M. Cassar, 'L-Istorja tal-Ilsien Malti' (*The History of the Maltese Language*), www.akkademjatalmalti.com/page.asp?p=9023#1600 (accessed 7 August 2015).

riod some two centuries subsequent to the City's foundation. In particular, Malta's embrace of its (troubled and never entirely believable) claims to an undisputedly European identity.⁹⁰ This obsession with appearing European, in mode and manner as much as religion, inevitably accrued the aura of Enlightenment thought, even as it maintained an ostensibly baroque, even feudal, sensibility.⁹¹ Yet the City was itself transformed and continues today to display itself by reference to those underlying discourses of modernity, of which we must become more aware.

If to be 'modern' (let alone late, or post, modern) is to participate in these discourses of secularisation,⁹² one must remember that on a social level, change in Malta has taken a tortuous and somewhat belated trajectory. Divorce legislation was only introduced in 2011 (replacing the status quo of Church-sanctioned annulments, dished out by the ecclesiastical tribunal arm-in-arm with the state); civil unions in 2014; respect for the self-determination of gender identity and bodily autonomy in 2015; and abortion is still not only (de jure) illegal, a situation that is unique in the EU, but the topic of reproductive

⁹⁰ M. Cini, 'The Europeanisation of Malta: Adaption, Identity and Party Politics', in K. Featherstone and G. Kazamias, *Europeanisation and the Southern Periphery*, London, Frank Cass Publishers, p. 272.

⁹¹ S. Goodwin, *Malta, Mediterranean Bridge*, Westport CT, Greenwood, 2002, p. 76.

⁹² M. Snape and C. G. Brown (eds.), *Secularisation in the Christian World*, Farnham UK, Ashgate, 2010, p. 1-2.

health is itself seldom seriously discussed without tremendous outcry from all Catholic quarters, drowning out the possibility of dialogue.⁹³

Cultural instances of Catholicism form the weft and warp of the fabric of Maltese identity, and the ongoing manufacture of Maltese heritage is deeply embedded in this phenomenon of ‘cultural Catholicism’. Today monetised and professionalised as ‘cultural heritage’, institutions of culture in Malta package their narratives for the consumption of tourists and locals alike. One of the key word-associations the national marketing authority elicited from visitors to Malta is, in fact, “culture” (second only to “welcoming”).⁹⁴ The maddening repurposing and recycling of religion-as-culture continues unabated in historical cities across Europe,⁹⁵ and because of its historical specificities, achieves particular piquancy in Malta.

It is not the intention of this work to offer a historical analysis of modernity in Malta, although one imagines that much more needs to be said by Malta's historians about colonial pressure's effects on national religion. For example, there is far more to be

⁹³ R. Vassallo, ‘Let’s discuss abortion. Oh no, wait...’, *MaltaToday*, 2 December 2014, http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/comment/blogs/46965/lets_discuss_abortion_o-h_no_wait#.VctRiCS6hE4 (accessed 7 August 2015).

⁹⁴ Malta Tourism Authority, *Tourism in Malta: Edition 2015*, Malta, MTA, 2015, p. 14.

⁹⁵ S. Ferrari, ‘Law and Religion in Europe’, in L. Christoffersen et al. (eds.), *Religion in the 21st Century: Challenges and Transformations*, Farnham UK, Ashgate, 2010, p. 150.

said about the results of that effective “apartheid”⁹⁶ practiced by the Protestant British in Malta, and the resultant emphasis on Catholicism as a defining distinction; a noted occurrence between highly exclusive groups.⁹⁷ The intention of this dissertation is rather to root the modern experience of place in Maltese collective memory, and the way these memories are formed as a direct result of interpretations of events and their corresponding emplacement, with resulting effects on the practice of cultural diplomacy to foster interfaith dialogue.

In all of this, it is important to achieve some understanding of the definitive role of the Second World War,⁹⁸ and Malta’s time as a crown colony. It was after the War that processes of social, cultural, and political change accelerated, in response to the “perceived loss of origins”, the “destruction through totalitarianism, war, and genocide”⁹⁹ that left Europe and its dependencies bereft of certitude and rendered old convictions untenable. It was at this time, against the backdrop of British Protestantism, that the Maltese

⁹⁶ C. Cassar, ‘Everyday Life in Malta in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, in V. Mallia-Milanes (ed.), *The British Colonial Experience, 1800-1964: The Impact on Maltese Society*, Malta, Minerva Press, 1988, p. 120.

⁹⁷ C. Stangor, *Social Groups in Action and Interaction*, Hove UK, Psychology Press, 2004, p. 329.

⁹⁸ For a more comprehensive look at the cultural context of the Second World War in Malta, see I. Callus and C. Thake (eds.), *Malta at War in Cultural Memory: Representations of “The Madonna’s Chosen People”*, Malta, University of Malta Press, 2005.

⁹⁹ P. Wagner, *Modernity as Experience and Interpretation: A New Sociology of Modernity*, Cambridge UK, Polity Press, 2008, p. 210.

came to think of themselves as “the Madonna’s chosen people”,¹⁰⁰ entering into a special covenant with Saint Mary, a figure held up by Catholicism as “mother of the members of Christ... mother of the Church”.¹⁰¹

These exigencies casts a particular complexion on the intertwining of religion and the Second World War in Maltese popular consciousness. No less than seven of Valletta’s principal churches are dedicated to Saint Mary, under various titles and devotional honours; of these the most interesting is Our Lady of Victories, where the cornerstone of Valletta was placed in 1566. The church was named in honour of the Knights’ ‘victory’ over the Muslim Turks during the Great Siege. Echoing this rhetoric of victory, the story of the ‘Santa Marija Convoy’ (Operation Pedestal)¹⁰² continues to be celebrated by the Maltese each year. The feast is framed as a story of Maltese agony (the struggle to survive without essential supplies) and rewarded faithfulness (supplies only entered Valletta’s Grand Harbour after a fierce naval battle). The crippled convoy, against all odds, completed its mission on the 15th of August, the Feast of the Assumption of Saint Mary.

The harbour is thus reimagined as a site of divine benediction; the Maltese, desperately praying in the subterranean labyrinth of tunnels-turned-bomb shelters beneath

¹⁰⁰ I. Callus and C. Thake, 2005, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Section 963, http://www.vatican.va/archive/EN-G0015/_INDEX.HTM (accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁰² American Merchant Marine at War, ‘Operation Pedestal and SS Ohio Save Malta’, <http://www.usmm.org/malta.html> (accessed 7 August 2015).

the fortifications of Valletta,¹⁰³ are affirmed in their covenant. All of this goes some way to mitigate trends that occurred in other parts of the Catholic world following the Second World War. While Catholic communities were reimagined in “progressively higher levels of generality”, culminating in the post-Second Vatican Council “world community” of Catholics,¹⁰⁴ Malta (in a peculiar instance of Maltese religious exceptionalism) drew a closer, nationalised sense of its Catholic identity and has experienced a concurrent difficulty in embracing religious groups that fall outside of the nation’s professed tradition.¹⁰⁵

We find evidence of this in the much attested description of Malta as a nation “more Catholic than the Pope”,¹⁰⁶ bolstered by the very need to maintain the integrity of an intrinsically Maltese Catholicism. Such a sensibility is deeply embedded in multi-layered narratives that preceded, and now strengthen, stories of the Second World War. Malta was, and still is in the popular consciousness,¹⁰⁷ cast in the role of the defender of Eu-

¹⁰³ E. Bradford, *Siege Malta 1940-1943*, Barnsley UK, Pen & Sword Military, 2003, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ J. Casanova, 1994, pp. 177-178.

¹⁰⁵ It is interesting to consider, though surplus to the subject of this dissertation, in what ways the ‘use’ made of Saint Mary served to differentiate Catholics from Protestants, as a strategy of distancing during the Counter-Reformation.

¹⁰⁶ J. Vella-Gauci, ‘Christian-Muslim Relations as a Topos in Maltese Historiography, Literature, and Culture’, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1996, pp. 53-54.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 69.

rope against the non-Christian invader during the Knights' occupation of the island.¹⁰⁸ This was sustained by the conscious misinterpretation of medieval documents (by overwhelmingly clerical historians) to give the impression that, throughout its history, "Malta was essentially European and Christian rather than African and Muslim,"¹⁰⁹ proof of an uninterrupted Christian past.¹¹⁰ Ultimately, these derive their force from Malta's "foundation myth",¹¹¹ and the resentment and fear provoked by the threat of that myth's dissolution, "in the name of science",¹¹² as certain (though by no means a majority of) historians and scholars challenge the identification of the Biblical 'Melitae' with the island of Malta; the place where Saint Paul was shipwrecked, and brought Christianity to a native people who showed him "unusual kindness".¹¹³

The cultural remembering of the Second World War takes shape as a testament to Malta's continuing 'chosen' Catholic destiny, under the solicitous eye of the Mother of God no less. It is simply one further iteration of this foundational myth, conflated with the chosen glory of the Great Siege endured in the 1500s. It gives voice to a deep-seated

¹⁰⁸ G. Gerber, 'Doing Christianity and Europe: An Inquiry into Memory, Boundary, and Truth Practices in Malta', in B. Strath (ed.), *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, Brussels, P.I.E., 2010, p. 251.

¹⁰⁹ A. Luttrell, *Approaches to Medieval Malta*, Rome, British School at Rome, 1975, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. p. 31.

¹¹¹ G. Gerber, 2010, p. 251.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ *New Revised Standard Version*, Anglicised Catholic Edition, Acts 28.

need to maintain a sense of incontrovertibly Christian identity, where Christianity stands (in the Maltese historical imagining) in the place of all that is European and civilised. The fact that these processes of remembering take root in Valletta, with its enduring attachments to the narratives of Christian Malta, transforms the City into a veritable stage upon which these narratives are performed and emplaced, at once strengthened and endorsed.

It is the vestiges of that identity, now that Europe has effectively ‘moved on’ (now that it is possible to think of, if not entirely live in, a post-Christian Europe),¹¹⁴ which conflicts with the larger agenda of interfaith dialogue and cooperation through cultural diplomacy. Which is to say that the Maltese cultural memory, and its inhabitation of place, as we shall see, is still functionally dependent on these underlying myths. The thorough separation that is necessary to divide one dominating sense of the sacred from the secular, to create spaces for non-Christian bodies and voices, must contend with the persistence of these narratives, if it is to produce the kind of cultural peace that nourishes and sustains all members of society rather than privileging one group over another.

The cult of national remembering in Malta is therefore intrinsically enmeshed with Catholicism. Walking alongside Adorno (to whom the bedrock of all modernity was the Enlightenment’s naive attempt to achieve understanding and stability through a “rationality of domination”),¹¹⁵ we see that this persistence of religion, because of how

¹¹⁴ E. van de Poll, *Europe and the Gospel*, Boston MA, De Gruyter Open, 2013, p. 251.

¹¹⁵ M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, trans. E. Jephcott, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, Redwood City, CA, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 59.

deeply rooted the above-mentioned narratives are, is as necessary to contemporary social cohesion in Malta as ever. If modernity is about ‘making’ individuals into meaningful beings, imbued with a sense of their personal purpose,¹¹⁶ then religion still plays a key role in understanding the causes of, and adequate responses to, social conflict.¹¹⁷ Beyond class, ethnicity, or concepts of citizenship, it is religion in Malta that provides a vital milestone,¹¹⁸ a category of identity that directs the “necessity” of “sense-making”, of story, in order to render the world “orderly determined, predictable... [and] insured”.¹¹⁹

The role of religion in achieving this sense of cohesion makes an interesting parallel to Bauman’s distinction between the metaphorical roles of the priest and the prophet. The traditional function of the priest, in his view, is “the interpretation of the supra-individual order, modelling the inscrutable into intelligibility, imposing an iron-clad logic”.¹²⁰ One cannot fail to hear echoes (the metaphor made literal) of this in the troubling (aberrant, even, when seen in the context of other European democracies) article in the Constitution of Malta which proclaims, “The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic

¹¹⁶ D. Smith, 1990, p. 30.

¹¹⁷ M. Gopin, 1997.

¹¹⁸ The CIA fixes the percentage of people in Malta who self-identify as Roman Catholic at “over 90%” (2011 estimate). Visit <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html> (accessed 7 August 2015).

¹¹⁹ Z. Bauman, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*, Oxford UK, Blackwell, 1995, pp. 85-87.

¹²⁰ Z. Bauman, *Towards a Critical Sociology: an essay on commonsense and emancipation*, NYC, Routledge, 2010 (first published 1976), p. 28.

Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong.”¹²¹ If this falls under the purview of the priest and his place in the hierarchical Church, then it is inevitable that, in the need for absolute clarity, the totalising voice comes to obscure all others; that a plurality of voices must fall silent, constrained to listen. Places come to be dominated by one overriding sense of emplacement and are unable to contain ‘alien’ bodies, just as they cannot offer a place on the City stage for the performance alternative narratives.

The priestly register is contrasted by Bauman with the message of that perspective he calls ‘prophetic’. The message of the prophet “contains no easy promises of releasing the tormented individual from the burden of his responsibility. It demystifies rather than interprets the mystery of human existence... The prophets, therefore, unlike priests, offer little comfort [but]... point their accusing fingers at the self, now left alone on the suddenly empty stage”. The prophetic response, as much a result of the religious reality as priestly dogmatism, announces the very political need to empty those places that have been crammed with certitude¹²² and thereby free them for the possibility of interfaith encounters.

Which is to say, there is the need to introduce possibilities of other voices, in places that are dominated by the claims to unique authority of one single fundamentalist

¹²¹ *Constitution of Malta*, Article 2.2, <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8566> (accessed 7 August 2015).

¹²² Z. Bauman, 2010, p. 52.

discourse. The need, indeed, to find civic places for multiple voices within spaces that have cultivated populations whose behaviour appears to be moderated by the strict surveillance of one dominant narrative.¹²³ It is this extended dominion of the monologic narrative that makes dialogue so difficult, pressed down under the crushing imposition of meaning placed on culture and society, so constructed (Bauman explains) in order "to conquer all potential sources of uncertainty and to achieve security even at the cost of freedom."¹²⁴

A release from such domination was the goal of the Second Vatican Council (to be explored in *Catholic Encounters* later in the dissertation), whereby the Catholic Church could, in response to the excesses of brutality (in which religion, either as catalyst for or rather a subject of violence, played an important role)¹²⁵ enacted and endured by Europe in the twentieth century, come to find a way of valuing and celebrating a plurality of voices.¹²⁶ However, it is the Church in Malta's reluctance to embrace the full force of these changes, made clear in Malta's continued cultural conflation of Church and the culture of the State, and the unsatisfactory disengagement of the two even as social forces

¹²³ For more about this from a different, but intersectionally related, context, see T. Sorek, 'Disciplining Palestinian national memory' (especially 'The Civic Gaze in Practice', p. 119 onwards), in E. Zurelik, D. Lyon and Y. Abu-Laban (eds.), *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine: Population, Territory, and Power*, NYC, Routledge, 2011.

¹²⁴ D. Smith, 1990, pp. 141-142.

¹²⁵ J. M. Nelson, *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*, NYC, Springer, 2009, p. 427.

¹²⁶ Y. Auerbach, 'Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Religion', in J. Fox and S. Sandler (eds.), *Religion in World Conflict*, NYC, Routledge, 2006, p. 172-173.

attempt to push one away from the other,¹²⁷ which perpetuate those cultural resources that sustain the religious identity of the state's imposition on certain spaces. The fact this has occurred at the expense of individuals and communities from other faith traditions calls into question the possibility of ethically inhabiting a single national narrative, which presumes to offer self-enclosed meaning and stability, at all.¹²⁸

In dealing with Christianity in Malta and its relationship with other religions, and the Church in Malta's relationship with its centralised authority from the Vatican, we must also be aware of discourses within Christianity that ambivalently sustain and provide for the potential deconstruction of such spaces. Extrapolated by modernity, the concepts of "freedom, the individual, reason itself",¹²⁹ are embedded in the manoeuvrings of Catholicism in Malta, even if only ironically; especially considering the Church's constitutionally-sanctioned control over morality. In the light of child molestation scandals and institution-wide attempts at covering these up, the Catholic Church's presumed prerogative to define "right from wrong" takes on disturbing implications. We have no choice but

¹²⁷ The tremendous social transformations taking place in Malta strike at the heart of some of the Catholic Church's core social teachings; for example, the affirmative result of the Divorce Referendum in 2011, and the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Law (2015), which transfers the right to determine categories of gender from the Church (or indeed state) to the individual citizen.

¹²⁸ Z. Bauman, *Globalisation: The Human Consequences*, Cambridge UK, Polity Press, 1998, p. 62.

¹²⁹ M. de Kesel, 2012, p. 72.

to qualify the reach of modernity's work in reforming the relationship "between civil and religious society"¹³⁰ in Malta, which is clearly contested.¹³¹

Recalling the period of the Knights for a moment, it is amusing, considering the form of 'Enlightened' despotism then practiced in Malta, to read a historical parallel in the letters exchanged between Benjamin Franklin and the Grandmaster of Malta, Emmanuel de Rohan. Referencing the gift of a medallion, in recognition of the Knight's assurances of naval cooperation during the American Revolutionary War (that culmination of modernist republican ideals),¹³² De Rohan describes the gift as "a monument of American liberty," which has found a "distinguished place in my cabinet."¹³³ World-defining revolution is reduced to an object d'art kept behind glass,¹³⁴ a reality so distant in influence from the narrative within which Malta was enmeshed (a feudal principality under the thumb of a man who had taken vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience while living

¹³⁰ F. Venturi, 'Church and Reform in Enlightenment Italy: The Sixties of the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 48, 1976, p. 215.

¹³¹ Described by one scholar as a "Herculean struggle" of decidedly ambiguous outcome. F. Ciappara, 'Private life, religion and enlightenment in Malta in the late eighteenth century', *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, vol. 71, no. 71, 1994, p. 118.

¹³² P. S. Boyer (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 624.

¹³³ J. Sparks (ed.), *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Boston, Nathan Hale and Gray & Bowen, 1892.

¹³⁴ Unfortunately the object has since gone missing; which in Malta invariably means it is displayed in somebody's sitting room, or lost in a bedroom drawer.

in opulence with a string of documented mistresses, one of whom was his niece)¹³⁵ so as to seem almost mythical in itself; a thing utterly unable to take root and flourish in the variety of Catholicism that continues to captivate Maltese memory.

How do such memories gain solidity, rise out of historical debris to form the consistency of politico-cultural narrative? In what ways does this process conflate itself with the Maltese sense of identity, and the possibility of inclusion or exclusion, by the efforts of community connection through the tools of cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue, for those who do not share its sense of self? If the defining feature of late modern Christianity is the fact that it “is no longer a force” and has had, perforce, opened and adapted itself to “conform to a situation in which it becomes the object of an impartial curiosity”,¹³⁶ one must wonder whether this has yet happened, to any satisfactory extent, in Malta. The “dilution of [Christian] institutions within the new structures of the nation”,¹³⁷ in a process of gradual transparency, is still underway; we shall now take some time to explore this tension between dilution and concentration, which arises in part due to the adhering effects of cultural memory.

¹³⁵ N. Grima, ‘The Misdeeds of the Grandmasters’, *Malta Independent*, 5 February 2012, <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2012-02-05/news/the-misdeeds-of-the-grandmasters-305368/> (accessed 7 August 2015).

¹³⁶ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. T. Conley, NYC, Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 33.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER THREE: MODES OF MEMORY

Maurice Halbwachs is widely considered, in symbolic if not substantive terms, the founder of contemporary collective memory research.¹³⁸ It was Halberwachs who presented the perspective that individual memories are socially framed, that making distinctions between individual and social memory is no easy matter, and that memory is the indwelling life of a group's existence and not merely its byproduct. These thoughts were rooted in the teaching of Halbwachs' mentor, Emile Durkheim, who articulated the key concept of collective memory as representation; not simply of the social frameworks of individual memory or social memory, but all publicly available symbols and meanings about the past. Which is to say as cultural, alongside individual and social, memory,¹³⁹ and certainly not as the outcome of a biological process that led certain movements in Europe and America¹⁴⁰ to the worst excesses of essentialism, in pursuit of a "racial mem-

¹³⁸ J. K. Olick, V. Vinitzky-Seroussi, D. Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader*, Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 10.

¹³⁹ See Chapters 1-4, J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilisation: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

¹⁴⁰ The phenomena of nazism and the "radicalisation of race" in Europe (see P. Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919-1945*, NYC, Routledge, 2003, pp. 176-178), and white supremacist movements in the USA (see Z. Leonardo, *Race, Whiteness, and Education*, NYC, Routledge, 2009, p. 157).

ory” supposedly inherited in the flesh.¹⁴¹ Rather, memory is principally a cultural inheritance; sometimes embodied, sometimes disembodied, with an ontological status of its own, a social fact with repercussions for the effective transformation of conflict and the exercise of cultural diplomacy among diverse communities.

If understood as a collection of memories shared by a community, informed by both cognitive and affective components,¹⁴² then collective memory is a mirror to the powerful psychological events that embed themselves in the experience of the communal group. These are the "effervescence" (to borrow a phrase from Durkheim) of remembered triumphs, the intensity of which is beyond communicative access at the moment they occur and thus only available in retrospect. They are worked upon by memory, made available by controlled “ritual celebration and mythical stories”,¹⁴³ whose force is often attached to the re/inhabitation of those spaces set aside and effectively consecrated¹⁴⁴ by their participation in the memory of triumph. Equally important are those cultural trau-

¹⁴¹ Halbwachs was not alone in dismissing this tendency to fixate on ‘race’; art historian Aby Warburg developed similar theories, during a roughly similar period. See J. Assmann, ‘Collective Memory and Cultural Identity’, originally published in *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, J. Assmann and T. Holscher (eds.), Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1988, pp. 9-19.

¹⁴² J. K. Olick et al., 2011, p. 162.

¹⁴³ J. C. Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Oakland CA, University of California Press, 2004, p. 113.

¹⁴⁴ P. A. Shackel (ed.), *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, Gainesville FL, University of Florida Press, 2001, pp. 133-134.

mas¹⁴⁵ held in common, violent ruptures in the "web of meaning", breaks in order and continuity.¹⁴⁶ It is the synthesis of these, and the struggles between them, that collide to form the substance of cultural memory.¹⁴⁷

These images of the past push through and adhere, individually and en masse, to the group's sense of itself, "imagined, renarrated, and visualised" in narrative emplacements that set aside certain spaces, suddenly invested with mythical grandeur, over which the group exercises a possessive interest.¹⁴⁸ Images of the present and future coexist within the community's collective memory, simmering alongside adherences of the past; Malta's national recollections of its mythically apportioned Christian past, the Great Siege, and the Second World War. Within these remembrances, possibilities for peace are held alongside justifications for the continuation of conflict; new potential self-understanding within the dominant community and its interaction with others, or the stern refusal to engage beyond the delineations of what is already considered meaningful, and thus worthy of remembrance.

¹⁴⁵ J. C. Alexander et al., 2004, p. 112.

¹⁴⁶ J. C. Alexander et al., 2004, p. 113.

¹⁴⁷ Also, see V. D. Volkan, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ J. C. Alexander et al., 2004, p. 114.

Developing Halbwachs' theories, James E. Young nuances the notion of collective memory as "collected memory",¹⁴⁹ marking memory's inherently fragmented, collected, and individual character; the bric-a-brac assemblage of triumphs and traumas, of eruptions and elisions, that are orchestrated within the cultural memory. Building on this and applying it to a historical context, Jan Assmann asserts that the collection of memory moves into a sense of being collective only in so far as the community becomes engaged in the process of assigning value ("worth") to the past.¹⁵⁰ The collected debris is sifted, and certain elements are held out in common as defining a particular "cultural" memory.

This cultural memory typifies itself by a self-conscious distancing from the quotidian, where distance marks its temporal horizon, while also pouring out of the "communicative memory" we engage in every day,¹⁵¹ and by which communities further stabilise those memories deemed particularly valuable and necessary. The references of cultural memory are therefore selected, and interpreted as fixed, within the very process whereby they are remembered, from which they draw substantial power. These particular memories tower over the community, indeed, the nation, and are sustained by "cultural forma-

¹⁴⁹ J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993, p. xi.

¹⁵⁰ J. Assmann and J. Czaplicka, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, no. 65, 1995, p. 131.

¹⁵¹ J. Assmann and J. Czaplicka, 1995, p. 126.

tion (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practices, observance)¹⁵² that can in turn be manipulated and commodified.

They are evidence of a process of accretion, a bubbling to the surface of what lies beneath in the communicative chaos of disparate individual and social memories, hardened into some semblance of permanence to form what Assmann calls “islands of time”.¹⁵³ Like insects encased in amber, these phenomena acquire a different temporality, whose meaning, separate from yet linked to the mutable flows of ongoing remembrance from which they erupt, offers them up to access (to use and abuse) by the community. Smearred and bleared, often partial and fragmentary, this patination of recollections gains solidity, it hardens into something more tangible, wholly in relation to the use made of it by the community in its communications, and by the access granted to these “islands” by the arbiters, enablers, and institutions of culture, in networks that allow for dialogue between traditions or hermetically seal the community in its own narrative.

The language of Maltese national culture is spoken through the idiom and inflection of its religious-cultural memory;¹⁵⁴ an historical, mythical, often religiously mediated sense of time developed out of a socially performed “communicative memory” and sub-

¹⁵² J. Assmann and J. Czaplicka, 1995, p. 129.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ More shall be made of this later in the dissertation, in terms of the Catholic use of spaces in Valletta.

jective “individual memory”.¹⁵⁵ It is this cultural dimension that determines “the style in which [the community is] imagined”,¹⁵⁶ dependent on the fixity of memory, which is “cast in symbols... performed in feasts... continually illuminating a changing present.”¹⁵⁷ The role of religion in ascribing and delineating this symbolic mediation cannot be overemphasised, especially in a context like Malta’s, where no cult of the nation (cognitively distinct from religious roots) has been accomplished.¹⁵⁸

Before proceeding to an examination of the relationship between access to collective memory and cultural control, it may seem necessary to further problematise things by considering what level of consensus is needed to make collective memories truly “collective”, informing the community’s sense of culture as a whole, in any meaningful sense. However, such questions miss a vital point; Assmann reminds us that culture’s collective memory is itself the hardened residue of a variety of social processes, the images, material residue, conceptual narratives, storytelling activities in various forms, smells and sensations, that accrue and invade and possess the communally held sense of self, and there-

¹⁵⁵ A. Erll, and A. Nünning (eds.), *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2010, p. 109.

¹⁵⁶ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (revised edtn.), London, Verso, 1991, p. 6-7.

¹⁵⁷ A. Erll, and A. Nünning, 2010, p. 113.

¹⁵⁸ B. Strath, 2010, pp. 251-252.

fore sense of place.¹⁵⁹ Together, these determine what may come to constitute memory. What is the same about these memories, with their social and emotional diversity, is not quite so pressing a question as the communally performed process of their accretion.

Rather than submit to thwarted bids for comprehension, arranged in neat rows of abstraction, it is perhaps more fruitful to imagine that these processes of remembrance leave a very physical residue, which coalesces upon and within the spaces we inhabit and the bodies through which we inhabit them. The residue forms the merest impression of substance, channeling and directing the “efficient exercise of power” through space.¹⁶⁰ Bits and pieces, narrative threads and patches, constitute the “pile of debris”¹⁶¹ upon which stick, like flies to flypaper, the accumulated mass of our collective and individual memories. All this smeared and bleared, often partial and fragmentary, patination of nuances gains solidity, it hardens into something more tangible, wholly in relation to its usefulness.

The resulting configurations (a bricolage presented in truncated and cleaned-up forms by the arbiters and institutions of culture) is inescapably at the disposal of those

¹⁵⁹ See D. Seamon, ‘Place, Place Identity, and Phenomenology: A Triadic Interpretation Based on J.G. Bennett’s Systematics’, in H. Casakin, M. de Fatima Campos Bernardo (eds.), *The Role of Place Identity in the Perception, Understanding, and Design of Built Environments*, Sharjah UAE, Bentham Science Publishers, 2012, pp. 3-21.

¹⁶⁰ M. Foucault, B. Smart (ed.), *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments*, NYC, Routledge, 2004, p. 82.

¹⁶¹ W. Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, in H. Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations*, New York, Schocken, 1969, p. 249.

who desire to make use of it. In one popular turn of phrase, whosoever controls “the images controls the culture.”¹⁶² Gradations of memory are the appurtenances of power; their hardened exteriors encase mutable references that must be cajoled into some semblance of continuity if they are to entice and enchant us. We see here how “collective memory becomes vulnerable to correction by [those who control] history. And because truth is the normative aim of history, collective memory is vulnerable to correction by truth about the past”, to the interference of those whose objective is the consolidation of unified, directed, controlled narrative.¹⁶³ Beneath these crusty exterior coagulations is a living chaos, and both are tools, with all a tool’s potential to be mis/used as a weapon. Both are mechanisms primed to exercise and disperse power,¹⁶⁴ to maintain master narratives at the expense of the subordinated. To ensure, in Malta, the primacy of a doggedly Catholic storyline that has not, as yet, prioritised the integration of effective modes of interfaith dialogue.¹⁶⁵

It is through these mechanisms that individuals and communities are enthralled, disciplined to receive and redirect the power of memory. Memory is enmeshed in the configurations that arise (from an excess of productivity, the very prolixity of the process

¹⁶² Attributed to Allen Ginsberg - R. A. Kriegler (ed.), *Civilisation’s Quotations*, NYC, Algora Publishing, p. 247.

¹⁶³ J. Blustein, 2008, p. 178.

¹⁶⁴ M. Foucault, D. Defert and F. Ewald (eds.), *Dits et Écrits 1954–1988, Vol. II, 1976–1988*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, pp. 911-912.

¹⁶⁵ See Introduction.

of memory), with pervasive influence, cloaked in anonymity; their origins, far beneath the surface, all too readily ignored.¹⁶⁶ It would, therefore, be perilous to mistake the apparently calm exterior configuration for the entirety of the thing. The interior is far larger and far more dangerous, and the further in you go, the bigger it gets; it contains the very multiplicity of voices that are so assiduously ignored by an adherence to one dominating narrative.

This apparent permanence and containment that obscures the metamorphic construction of memory is problematic. Neither interior nor exterior should be mistaken to constitute the measure of meaning, and nowhere does this process (because memory is a process and not a product)¹⁶⁷ take on more risk than in the adherence of memory to place; the elision of that corrupting sea within, and the disarming but treacherous semblance of solidity without. It is to this semblance that we surrender, which we come to call “home”, for which people kill, and for which they are ready to die. The configurations that place us are at once nurturing roots, and potential nooses (and also, reflecting contemporary culture’s consumerist agenda, a potent commodity).

Let us consider two examples from Maltese history, about which there are many strong beliefs and emotions: the Great Siege (1656), and the Second World War. Both

¹⁶⁶ L. Rofel, ‘Rethinking Modernity’, in A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (eds.), *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Durham NC, Duke University Press, 2001, p. 156.

¹⁶⁷ G. Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum*, London, Bloomsbury, 2000, p. 5.

stand as vast monoliths, casting long shadows across what it means to be Maltese and to inhabit the memory of Malta. Enacted in played-out pageantry for the benefit of visitor and local alike, their narratives overlap anachronistically; a group of performers dressed up like knights (although in reality the Maltese never could be knighted)¹⁶⁸ march through Saint George square, in front of a tour guide who points out the memorial slabs embedded in the Grand Master's Palace, which commemorate the experience of the Maltese during the Second World War (two of special note are from US President Roosevelt and Britain's King George VI). The Grand Master's Palace (now the Presidential Palace) is surmounted by dual flags, those of Malta and the European Union, across the square from the Office of the Attorney General, which is still emblazoned with statues of the lion and unicorn; the British Main Guard were stationed here during the Second World War.

History collapses in the elision of these emplacements, memory seethes with viscosity, snaring the wary and ignorant alike. The Siege is well beyond the living memory of the Maltese and their immediate ancestors but it echoes in the retellings of the Second World War, handed down from grandparent to grandchild, heirloom stories of bombed streets and decimated lives. Yet for all their glamour of intelligibility, even these narratives remain ever elusive; Walter Benjamin paraphrases Agrippa von Nettsheim to say that the memory of ruins is "the home of the saturnine beasts",¹⁶⁹ dispirited (perhaps de-

¹⁶⁸ S. Goodwin, 2002, p. 76.

¹⁶⁹ W. Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. J. Osborne, NYC, Verso, 2003 (first published 1928), p. 179.

spirited is a better term) creatures plagued by crisis. They live through Malta's experience of modernity, and into "late modernity's flight from transcendence",¹⁷⁰ its need to find in the material remains of memory a thread of coherence, reinvested with religion's meaning-making just as they are evidence of its collapse.

Benjamin read the baroque period as a foreshadow of modernity,¹⁷¹ making Valletta a simultaneously 'baroque' and potentially 'modern' City of the first order. The dominant register of the period, and thus modernity, is not "the convention of expression, but the expression of convention",¹⁷² the declaration of the objective narrative enunciated in the idiom of memory. Meanwhile, the nineteenth century (Malta's great 'living' memory of war) represents a world of ruins and fragments, emptied in the narrative of their meaningful traditions that once connected ideas of the present to ideas of the past.

Suddenly, everything becomes collectible; treasures transferred to the museums of culture, reprints and copies relocated as souvenirs in domestic interiors, city views and architectural monuments reconstructed and conserved as privileged landscapes of heritage, churches transformed into galleries complete with postcard racks. A deep crisis of memory informs the construction of 'official history' in Valletta. The City performs a dif-

¹⁷⁰ G. T. Colvert, 'The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy in a Postmodern World', in A. Ramons and M. I. George (eds.), *Faith, Scholarship and Culture in the 21st Century*, NYC, American Maritain Publications, 2002, p. 36.

¹⁷¹ A. E. Benjamin and C. Rice, *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, Melbourne, Re.Press, 2009, p. 66.

¹⁷² W. Benjamin, 2003, p. 175.

difficult balancing act between the physical domination of Catholic influence, dressed in the trappings of the baroque and offered for consumption by visitor and denizen, and the ambivalent narratives of deconstruction and ruin that invade this traditional frame as a result of war's disaster; the disappearance of stories that do not fit the narrative's ostensible purpose.¹⁷³

The forces that dictate the submerged flows of national and communal memory are of particular importance here, as is the "inhabited" nature of memory (its own participation in eruption), and the fact that the politics of memory directly relate to human concerns for the ethical imperative of remembering.¹⁷⁴ This is best understood in terms laid down by Judith Butler, on the social unmournability of certain lives;¹⁷⁵ the continued suppression, deep within the movements of memory, of that which threatens to crack through to the surface and displace those hardened spaces from which extend coils of authority and control. This is a cornerstone of the cultural conflict we find here that must be tackled by the tools of cultural diplomacy, and a powerful reminder of those lives effaced by a reluctance, if not outright refusal, to remember; and the implied need for a decision to choose to remember differently.

¹⁷³ For example, Valletta's cultural forgetting of the City's synagogues (addressed in terms of Jewish-Catholic relations in subsequent sections of this dissertation).

¹⁷⁴ J. Blustein, 2008, p. ix.

¹⁷⁵ See J. Butler, *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London, Verso, 2006.

In the sections that follow, our view shall shift to the lacunae of cultural remembering; areas where memory wells up and passes over; the forgotten places. For now, let us remain a little longer with Asserman's "islands of time" that are visible above the surface. It is necessary explore their topography in more detail, which is to say, the role of place in memory and its relationship in Malta with the national experience of the Catholic variety of the Christian religion, and how this experience has hampered effective and peace-oriented interfaith dialogue.

"Within the tissue of history", subjects are reformulated to "conform to the place of observation".¹⁷⁶ It is this transformative effect of emplacement that defines the operations of memory, creating the categories and curtailments by which voices are heard or silenced, bodies roam free or are rendered captive. By which narratives are respected, and sometimes privileged, or rejected and made unintelligible. We shall now turn to the enactment of these processes within Catholic Valletta, and what this means for the inhabitation of religious identity, and its emplacement.

¹⁷⁶ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1988, p. 32.

CHAPTER FOUR: EMPLACING THE CITY

The instability of memory finds order in the phenomenon of place; the cultural construction of memory finds cohesion in its adherence to inhabitable structures populated by communities, determining possibilities of encounter and patterns of narrative. To be emplaced “implies an indication of stability”,¹⁷⁷ a thread of coherence that runs through the thoughts, smells, sights and kinaesthetic impressions of spaces crammed with significance, in which we bodily traverse and travel (indeed, travail) in the imagination. Places and their narratives that sometimes fade into the background (places are commonly called the ‘background’ to the ‘action’ of human activity) or are suddenly thrown into sharp relief, claiming a smug aura of permanence and authenticity out of their own confusion.

“Places are fragmentary and withdrawn histories, pasts others have robbed of legibility, accumulated times that can be unfolded but which are present much more as stories in waiting, remaining like rebuses...”¹⁷⁸ In these words, Michel de Certeau offers an idea of the ways in which memory adheres to particular places within the City; the ways in which clear-cut strategies of categorisation are sought, even as they are undermined. The assumption that such a strategic approach to the phenomenon of place is even possi-

¹⁷⁷ M. de Certeau, 1988, p. 117.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

ble, or for that matter desirable (and here we must follow de Certeau in drawing a careful distinction between the use of strategy by “producers”, the institutions and structures of power, and the tactical management of these strategies by “consumers”),¹⁷⁹ is tied to the persistent discourses of modernity, pursuing its misguided promises of meaning-making.

Places (as “instantaneous configuration[s] of positions”)¹⁸⁰ are dreamed to unfold with tidy logic, like origami puzzles, which reveal in their creases the indices of street maps and museum catalogues, encyclopaedic treatises, city models and their myriad attempts at establishing enduring order. Moving in and out of our late modern reality, like the scales of a fish gleaming beneath troubled waters, is the glimmer of religion. As we have seen, it is here that we find systems of ordering and disordering¹⁸¹ that at once herald and disassemble the self-styled “scientific” meta-narratives that dominate contemporary life.

Religions provide their own founding narrative for containment, by their cosmic reach and the measure of their ethical yardstick. Religions offer an absolute sense of order that holds the potential for endemic conflict, yet also the key to their own, and larger socio-political, transformations.¹⁸² This sensibility has also come to inform the scope of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ M. de Certeau, 1988, p. 117.

¹⁸¹ Where the “establishment... is always already infected” by that which undermines it most radically. See M. de Kesel, 2012, especially pp. 67-74.

¹⁸² See M. Gopin, 1997.

narrative processes that are ostensibly secular. Centres of inhabitation are places where narratives must be sorted, given some semblance of continuity, some sense of constancy, independent of their underlying (often unacknowledged) religious substrate. The City has become a place for this comparable taxonomic categorisation of creation, displaying an “effective constitution”¹⁸³ as an ideological system for the channeling of control through carefully orchestrated symbolic configurations of experience, grounded on the preexisting meaning-making supplied by religion. This fact was embraced by modernity nowhere so completely as in the idea of curatorship, within the conceptual space of the museum.¹⁸⁴

Indeed, the City has much in common with the museum; Valletta is sold as an ‘open air museum’ to any and every visitor who sets foot on the island, a UNESCO endorsed world heritage centre touted as “one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world”.¹⁸⁵ It is now being proclaimed, and loudly marketed, as the European City of Culture 2018 since it was awarded the distinction by the European Commission in 2012.¹⁸⁶ The Valletta International Visual Arts Festival has, for the past two years (supported by Valletta 2018) acknowledged the need for an explicitly curatorial exploration of

¹⁸³ V. R. Schwartz, J. M. Przyblyski, *The Nineteenth-century Visual Culture Reader*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 131.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 131-142.

¹⁸⁵ UNESCO, *World Heritage List*, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/131> (accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture, *Mission Statement*, <http://valletta2018.org/mission-statement/> (accessed 7 August 2015).

the City and its cultural potential,¹⁸⁷ engaging with international theorists to explore the processes and objectives of the museum and the curator within the City's spaces, and cultural life of the community.

In dealing with the concept of the museum, it is necessary to observe the way it has come to function as a privileged, almost sacred, site of its own. Not only has the ritualising function of the space always been important¹⁸⁸ but the museum was itself built to resemble the typology of temples and cathedrals, intimately emplaced in architectural solidity as the very thing it aspires to be.¹⁸⁹ St John's co-Cathedral, at the heart of Valletta, is currently marketing its conservation (and expansion into designated museum spaces) as "the preservation... [of] the pride of the Maltese nation".¹⁹⁰ The pride of Malta is thus framed as the explicit edifice of Catholicism in the City, with the need to ensure its perpetuation at all costs.

In effect, this union of Maltese Church and the City through blurred roles as custodians of memory contains a moral imperative; it declares what is worthy of remem-

¹⁸⁷ VIVA, *Curatorial School 2015*, <http://www.viva.org.mt/projects/curatorial-school/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁸⁸ C. Duncan, 'Art Museum as Ritual', in I. Borden, T. Hall, M. Miles (eds.), *The City Cultures Reader*, NYC, Routledge, 2003, p. 73.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ St John's co-Cathedral Official Facebook Page, 6/8/2015, <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnscocathedral> (accessed 7 August 2015).

brance, and therefore of moral value,¹⁹¹ in a very particular way. It evokes a worrying elision of the aforementioned article in the Constitution of Malta which allocates to the Church the right and duty to decide which “principles are right and which are wrong.”¹⁹² This conflation did not end with the Church, but draws into its purview the theatre, university, and parliament,¹⁹³ by the subsumption of the Church into these institutions.¹⁹⁴ The University of Malta begins its academic year with a Catholic mass, presided over by the Rector; the rituals of no other religion are institutionally observed.¹⁹⁵ The opening of the new parliament in 2015, at the entrance to Valletta, culminated in a public blessing by the archbishop, standing side by side with the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister of Malta. Also, every sitting in parliament and the sessions of each standing committee are preceded by a brief Catholic prayer. Due to the fact that parliamentary proceedings are televised, this continues to be a practice shared with (we might say ‘imposed upon’) all.

¹⁹¹ J. Blustein, 2008, p. 328.

¹⁹² *Constitution of Malta*, Article 2.2.

¹⁹³ See S. Forgan, ‘The Architecture of Display: Museums, Universities and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *History of Science*, vol. 32, 1994, pp. 139-162.

¹⁹⁴ This is particularly relevant in relation to ongoing discussions about blasphemy and censorship laws in Malta. See End Blasphemy Laws, *Malta*, <http://end-blasphemy-laws.org/countries/europe/malta/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

¹⁹⁵ It is amusing to note that the venue where this course is held, the Valletta Campus (the ‘Old University’) contains an internal window that overlooks the Jesuit Church of Valletta, through which the chanting of the office and the celebration of mass can be distinctly heard every morning.

Drawing to itself these levels of authority, the religious narrative seems to ventriloquise the City, and comes to be understood as that which claims for itself a sense and voice of ordained and inviolate authority. Co-opted into the ambit of church-as-city-as-museum, we therefore find other cultural and political centres; the theatre (cinema, concert hall, or sports arena. Night club, even) as that liminal place where strangers come together to participate “in the Mysteries, dreaming the same dream in unison”;¹⁹⁶ the university, first conceived of as a space (policed by the Western Church) set aside for the pursuit of God’s ultimate authority,¹⁹⁷ only to be displaced by a different kind of (humanist) authority, found closer to home;¹⁹⁸ and parliament itself, that supremely bourgeois capitalist institution¹⁹⁹ and successor to the councils of anointed kings,²⁰⁰ where power is laid a little more bare, so to the state as “the soul is to the body”.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ A. Carter, ‘Expletives Deleted, review of Robert Coover: A Night at the Movies, *The Guardian*, 7 August 1987.

¹⁹⁷ W. Rüegg, ‘Mythologies and Historiography of the Beginnings’, in H. De Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe*, Volume 1, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 4-34.

¹⁹⁸ P. F. Grendler, ‘The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 57, 2004, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ M. Mulholland, *Bourgeois Liberty and the Politics of Fear: From Absolutism to Neo-Conservatism*, Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 165.

²⁰⁰ T. Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage: Interpretations of a Discordant Part*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 32.

²⁰¹ John Pym, referenced in L. Rosner and J. Theibault, *A Short History of Europe: 1600-1815*, NYC, Routledge, 2000, p. 105.

Listening to the voice of religion in the City, we cannot help but ask whether the City is a body of many souls, or is it a soul of many bodies? Turning a microscope on Valletta, we see bodies in multitude; tourists who stalk the City by day, and jostle for space alongside residents and bustling commuters; waiters and hawkers and stall pedlars, beggars (a relatively recent re-emergence in Valletta) and street artists; priests and nuns; shop owners who smile in the doorways of their establishments, enticing passersby. Feasts, in commemoration of titular saints, dominate the City throughout the year, especially the summer months, when cornices and pediments are swathed in bright-painted banners. Indeed, Valletta hosts a national feast, celebrated as a nation-wide holiday; the Feast of St Paul.

Meanwhile, bars and restaurants swell to bursting, and night-time excursions herd young students through secluded side-streets. Ostensibly here to learn English and practice their pronunciation, the larger 'Language Schools' encourage students to visit the City after dark, on tours designed to curtail youthful indulgences. The City as church and museum, as theatre and university, as court and parliament, adds nursery to its evolving management of spaces. One wonders whether the image of the nursery as home of innocence (and the speculated effects of violence's 'strange wisdom')²⁰² is just as powerful as anything the ecstasy-inducing²⁰³ actor, the priest with his promises of salvation, or the brash

²⁰² See C. Fortune, 'The analytic nursery: Ferenczi's 'wise baby' meets Jung's 'divine child'', *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2003, pp. 457–466.

²⁰³ *Ek-stasis* evokes its own spatial reference, "to stand outside"; "to be removed" and taken "elsewhere", lost in lands unknown.

parliamentarian (whose sovereignty derives from those spaces appropriated by the State) can hope to offer.

What links this diversity of bodies together is the configuration of stories held up in “a common language”²⁰⁴ to bridge the division of individual remembrance and collective memory, a common language spoken in the grammar of the City that necessarily absorbs and constrains the participation of certain communities outside of the City’s dominant register. Inhabitants are linked “by a oneway relationship to the very centre that maintains their isolation from one another”, united in separation.²⁰⁵ In the hands of these diverse managers of culture, the methodology of memory and the ideology of cultural management have become ambivalent guides in telling a story of the City at once partial and misleading,²⁰⁶ and the means by which this unity in separateness is engineered, impressed upon subjects (*sub-jectus*, those who are ‘brought under’ into spaces below) whose vacillations take them between an objectification of the place they inhabit and a means of subjecting it to their own processes of scrutiny.

When it comes to the place of religion in Valletta, at once usurped of its domain and diffused among all other avenues of power, the primal resistance to share space (the

²⁰⁴ B. Highmore, *Michel De Certeau: Analysing Culture*, NYC, Bloomsbury, 2006, p. 89.

²⁰⁵ G. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, London, Rebel Press, 1983, p. 40.

²⁰⁶ M. C. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 1994, p. 131.

sense of the sacred site as an indivisible and inviolate possession)²⁰⁷ becomes especially alarming. In effect, it excludes from all spheres those voices and bodies that do not conform to the narrative secured by Maltese Catholicism, in an exercise of what can only be described as cultural violence. This control (rally as it might against the perceived incursions of secularism) now extends its grip, through ongoing mis/managements of culture, on the inhabitation of City space in all its permutations. It is through the tools of cultural diplomacy in confronting communities with these realities, and discovering ways of addressing them within cultural processes, that some new sense of meaning may be hoped to emerge.

Therefore, the communication of meaning is essential to each individual engaged in this process, to their performances within social matrices, and the cultivation of cultural memory within communal configurations of place. The cultural dimension, managed by institutions to whom the capitalist recycling of Valletta's culture is a primary concern, intersects with politico-economic as well as religious ideologies; all are reflected back onto the cultural landscape.²⁰⁸ Spaces invested with authority come to be understood as

²⁰⁷ See E. Barkan and K. Barkey (eds.), *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics, and Conflict Resolution*, NYC, Columbia University Press, 2015.

²⁰⁸ D. Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, NYC, Guilford Press, 2003, p. 133.

cultural capital, upon which adhere the values and ambitions of dominant ideologies; they form a nexus for the exercise of political, economic, and social authority.²⁰⁹

The cityscape plays a foundational role in the construction of this cultural identity, where nationalist ideologies percolate to the surface and are covered with a film of consumerism. Fostered in the rhetoric of particularity that roots itself in place, Malta's heritage is presented in easily identifiable (and preferably non-threatening) soundbites, and familiar images; Malta as the Christian capital of Southern Europe, Malta as the defender of the faith, quaint Malta with its baroque charm and mellow Mediterranean lifestyle. The City's museums fall in line to tell this same story; for example, the National War Museum in Valletta, with its single-minded focus on the narratives of Malta's Second World War experience and Catholic identity in the face of invading barbarism, was only expanded to include other instances of war (specifically, a display of Bronze Age weaponry and a critical overview of warfare in general) in 2015.²¹⁰ Meanwhile, this ongoing process is allowed to continue determining criteria of social inclusion and exclusion among non-Catholic faith communities.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ See G. J. Ashworth and B. J. Graham, *Senses of Place: Senses of Time*, Burlington VT, Ashgate, 2005. Especially noteworthy is the authors' case-study of Ireland.

²¹⁰ Heritage Malta, *Information Sheet: National War Museum 2015*, <http://heritagemalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Info-Sheet-Fort-St-Elmo-The-National-War-Museum.pdf> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

²¹¹ G. J. Ashworth and B. J. Graham, 2005, p. 51.

However, the very presence of such communities proves that Valletta's cultural cityscape is inherently polyvocal in scope. This is due to the simple fact that it is not only an urban environment beside a coastal centre, an historical as well as contemporary meeting place for diversity, but that the City's own story is held in tension by the wide plurality of experiences and memories that form its identity. This must be emphasised as the way forward in establishing cultural diplomacy and dialogue between communities; especially within faith traditions that come up against the full force of Catholicism in Valletta, even as their existence is effectively ignored or denied by the powers-that-be in the present cultural configurations of the City.

Valletta is made complicit in the effacement of these communities; it is actively involved in the construction of power in society,²¹² through ongoing interactions of cultural and social institutions throughout the City. Social actors engage in overlapping projects of interpretation that obscure (rather than highlight) the City's polyvocality, responding to fluidity by capturing and crystallising volatile inhabitations of Valletta. Such mis/use is made of the monologic religious narrative in Valletta, presented and emplaced as enduring, deserving of veneration, a source of undeniable authority. The need for subjection to this authority remains rooted in the continued conflation of Catholicism and European-identity, and Malta's need to package and sell culture-as-commodity on the open market of capitalist tourism.

²¹² D. Mitchell, 2003, p. 35 and p. 40.

Reading de Certeau with Foucault at our shoulder,²¹³ this approach reveals itself as an appropriation, an invasive strategy of possession. The City speaks loudest in imperatives; the City orders itself by proclaiming orders, just as it regulates itself by the rule of order. This is the taxonomy of modernity, where, in the case of Malta, the dogmatism of the Church was given a new lease of life in its elision with the sale of culture and the focus of Europeanising narratives. The desire to possess through assigning commodified particularity, to cram spaces with stories that bring defined purposes and meanings of their own, is the mark and measure of control. Indeed, it creates what Dean MacCannell calls “markers”,²¹⁴ cues that at once reference and seek to contain the unwieldily magnitude of place.

This hardening crust of cultural memorialisation reveals itself in the plaques, the holidays and holy days, the statues, signs and street names, the rituals, memorials and monuments that clog the City’s arteries - things to be thrust at with the tips of tour guide umbrellas, gawked at by visitors from one appointment to the next, or heard described in the crackling monotone of a pre-recorded audio-guide. Things to be flattened and printed in primary colours, between the pages of a tourist map; branded with the ubiquitous legend-cum-litany ‘Palace, Theatre, Parliament; Museum, Church, Lavatory.’ Things to be memorised in school classrooms (‘committed’ to the asylum of memory), to be invoked

²¹³ C. Colebrook, *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997, p. 115.

²¹⁴ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1999, p. 137.

at political rallies in the shadow of great men's effigies, denounced from pulpits, to represent (to be made 'present') on theatre stages, and discussed with gravitas, and at great length, in lecture halls whose tall windows overlook roads that once rumbled with war machines.

These marks are evidence of a frenzy for what might be considered 'facts' about the past, the crushing need for simple certitude, the enforcement of power through story, which in Valletta always wears the habit of hagiography. It is Henri Lefebvre who reminds us that the meanings made present by places are always and in all ways contested;²¹⁵ that the belligerent beasts within the City are not yet finished, and no conqueror among them lasts for long. Their marks of victory arise out of conflict between groups and classes of people who seek to appropriate space; to name it, to dominate it, to possess it. The fixity of place (which distinguishes it from the mobility of space)²¹⁶ offers stories that masquerade as incontestable realities yet remain elusive and inaccessible fragments, not simply because of the instability of memory but also because the act of possession-through-definition hides, behind its violent grasping, the social and political conflicts that gave rise to them in the first place.

Therefore the City's burden of religion is, far from a safe harbour in a stormy sea, itself evidence of the seething flux beneath the crust, the chaos below, even as it pretends

²¹⁵ L. Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory*, Minneapolis MN, University of Minnesota Press, 2011, p. 229.

²¹⁶ M. de Certeau, 1988, p. 117.

to be anything but that. There is an ancient logic at work here, for to name a thing is to have some measure of power over it. Valletta's Catholic ideology maintains control through these process of remembering, by navigating and mapping the crusty exterior to declare what should, indeed can, be held morally accountable to memory.²¹⁷ To create maps is to create the world; it is no different within the City. Members of communities lay claim to their stalking grounds, seeded with memory, smeared with ownership; not unlike a dog raising one leg to assert, to himself and all other members of his species, "I was here. This is mine. Remember me."

The human animal complicates this (shameless, but straightforward) gesture, and marks its territory by more convoluted means of performative, unified remembering. Indeed, any serious attempt at achieving interfaith dialogue through an expanded understanding of cultural diplomacy within the City (as an internal process, among communities in the nation) must include some approach to the politics of remembering and their adherence to place, some attempt at untangling the braided histories of conflict of which this crust is a landscape. Put simply, we may now see that firstly, the construction of collective memories is a social and political process that depends on the inhabitation of places rich in remembering; and secondly, that present needs are responsible, in no small part, for shaping what is told and retained about the past,²¹⁸ with a concurrent devaluation

²¹⁷ J. Blustein, 2008, p. 122.

²¹⁸ S. Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past: The Ethics and Politics of Memory*, Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 166.

of dialogue, in favour of consolidating the dominant narrative. These necessities help to explain both continuities and disruptions in memory through time, fissures that appear with the potential for new eruptions, as well as the corresponding solidification that is emplaced elsewhere.

The ordering of Valletta, which is to say the specific way in which the City's inhabitants arrange themselves in space and time, is therefore not independent of larger social orderings. Indeed, it is within the structure of place that the very possibility of the social achieves reification.²¹⁹ The authority of place, understood in terms of structuration,²²⁰ derives from the very processes of communicative and cultural memory that enable social engagement. Place is, in line with de Certeau's thinking on the subject,²²¹ at once practice and process, never a *fait accompli* but always a becoming, a muddling of being/s. The desire for enduring certainty rather than this endless transformative dynamism, the need to hear in the single voice an eternal stability, an unwavering song, is (to quote Anais Nin) a kind of death. Not only are alternative inhabitations of the City destroyed, but the fact of their being spoken into existence, of their participation as

²¹⁹ J. E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 35-36.

²²⁰ T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete (eds.), *Mobilising Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalised World*, NYC, Rodopi, 2002, p. 21.

²²¹ M. de Certeau, 1988, also Soja on "thirthing" (a critical strategy of spatial imagination, through which covert narratives of the Other can be made visible); see E. W. Soja, *Third-space: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, New Jersey, Wiley, 1996.

bodies that can inhabit the cityscape, both as peers and as friends, is rendered unthinkable.

Therefore, we must encounter place as “lived rather than being simply material (conceived) or mental (perceived)”.²²² It is the social engagement itself to which we must turn, and not confuse the product, the surface, with the process, the interior. This brings us to the fullness of de Certeau's intimation of place as the deep interior of the social, around which the chaos of memory and the practice of living, the consolidation of culture, can occur. Place is operationalised through practice, a tactical manoeuvre within competing political, economic, social, cultural and religious structures.²²³ If we now accept that “even the most concrete of constructs is open to change and transformation”,²²⁴ it becomes clear that the concentration of religious ideology within the Valletta cityscape is as much a producer of culture as its product, and say alongside de Certeau (and Lefebvre), that “place is a raw material for a creative production of identity rather than an a priori label of identity”.²²⁵

Indeed, place and the human phenomenological relationship within it represents “the internalisation and embodiment of the social order which in turn reproduces the so-

²²² T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete, 2002, p. 21.

²²³ M. de Certeau, 1988, p. 120.

²²⁴ T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete, 2002, p. 24-25.

²²⁵ T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete, 2002, p. 25.

cial order”.²²⁶ In this constant reproduction, constrained by Valletta’s religious narrative, body and place obtain a normative meaning²²⁷ that gives them shape, but necessarily limits their scope. They produced as much as they are producing, performed from the perspective of time, enmeshed in the narratives of power and place and unable to reach out, to engage with others whose lives are not similarly woven into the story they tell. Which is to say, the production of identity is complicit in limiting and regulating the effective inhabitation of the City, and the im/possibility of liveable inhabitations that extend beyond the parameters of those places, those narratives, those bodies deemed visible, audible, and valuable.

“Each time we enter a new place, we participate in an existing number of multiple identities and histories.”²²⁸ It is the realisation of this plurality of voices, reified in place, which we must aspire to achieve in cultural diplomacy’s work among separated communities. The overarching confinement of the monologic voice is to be resisted, overcoming the desire to stand simultaneously outside and within our discourses and our movements, if participation in multiplicity, our own and the City’s as well as that of one another, is to be a source of creative stimulus and not a cause for concern (and a potential source of conflict). It is self-evident that places come to resemble, to replicate and reinforce, their

²²⁶ T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete, 2002, p. 22.

²²⁷ J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, NYC, Routledge, 1990, pp. 1-16, and T. Cresswell and G. Verstraete, 2002, p. 28.

²²⁸ L. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicentered Society*, NYC, The New Press, 1997, p. 6.

narratives; thus it is by developing the narrative as fruitful, by reasserting it as inclusive rather than exclusive, that we may hope to think in terms of interfaith dialogue, even within a context as saturated with self-conscious storytelling as the Catholicism of Valletta.

“Even the power of place is diminished and often lost, [but] it continues – as an absence – to define culture and identity. It also continues – as a presence – to change the way we live”.²²⁹ We must now journey into the heart of this absence, to explore the mysterious presences of place. This journey shall inform the work presented in subsequent sections, where the power of the (ostensibly) unmemorable place, by its stubborn refusal to endure complete effacement, shall be addressed. These are the lives and the bodies of those who have not been permitted access to the emplaced, official memory of the City, but stand at the periphery as both caution and consolation. The forgotten, who gesture beyond themselves in expectation of restoration; the narratives of communities that await voice, whose participation in the City polyphony hold the promise of reconciliation.

²²⁹ L. Lippard, 1997, p. 20.

CHAPTER FIVE: PLACES OF MOURNING

Judith Butler's political writings introduce a vision for an ethics of non-violence, based upon an understanding of the ease with which the worth of human life is annulled through strategies of oppression and exclusion.²³⁰ Through this vision, detailed earlier in the dissertation, this following section shall explore what that must mean for a society coming to grips with the place afforded to individuals and communities within a nation's memorialising spaces of restricted politico-cultural access.²³¹ What must a non-violent ethics *mean* in proposing the potential for dialogue between cultures?

This section shall work to demonstrate how such an approach fits within the layering work of memory and place, to show that the choice to remember or forget certain narrative inhabitations of Valletta at once postpones or encourages the annulment of meaningful life. Indeed, the section asks whether the City furthers or hinders the aims of a non-violent ethical engagement, and its possibility through national programmes of cultural diplomacy and grassroots interfaith encounters. Gesturing towards an answer, both Butler's perspective and that of her primary interlocutor, Emmanuel Levinas, shall be ex-

²³⁰ L. Secomb, 'Words that Matter', in B. Davies (ed.), *Judith Butler in Conversation: Analysing the Texts of Everyday Life*, NYC, Routledge, 2007, p. 155.

²³¹ *Ibid.* p. 157.

plored, rooted in that “great political legacy of modernity”,²³² Europe’s enduring experience of the Holocaust, and the rationalisation of evil.

Butler’s concern for the mournability of bodies, ravaged as a result of modernity’s imagining of violence, is guided by the writings on precariousness of other theorists working in the social sciences,²³³ whose emphasis on precarity relates to the vulnerability of bodies and subjectivities within the ambit of exclusionary, totalising cultural discourses.²³⁴ Their work walks a path already well trodden by continental philosophers,²³⁵ to whom the socio-economic nature of precarity, brought to the fore in a post-Holocaust context, was of primary importance. To the former, precarity describes a condition that

²³² A. Mineau, *The Making of the Holocaust: Ideology and Ethics in the Systems Perspective*, Atlanta GA, Editions Rodopi B.V., 1999, p. 56.

²³³ Especially feminist scholars, including V. Tsianos and D. Papadopoulos (see ‘Precarity: A Savage Journey to the Heart of Embodied Capitalism’, paper presented at the *Immaterial Labour Conference*, University of Cambridge, April 29-30, 2006), and B. Anderson (‘A Very Private Business: Exploring the Demand for Migrant Domestic Workers’, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, vol. 14, 2007, pp. 247—264.).

²³⁴ C. Keller, ‘Occasioned by “On this Occassion”’, in R. Faber, M. Halewood, and D. M. Lin (eds.), *Butler on Whitehead: On the Occassion*, NYC, Lexington Books, 2012, p. 253.

²³⁵ See P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 1977; J.-C. Barbier, A. Brygoo, and F. Viguier, *Defining and Assessing Precarious Employment in Europe: A Review of Main Studies and Surveys, A Tentative Approach to Precarious Employment in France*, Paris, Centre d’Etude de l’Emploi, 2002; A. Mattoni and N. Doerr, ‘Images and Gender within the Movement Against Precarity in Italy’, *Feminist Review*, vol. 87, 2007, pp. 130-135.

emanates from more generalisable instances of social and cultural anxiety,²³⁶ while the latter scholars locate precarity in expressions of economically dependent inequalities that arise within modern capitalist labour markets.²³⁷ The use that shall be made of the concept focuses primarily on the cultural context and emplaced experience of precarity; which is to say, as a possible point of mobilisation and cultural transformation that shall be taken up in the policy recommendations in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Larger links between precariousness and meta-discourses of the Holocaust experience and the Second World War have already been shown to suffuse the City's sense of itself, in relation to processes of remembrance and inhabitation. It is the former understanding of precarity, while mindful of the latter, that shall inform these thoughts for the simple fact that the cultural 'anxiety' of the City, struggling into an awareness of its exclusionary narratives and a reckoning of those post-war narratives, presents a catalyst for producing effective interfaith dialogue through renewed processes of cultural remembering. This link between precarity and mourning, and memory and emplacement, is spelled out by Butler where she describes the "consideration of precarity as an existing... site"²³⁸ for the moment of mourning. Precarity refers to the gaze that holds the shared vulnerability of bodies, voices, and narratives; mournability is the strategy whereby this gaze shares

²³⁶ See B. Neilson and N. Rosseter, 'Precarity as a Political Concept, or, Fordism as Exception Theory', *Culture & Society*, vol. 25, 2008, pp. 51-72.

²³⁷ See L. Fantone, 'Precarious Changes: Gender and Generational Politics in Contemporary Italy', *Feminist Review*, vol. 87, 2007, pp. 5-20.

²³⁸ J. Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, London, Verso, 2010, p. 28.

meaning, uplifting the body, the voice, the narrative of the Other, and invests it with a culture of shared humanity.

We would agree with Butler that while mourning is not the “goal of politics... without the capacity to mourn we lose that keener sense of life we need in order to oppose violence.”²³⁹ If the City’s inhabitation of place does not move from the apprehension of precarity to the act of mourning, it remains unable to give voice to stories other than its own dominant register, to conceive of lives and to host bodies outside of its central narrative.²⁴⁰ The work of cultural diplomacy, and its expression in the interfaith encounter, is to provoke this connection between the voiceless and the voiced; to make clear the debt that has resulted from modernity’s experience of extreme violence, and its repercussions.²⁴¹ It is thus necessary to discover ways through which Valletta may become a site for the contestation of these operations of precariousness and mourning, mindful of the context of its imperfect Maltese modernity.

²³⁹ J. Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London: Verso, 2004, xviii–xix.

²⁴⁰ This has special relevance when we remember the realities of mass migration through Mediterranean, and the status of such bodies and their narratives within Malta.

²⁴¹ Z. Bauman, 1989, p. 58.

Valletta, positioning itself as a vibrant European city with its lifeblood tapped into industries of tourism and the manufacture of heritage,²⁴² is now more than ever a central motivator in processes of privileging certain lives within Malta's national narratives. It opens itself to displays of the abiding memorialisation of grief, and reveals concentrations of power from which the culture draws an enduring sense of place. What does Valletta's apparent inability to adequately mourn the non-Catholic, the City's reluctance to remember or retain non-Christian memories within its sense of self, mean for the "keener sense of life"²⁴³ Butler identifies are necessary in order to oppose the kinds of cultural violence explored in earlier sections?

It is clear that the mournability of such bodies has not been adequately attained for the simple fact that the presence of the non-Christian Other endures effacement. For example, the synagogues of Valletta (there have been four since the early 1800s, none of

²⁴² For more about the process of cultural management and manufacture, see N. Alsyyad (ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, NYC, Routledge, 2013.

²⁴³ J. Butler, 2004, xviii.

which remains today)²⁴⁴ are in no way marked nor remembered, and mosques that would have catered to Muslim captives during the baroque period, both within prisons and rooms in private homes, are entirely forgotten.²⁴⁵ More shall be made of this fact later in the chapter. We would also do well to remember the place of migrants and refugees within these processes of forgetting, of their excluded bodies and narratives that cannot (will not) find emplacement in the cityscape. Although the specific nature of migration and Maltese national identity extends beyond the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to note that intersectional points do exist between the experience of the non-Christian Other and the experience of displaced persons in Malta.²⁴⁶

For now, let us say that if the City is to begin mourning the forgotten, to find configurations of place for their inhabitation, this must also become a means for counteracting the silence that exists over their loss. There must be a concurrent process of acknowledging and possibly working to change the ways that the City's culture is constructed over the effacement of certain narratives, of certain places, of certain bodies, making use

²⁴⁴ D. Chambry and D. H. Trump, *Malta*, Geneva, Nagel Publishers, 1978, p. 192. Also, see the wonderful biography (detailing a Jewish experience of Valletta) by A. P. Tayar, *How Shall We Sing? A Mediterranean Journey Through A Jewish Family*, Sydney, Picador, 2000.

²⁴⁵ G. Wettinger, *Slavery in the Islands of Malta and Gozo ca. 1000-1812*, Malta, Publishers Enterprises Group, 2002, p. 58 and p. 445.

²⁴⁶ For an interesting perspective on the tensions between national identity and humanitarian aid to refugees, with a focus on the EU and Malta, see S. Klepp, 'Malta and the rescue of unwanted migrants at sea', in H. Schwenken and S. Ross-Sattar (eds.), *New Border and Citizenship Politics*, NYC, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

of the tools of cultural diplomacy (not simply between nations, but to instigate dialogue between religious communities within the nation) and interfaith encounters within these spaces. By foreclosing the reconstruction of identities on which a successful mourning depends, what Butler calls a “grievable life”,²⁴⁷ this process may also offer a possibility in which the act of mourning becomes a cultural resource for an ethical response, perhaps even a political response, to the dangers of the monologic voice, and a platform for the performance of interfaith dialogue.

As we have seen, the notion of precarity at its most fundamental describes the condition of being vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion;²⁴⁸ it is a lack of security, which manifests itself within the narrative memorialisations and emplacements of the City, perpetuated by the absence of the non-Christian from the attested and replicated narratives of Valletta. These are drawn out through the City’s displays of memory and its ongoing management/marketing of culture. Precarity suggests the potential for exploitative conflict within these uses of culture, the looming threat and constant vacillation between representation and effacement; between active remembering and the choice to forget (as a result of political or social expediency), rather than the imperative to maintain memory.²⁴⁹ Applied to discourses of place, precarity does not suggest an imminent vacation of em-

²⁴⁷ J. Butler, 2004, p. 34.

²⁴⁸ G. Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 2.

²⁴⁹ J. Blustein, 2008, pp. 75-78.

placement, but its very real possibility;²⁵⁰ similarly, cultural precarity does not necessarily describe an utter absence of support or peripheral recognition, but the potential for the dismantling of such supportive networks and the refusal to take seriously, to accept as integral, those adherences of memory and place that fix a group to the City's story.

Butler's treatment of the notion of precarity develops its meaning into the realm of self-sovereignty and its lack, the agency assigned (or not) to those who form part of the City narrative. She suggests the need for a communal approach to non-violence, one that encourages a reframing of not only ethnic and racial, national and cultural orientations,²⁵¹ but also how these existential orientations find spatial emplacement²⁵² in order to avoid the risk of exclusionary domination by one single voice. Throughout *Precarious Life*, Butler provokes us to ask "what makes a grievable life?"²⁵³ and how does grief consequently become a political issue?

Butler, linking her argument to Foucauldian ideas of biopower where the state controls the appurtenances of memory, and thus grievability,²⁵⁴ reminds us that our culturally mediated framings of grief not only contributes to the normative assumptions by

²⁵⁰ R. Faber, 'Khora and Violence', in R. Faber, M. Halewood, and D. M. Lin (eds.), *Butler on Whitehead: On the Occasion*, NYC, Lexington Books, 2012, p. 124.

²⁵¹ J. Butler, 2004, p. 45.

²⁵² R. Faber, 2012, p. 124.

²⁵³ J. Butler, 2004, pp. 20-21.

²⁵⁴ J. Butler, 2004, p. 21.

which our narratives of humanity are constituted, but also the corresponding dehumanisation of some whose precarity goes unacknowledged, and whose lives are unmourned. Violence against such targets is hidden beneath the debris of memory, the accretions of what is consciously held worthy of remembrance. It “leaves a mark that is no mark”,²⁵⁵ moments where the dominant voice fails to ‘speak over’ the vulnerable and precarious lives that seek inhabitation within the City.

In *Precarious Lives*, Butler builds this theorising on Emmanuel Levinas’ idiosyncratic conception of an ethics of precariousness, which rests upon a theologically grounded apprehension of the precariousness of life (as an outpouring gift of divine solidarity)²⁵⁶ lived within “a world in pieces”.²⁵⁷ It comes as no surprise that Levinas developed this vision of the vulnerability of human life during his time as a prisoner of war (1949-1945), coming to terms with the horror of modernity’s ‘rationalised’ experience of warfare.²⁵⁸ Indeed, Levinas’ work may legitimately be considered a post-Holocaust

²⁵⁵ J. Butler, 2004, p. 36.

²⁵⁶ A. Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other: Levinas, Derrida, and a Theology of Hospitality*, Eugene OR, Pickwick Publications, 2014, p. 170.

²⁵⁷ E. Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, The Hague and Boston, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978, p. 1.

²⁵⁸ P. Atterton and M. Calarco (eds.), *Radicalizing Levinas*, Albany NY, State University of New York Press, 2010, xi.

ethics, struggling to get at the roots of the damage inflicted by the obscuring of the non-Christian, non-European Other.²⁵⁹

Levinas enunciates the need to recapture the human frailty of what he calls the “face” of the Other and the relationship it instigates with the Other,²⁶⁰ an image extensively explored in Butler’s use of Levinas, and the utterances (the ‘voice’) of the Other, spoken within matrices of memory. These can be heard echoed in the Second Vatican Council’s call to polyvocality, which shall be detailed in the penultimate section of this dissertation. I contend that the City must come to secure these faces and voices in its configurations of place, however fleetingly and however fragmentary their form, if it is to become a stage for interfaith encounters within the scope of a cultural diplomacy built on community engagement. The accretions of place must come to exhibit new modes for the valuing of impressions within the City, instances of life experienced by those whose historical and cultural worth have so far been rendered extraneous to the dominant narrative of Catholic Valletta.

The process whereby these new modes of value can begin to have meaning starts with an appreciation of the precarious life of the Other in the City’s spaces. Levinas

²⁵⁹ S. L. Kremer (ed.), *Holocaust Literature: Lerner to Zychlinsky Vol. II*, London, Taylor & Francis, 2003, p. 760.

²⁶⁰ E. Levinas, ‘Is Ontology Fundamental?’, in A. T. Peperzak, S. Critchley, and R. Bernasconi (eds.), *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 9.

makes use of the “face” as a figure to communicate “both the precariousness of life and the interdiction on violence.”²⁶¹ To Levinas, conflict sits at the heart of all ethical struggle within culture. Therefore, the experience of aggressive conflict is not to be understood as that which is erased by the non-violent; rather, it is to be transformed by cultural processes. Indeed, any attempt at offering an unchanging, totalising foundation for our ethical engagements is itself doomed to replicate the very violence it would obviate.²⁶² Butler describes Levinas’ focus on fear and anxiety as those states of existential tension that aggressive conflict seeks to contain, “to keep fear and anxiety from turning into murderous action.”²⁶³

The City presents a context for this transformation, through its status as a cultural stage for memory. Valletta is a locus for the transformation of what is remembered into that which can be effectively retained, reimagined, and (in a capitalist vein) rebranded and marketed, perpetuated as the socially stabilising bedrock of national, cultural identity. The fact that this has been solely linked to a Catholic foundation, against the effects of post-Holocaust late modernity, calls into question the effectiveness of Valletta’s narratives when confronted with the Other.

²⁶¹ J. Butler, 2004, xviii.

²⁶² A. Shepherd, 2004, p. 32.

²⁶³ J. Butler, 2004, xviii.

It is precisely this failure in effectiveness that Levinas' (and Butler's) emphasis on the need for fear and anxiety to be contained by the cultural re/framing of aggression, through the apprehension of the Other, which leads us to ask who is considered worthy of remembrance and who falls outside, forgotten within the frame of an unacknowledged Other. Whose "agony [and] injurability"²⁶⁴ are valued enough to supply the framing of these culturally disastrous modalities? It would seem that within Valletta, this process has yet to take root; the non-Christian Other is repeatedly devalued, ignored, or excluded, and therefore is not transformed, but remains an outside entity threatening those phantasms of fear and anxiety that the City is loath to admit within its precincts. Therefore the foundation of the City's ethics remains a pursuit of stability, of certitude, within the narrative it supplies for itself, the monologic voice of its Catholic tradition. We can find evidence of this in the absence of non-Christian places of worship in Valletta; of particular interest is the aforementioned lack of synagogues or mosques. Yet both of these places of worship have, at various times in the history of the City, existed; the bodies of Jews and Muslims have walked (and continue to walk, although denied legitimate historical roots; in the case of Islam, this is worryingly intersected with migrant bodies)²⁶⁵ Valletta's streets. The

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ This has already been, and is increasingly, sensationalised by certain groups in Malta, further problematising potential opportunities for cultural engagement and dialogue. See T. Diacono, 'Meet the 'patriots' who fear Muslim takeover of Malta', *MaltaToday*, 22/11/2014, http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/46513/watch_meet_the_patriots_who_fear_muslim_takeover_of_malta#.VehauIS6hE4 (last accessed 7 August 2015).

spiritual and cultural life of Judaism and Islam have informed configurations of City place, even as they are deracinated and obscured.

Focusing on one element of the City's relationship with Judaism, we find that markers attesting to the presence of a historical (let alone living) Jewish community in Valletta are few and far between; during the nineteenth-century, the community was amassed at the far end of the city, near Fort St. Elmo.²⁶⁶ The only reminder, a fortified gate known as the Jews' Sally Port, pre-dates this inhabitation by several centuries and was used throughout the Baroque - a period of key importance to the way Valletta markets and understands itself in contemporary Europe.²⁶⁷ Located at the foot of Old Bakery Street, the gate is so named for its vicinity to the Jewish ghetto²⁶⁸ and the fact it was the only point through which Jewish visitors to the island were allowed entry during the rule of the Knights.²⁶⁹ Of these visitors, an overwhelming number were either captives,

²⁶⁶ The Jewish Historical Society of England, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, vol. 27-28, London, 1978, p. 157.

²⁶⁷ The Valletta International Baroque Festival (<http://www.vallettabaroquefestival.com.mt>), which attracts global attention every year, is another iteration of the variety of ways that the City presents its contemporary identity and traditions as basically baroque, and entirely positive; problematic issues of non-Christian slavery and the colonial oppression of the Maltese are sidelined, if not completely ignored.

²⁶⁸ W. K. R. Bedford, *Malta and the Knights Hospitallers*, London, Seeley and Co. Limited, 1905, p. 54.

²⁶⁹ G. P. Badger and M. Zammit, *Historical Guide to Malta and Gozo*, Malta, P. Calleja, 1879, p. 137

marked for slavery, or members of Jewish societies dedicated to carrying out the religious duty of *pidyom shevuyim* (the redemption of captives).

Negotiations with the Knights to redeem captives could take months or even years, and Valletta's Jewish population throughout the Knights' occupation were either awaiting their release or being re-sold.²⁷⁰ The captives' extended stay was such that the *pidyom* societies acquired the use of one room in the prison for prayer. Eventually, a Torah scroll and arc were acquired for use by the captives.²⁷¹ Captured rabbis led the congregation; of special note is one slave (captured in 1666), Rabbi Moshe Azulai, who remained in Valletta to tend to the spiritual needs of the prisoners even after he was redeemed, and died in the prison.²⁷² This was similarly the case with Muslim captives in Malta,²⁷³ who used their prisons as places for prayer before facing a life of slavery on board Christian ships, or as indentured servants in Christian households.²⁷⁴ It is a shame to discover that while the great namesakes of Valletta's Catholicity (and supporters, if not downright instigators, of its slave trade) have their own centrally displayed monuments in

²⁷⁰ G. Wettinger, *Slavery in the Islands of Malta and Gozo ca. 1000-1812*, Malta, Publishers Enterprises Group, 2002, p. 41.

²⁷¹ G. Wettinger, 2002, p. 95.

²⁷² G. Wettinger, 2002, p. 440.

²⁷³ A. G. Barnard Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa*, London, Billing and Sons, 1970, pp. 32-33.

²⁷⁴ See A. Salzmann, 'Migrants in Chains: On the Enslavement of Muslims in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe', *Religions*, vol. 4, 2013, pp. 391-411.

tangible evidence of emplaced memorialisation,²⁷⁵ these people and their experiences are unremembered by the Maltese and by visitors to the City; the narrative closes itself, rendering them unmemorable, and their lives unmournable.

The horror with which the Mediterranean Jewish community held Malta during the period (and one might imagine the sentiment was shared by Muslims too) can be summed up by one piece of visionary writing penned by the Kabbalist Chaim Vital, who described the island as a great hell on earth,²⁷⁶ with Valletta occupying a space in the medieval Jewish imagination burdened with emotions of "revulsion that modern Jews reserve for a place like Treblinka."²⁷⁷ Bringing us back to the present for a moment, it is interesting to consider the ambivalent implications of the first (in Valletta's recorded history) celebration of Hanukah that took place in 2014. The mayor of the City, along with the Chabad rabbi and some two hundred participants from various faith traditions, lit a large electric menorah while offering prayers and enjoying a small communal meal.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ A monument to the founder of the city, Jean Parisiot de Valetta, erected in a square also named after de Valette, was inaugurated by then Prime Minister Laurence Gonzi in 2012. An imposing bust of Pope Pius V, who sponsored the construction of the City, was installed opposite the Law Courts in Valletta's Great Siege Square in 2006.

²⁷⁶ A. Broide, 'Captives-Redeeming', *Strange Side*, <http://strangeside.com/captives-redeeming/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

²⁷⁷ A. P. Bloch, *One a Day: An Anthology of Jewish Historical Anniversaries for Every Day of the Year*, Brooklyn NY, KTAV Publishing House, 1987, p.137.

²⁷⁸ 'Chabad on the Harbour: A Visit to Malta', *Phoenix Jewish News*, <http://www.chabad-nj.org/page.asp?pageID=%7BCB94A507-9665-4603-AA5C-BA27145F8580%7D> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

The event took place in de Valette square, a few feet away from the newly erected statue of de Valette himself, a man who had, throughout his reign, been responsible for sustaining the slave trade of countless Jewish (and Muslim) captives. A bitter-sweet moment for interfaith communion, if ever there was one.

Returning to the cultural history of Valletta, the fact that slavery remained a massive and motivating factor in the economy of Valletta during the period of the Knights²⁷⁹ was a reality only changed when Napoleon conquered the island in 1798 and made the slave trade illegal.²⁸⁰ The role of slavery in the Maltese economy is conspicuously absent in mainstream contemporary retellings of the story of Valletta.²⁸¹ One wonders whether the institutions of memory are so eager to elide the presence of the non-Christian precisely because to do otherwise would inevitably involve a long and difficult look at the legacy of slavery that, for centuries, informed Catholic Malta's relationship with Judaism and Islam. What would such an acknowledgement mean in terms of cultural memory and

²⁷⁹ E. Buttigieg, *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity: The Hospitaller Knights of Malta c. 1580-1700*, London, Bloomsbury, 2011, p. 6.

²⁸⁰ J. Clancy-Smith, *North Africa, Islam, and the Mediterranean World*, NYC, Frank Cass Publishers, 2005, p. 136.

²⁸¹ For example, one heavily marketed and government/E.U. subsidised avenue for 'popular history', peddled to local and tourist alike, is the *Malta 5D* audio-visual experience in Valletta. Purporting to offer "colourful and impressive episodes of the Maltese history and culture", with a heavy emphasis on the baroque period and the Second World War, the realities of slavery during the period of the Knights (and the postcolonial experience of the Maltese following the British presence in Malta) are never mentioned. See <http://malta5d.com/home/>, (last accessed 7 August 2015).

contemporary mournability, the shifting context for authentic cultural diplomacy, and the ongoing relationship with the religious Other, demanded by an ethical encounter with non-Christian faith traditions? The benefits the Maltese Catholic Church accrued, the wealth and prosperity that its economic dependency on the institutions of slavery offered, suddenly reach into the present to propose problematic renegotiations of memory and place within Valletta.

These obscured instances of violence make it all the more necessary for the cultural arbiters and institutions of the City to appreciate the mournability, as an existential category, of the Other in the places and the spaces that constitute Valletta. To do otherwise is simply to maintain the single-voiced narrative, the “neatly plotted and so well performed”²⁸² exclusion of other inhabitations of the cityscape that secure the story of the Maltese as inviolately Catholic and European, defenders and saviours with untarnished and heroic histories. The tactical dehumanisation of identities, voices, and bodies that suffered slavery, such as the non-Christian Other during the baroque, or any other number of contemporary strategies of exclusion, is a response to those whose place in the narrative of Valletta threatens to disrupt the entire industry of heritage manufacture and national sensibility. It is a disturbing disavowal of the City’s own complicity in the violence that has led to these absences, to these refusals to remember. The only ethically tenable ap-

²⁸² III.iii.1–2, from *The Jew of Malta* (1589) - Christopher Marlowe’s play, set in Malta during the period of the Great Siege, highlights the levels of antisemitism and Christian triumphalism typical of the era, and the perception of Malta (and Valletta specifically) as a centre of unrest between Christian and non-Christian inhabitants.

proach must involve an acknowledgement of Valletta's investment in the obfuscation of these non-Christian traditions within the City, and the attendant responsibility of Maltese processes of memory in perpetuating violence.²⁸³

The need to coexist, to acknowledge the shared mournability of all life (the vulnerability of all bodies held in place and the value of all stories contained in memory, which co-inhabit the cityscape) is incumbent on all communities,²⁸⁴ especially those that call the City their literal or metaphorical home. Such a move towards coexistence is especially important where there is a cultural distance between the dominant narrative and the voices of the Other; a distance written in time and cultural distinction. Indeed, the distance between them may serve as a space in which diverse traditions can come together; it may serve as an encouragement to the work of cultural diplomacy to forge “a human community in which common epistemological or cultural grounds cannot always be assumed”.²⁸⁵ Rather, something deeper, some ontological and existential sense of shared life, must come into play; the inability to assume a shared point of origin leads to interior searching for some other point of departure, built on a more basic and more human foundation.

²⁸³ J. Butler, 2004, p. 35-36.

²⁸⁴ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd Edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, (originally published 1958) 2008, p. 51.

²⁸⁵ J. Butler, 2004, p. 38.

The pursuit of proximity in differentiation and distance (to paraphrase Butler) both disrupts the project of Maltese Catholic exceptionalism, the result of its ‘imperfect’ modernity highlighted in previous sections, and sets the ground for the next section’s focus on the Second Vatican Council, with its particularly Catholic response to the problem of exclusion and re/union. This conciliar perspective offers its own entry points into the valuing of polyvocality, by a cultural approach that arises from Malta’s existing monologic narrative, and makes possible mutually respectful, enriching encounters between faith communities in Malta. It expands the parameters of Valletta’s narrative but does not undermine the cultural and social context it provides. Mourability offers itself as a register through which to enliven the Second Vatican Council’s non-violent framework,²⁸⁶ ready to be accessed by Valletta’s existing Catholic narrative. It may therefore ensure an ethical interfaith encounter within the workings of cultural diplomacy, prioritising the inclusion of the Other, and at last allowing for a variety of voices, bodies, and identities to inhabit and enliven existing configurations of place within the contemporary City.

²⁸⁶ G. F. Powers, ‘Catholic approaches to security and peace’, in C. Seiple, D. Hoover, P. Otis, *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Security*, Oxford, Routledge, 2013, p. 39.

CHAPTER SIX: CATHOLIC ENCOUNTERS

Previous sections have discussed the ways in which narratives of Maltese Catholicism dominate the spatial memory City of Valletta, and how openings and fissures in the totalising narrative present the possibility for transformations that may allow for peace-based interfaith dialogue, within the context of a national programme of cultural diplomacy between faith communities. This section will look at how non-Christian traditions can inhabit the City, not by destabilising the Catholic narrative but by working within it, through the vehicle of the Second Vatican Council. This section shall suggest that, while the effects of the Council were never adequately embraced in Malta due to Malta's experience of modernity,²⁸⁷ its key documents, with special emphasis on *Nostra Aetate* (the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, promulgated in 1965), have a special role to play in fostering interfaith encounters within the City of Valletta.

Just as the momentous Council of Trent was motivated by far-reaching historical changes in the 1500s, Vatican II surfaced out of the “long 1960s.”²⁸⁸ An international

²⁸⁷ Due to the effects of that imperfect modernity experienced in Malta, detailed in previous sections.

²⁸⁸ A. Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c.1958–1974*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 7.

phenomenon heralding a period of decisive transformation in the religious history of the Western world, it marked “a rupture as profound as that brought about by the Reformation.”²⁸⁹ The modern cultural and political changes undergone in Malta were equally crucial; the transition out of British imperial rule, first as an independent state with a constitutional monarchy in 1964²⁹⁰ and finally becoming a republic in the early 1970s. Just as the Church in Malta had to modify its relationship with the people of Malta and British colonials,²⁹¹ the international Church, through the Council, responded to massive transformations around the world by proposing a programme of unprecedented social, political, and economic renewal. Motivated by a sense of *aggiornamento* (reading “the signs of the times”)²⁹² the Catholic Church since the Council has undergone substantial and far-reaching changes both in institutional character and ecclesiological orientation, mindful of “one sole purpose – that the Kingdom of God may come and the salvation of the hu-

²⁸⁹ H. McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 1.

²⁹⁰ Where the Protestant monarch of Great Britain, head of the Church of England, was retained as constitutional monarch of Malta.

²⁹¹ Including an unprecedented inauguration of dialogue between Anglicans and Catholics. This new movement towards open discussion between representatives of Anglicanism and Catholicism culminated in a meeting held in Malta, where the Anglican Communion was described as holding a “special place” among the Reformation churches. The meetings were subsequently collected in the Malta Report (1968), and have formed a foundation for subsequent hospitality and ecumenical dialogue. See J. Gros, E. McManus, A. Riggs (eds.), *Introduction to Ecumenism*, Mahwah NJ, Paulist Press, 1998, p. 177.

²⁹² Pope John XXIII, *Humanae salutis* (1962), cf. Mt. 16:4.

man race may be accomplished.”²⁹³ This reorientation was in no small measure informed by the legacy of the Second World War, and Europe’s failure to protect the lives of so many vulnerable individuals during that darkest period of modernity.²⁹⁴

In response, the Second Vatican Council expressed an ecclesial duty in furthering the reform of socio-political and economic structures at the service of human dignity,²⁹⁵ in unifying the human family,²⁹⁶ striving for liberation from economic and political oppression,²⁹⁷ and discovering in the human being, beyond differences of ethnicity, culture, or even religious ideology, “the source, the centre, and the purpose of all socio-economic life.”²⁹⁸ This was certainly an ambitious undertaking, and assessing the realisation of the fruits of the Council is equally multifaceted.²⁹⁹ However it is certainly the case that the Catholic Church repositioned itself to engage in various levels of interfaith, ecumenical, and inter-ideological dialogue during the Council; one might say that it began to embrace

²⁹³ *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), §45.

²⁹⁴ K. Kwiet and J. Malthaus (eds.), *Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust*, Westport CT, Praeger Publishers, 2004, p. 69.

²⁹⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, §9 and §63d.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* §40.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* §60 a/b.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.* §63a.

²⁹⁹ For recent reassessments of the Council’s legacy see J. W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2008, and, M. L. Lamb and M. Levering (eds.), *Vatican II: Renewal Within Tradition*, NYC, Oxford University Press, 2008.

its own understanding (in light of modernity) of the mournability that forms a common approach to human experience. Whether this new project was adequately reflected in the Church in Malta's outreach is, however, questionable.³⁰⁰

The fact is that many of the larger aims of the Council did not have direct impact in Malta, because of the political and social climate that dominated the islands. These are yet to be fully accessed in terms of expanding the scope of interfaith dialogue through Catholic channels; for example, Malta's Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, coordinated by the Curia of the Catholic Church in Malta, was only established in 2011³⁰¹ and has yet to perform any substantial outreach to non-Christian communities on the island. This lack of engagement may be addressed through accessing available strands in the narrative of Maltese Catholicism, in order for Valletta's spatial memory to represent those places of mournability, and therefore of shared humanity, that are loci of violence historically (and in some ways, presently) inhabited by the non-Christian Other.

³⁰⁰ Indeed, during the period in question it seems that the Church in Malta become more traditional and conservative in its approach, not only politically (the interdicts mentioned in previous sections), but also in its spirituality. This can be seen in the kind of Catholic lay participation proposed and popularised (as an expression of largely anti-Protestant sentiment) by the Church through the evangelisation of individuals like Dun George Preca, who would later become Malta's first, and so far only, canonised saint. See D. A. Castillo, *The Santa Marija Convoy*, Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2012, p. 239.

³⁰¹ The Church in Malta, *Commission for Interreligious Dialogue*, http://thechurchinmalta.org/en/posts/38028/kummissjoni-gad_djalogu-interreligjuz (last accessed 7 August 2015).

Returning briefly to an overview of the Council's historical background; in 1962 Pope John XXIII³⁰² inaugurated the Second Vatican Council and its mission of dialogue, in a necessary dual action of "interrogating and being interrogated by the Word."³⁰³ The Council signalled a move beyond models of coercion, where the state (supported by the institutional Church) envisions a single religion for its national identity; something the Constitution of Malta still intimates, however obliquely, and reflects in its political ritual and social mores.³⁰⁴ The impossibility of any such totalising, monologic rhetoric after the atrocities of the twentieth century informs the theoretical underlay we observe within our journey through Valletta (studded as it is with physical encrustations of the memory of war), and in the textual operations of the Second Vatican Council.

However, the importance of breaking with this rhetoric was not uniformly recognised across the Council. Its appeal is attested to in the varieties of ecclesial reform advocated by different groups of bishops. Broadly speaking, bishops from a religious economy where Roman Catholicism was numerically and legally predominant (including Italy, Spain, and Portugal) tended to oppose accommodating contemporary trends in outright

³⁰² Declared a saint of the Catholic Church in 2014.

³⁰³ M. Barnes, *Interreligious Learning: Dialogue, Spirituality and the Christian Imagination*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 28.

³⁰⁴ Already referred to throughout this dissertation; Parliament begins with Catholic prayers, the Law Courts are emblazoned with crucifixes, the University of Malta inaugurates each academic year with a celebration of the Catholic mass etc.

socio-political reform.³⁰⁵ Although Malta was not represented in any great number (there are usually only two bishops selected for the islands, one for Malta and the other, Gozo), it is to be expected that their sympathies were similarly oriented. It was bishops from pluralistic environments (Northern Europe, the USA, Africa and Asia) who insisted on an openness to change, and the benefits of interfaith communion. Interestingly, in contrast to the bishops of central and southern Europe (including Malta) “and despite their similar monopolistic status,”³⁰⁶ the bishops from Latin America were among the most theologically progressive.

The Second Vatican Council’s critical acknowledgement of the need to move beyond a totalising rhetoric, such as we have encountered in the narrative of Valletta, is evident in its ecumenical documents.³⁰⁷ Avery Cardinal Dulles, an influential interpreter of the Council, suggests the only tenable ecclesial position must now be one of tolerance. While admitting Christians’ right to claims of the absolute uniqueness of Christianity, the Council makes clear that Christians within societies in which tolerance is operative are, through the Council, well placed to engage in a newly formed hermeneutic of listening. This ‘hermeneutic’, or method of interpretation, is characterised by continual self-questioning in light of the beliefs, habits, and values of others, a sense of reflexive enquiry

³⁰⁵ M. J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2007, p. 43.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964), *Nostra Aetate* (1965).

through which narratives of Self are expanded in new vocabularies of experience, afforded by constant encounters with the Other. This social process, and its concurrent responsibilities of initiating, sustaining and valuing discourse, radically informs the Second Vatican Council's exhortations to dialogue and collaboration.³⁰⁸ The need for such a process in Valletta, as a means of achieving an awareness of shared vulnerability and mournability, are self-evident. Consequently a more modest ecclesiology begins to emerge in the City's spaces, capable of critical engagement with ecclesial action at various stages of its development, and exploring ways in which the Church may, through cultural engagement, extend itself beyond the confines of one closed community.³⁰⁹

Of particular interest is the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on Christ's presence within the Church as a "sacrament or sign of salvation,"³¹⁰ grounded in Patristic doctrines of the Mystical Body in *ressourcement* ("a return to the sources") of Catholic ecclesiology; an understanding of the body of the central figure of Christianity that emphasises its precariousness and vulnerability. The implications of defining the Church as a sacrament (a common motif in the Council documents) is summarised in the views of Yves Congar. He addresses the idea that medieval and later baroque sacramental theology had grown progressively more disconnected from its ecclesiological foundations, a posi-

³⁰⁸ *Nostra Aetate*, §2.

³⁰⁹ Already under serious discussion as early as the 1900s by theologians including Louis Capéran.

³¹⁰ Y. Congar, *Un peuple messianique: l'Eglise, sacrement du salut. Salut et liberation*, Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1975, p. 13.

tion much in vogue before the Council and reflected in Malta's religious conservatism. Going some way to restore balance, Congar points to Aquinas' emphasis on the humanity (indeed, mournability) of Christ as preserving a sacramental understanding of Church,³¹¹ and underpinning the Council's talk of the Church as a "universal sacrament of salvation",³¹² capable of application beyond the confines of the Church understood restrictively and traditionally, but rather embracing individuals and communities from other traditions in its universalising orbit. It is in these key themes that a hermeneutic of listening emerges, responding to the universal sacramentality of the Church, and the Second Vatican Council's new vision of the Church as expressing its ecclesiology in a "ministry of service",³¹³ of outreach to the Other through dialogue and witness,³¹⁴ through encounter and listening.

This theological reorientation has something vital to tell us about the Church's potential to embrace the mournability of the Other, the humanity of the non-Christian, within its narratives of the City. It offers a corrective to the Church in Malta's closed sense of itself, tethered to the traumatic cultural effects of Knights' rule (where the Maltese were figured in terms of keeping the non-Christian, non-European barbarian at bay)

³¹¹ Y. Congar, 1975, pp. 57-58.

³¹² *Lumen Gentium*, §48.

³¹³ A. Dulles, "A Half Century of Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies*, vol. 50, 1989, p. 426.

³¹⁴ Y. Congar, 1975, p. 20.

and the Second World War (and the place of the Maltese as the Madonna's chosen people). The tenability of such narrative strategies is called radically into question; there are no longer any places that can be considered 'outside' the remit of the Church's newly adopted strategies of listening and inclusion, the valuing of narratives and of bodies that were, for the longest time, surplus to the requirements of the City's Catholic narrative.

The non-Christian now becomes a valuable participant in the story, offering an opportunity for reconnection, a potent symbol of Pope John XXIII's liberalising aspirations for the Council.³¹⁵ Valletta's Catholic narrative is well placed to make use of the Second Vatican Council's hermeneutic of listening as a framework through which to explore the mournability of the Other, and therefore engage in theologically supported interfaith dialogue and cultural diplomacy through an exploration of religion's place within the life of diverse communities in Malta. The Council opens up a space for interfaith encounters, precisely because it presents a response to the excessive damage of modernity within Catholic discourse; it works inside the narrative structures already employed by the Catholic Church and its traditions. Of all the documents presented by the Council, *Nostra Aetate* comes to the fore as the key document for the celebration of this interfaith dialogue.

³¹⁵ D. Philpott, "The Catholic Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 15.2, 2004, p. 35. For a more critical view of John XXIII's social teaching and its perceived liberalism, see J. Haldane, *Faithful Reason: Essays Catholic and Philosophical*, London, Routledge, 2004, pp. 215-216.

The most significant document produced by the Second Vatican Council as regards interfaith dialogue, *Nostra Aetate*, celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2015. The document expresses the Church's positive regard for faith traditions other than Christianity. It makes extensive use of the metaphor of light, stating that non-Christian traditions “reflect a ray of Truth,”³¹⁶ a shared inclination, by which it is possible to communicate across previously insurmountable doctrinal and cultural boundaries. The document also places particular emphasis on Catholic-Jewish relations, deploring anti-Semitism and emphasising a “spiritual patrimony common”³¹⁷ to Christians and Jews; this has special relevance to the realities of Valletta described in the preceding section, with its heritage of slavery and religious intolerance, made all the more complicated by the experience of the Second World War and the legacy of modernity.

Nostra Aetate counteracts the threat to Catholicism posed by late-capitalist culture’s amassing of commodified and disposable heritage (the cult of tourism alluded to throughout this dissertation), and the threat of a resurgence of the rationalising monologic narrative (the dark and enduring shadow of institutional violence),³¹⁸ by encouraging the pursuit of traces of the sacred (understood as the deeply human) in the physical world; in bodies, in places, in the inhabitation of materiality. We can see this most clearly in rela-

³¹⁶ *Nostra Aetate*, §2.

³¹⁷ *Nostra Aetate*, §4.

³¹⁸ R. Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning Under Mussolini and Hitler*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 39.

tion to Judaism when we read the comments made by Cardinal Walter Kasper,³¹⁹ who described the effect of *Nostra Aetate* as "an astonishing transformation".³²⁰ What is truly astonishing about the document is the way in which it describes non-Christians, with special emphasis on the Jewish people, as both a profoundly spiritual and physical people, imbued (to resume our use of Butler and Levinas) with a common vulnerability. It emphasises the nature of community,³²¹ which must now be envisioned as a collection of corporeal bodies that must exist within physical spaces, afforded the dignity and opportunity to share the spatial memory of the Catholic Church and its traditional loci such as the City of Valletta.

Rabbi David Rosen says that "the implications [of *Nostra Aetate*] were truly revolutionary in the most positive sense of the word. With the promulgation of this declaration, a people - formerly viewed at best as a fossil but more often as cursed and condemned to wander and suffer - was now officially portrayed as beloved by God and somehow very much still part of the Divine plan for humankind."³²² Gathering impres-

³¹⁹ Cardinal President of both the Holy See's Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The Commission was established in 1974 (the year the Republic of Malta was created).

³²⁰ N. Lamdan and A. Melloni (eds.), *Nostra Aetate: Origins, Promulgation, Impact on Jewish-Catholic Relations*, Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2007, p. 175.

³²¹ *Nostra Aetate*, §1, §5.

³²² See, D. Rosen, 'Catholic-Jewish Relations 40 Years After *Nostra Aetate*', *AJC Global Jewish Advocacy*, <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=7oJILSPwFfJSG&b=8451903&ct=12485179> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

sions to be transposed to cities across the world, the document's images of one human community on one shared, common journey echoes the Council's larger declarations of the Pilgrim Church on a journey of gathering and reconciling "impressions" to itself, performing the lives and narratives of the Other within its own story.³²³ Valletta, as a City of troubled past, is effectively consecrated by this invitation to participation in the performance of ecclesial pilgrimage; it is by elevating its Catholic narrative, away from the totalising voice to a now polyvocal performance, a choir of many voices, that the City can reread its narrative in light of the Church's orientation towards the non-Christian.

The City is therefore invited to surrender to the Council's enactment of what it means to be Catholic in a new world, to accept the invitation to encounters with those who were previously excluded and forgotten. Here we approach the crux of what gives the Second Vatican Council's potential for interfaith dialogue its particular valency, providing a context for cultural diplomacy that is both deeply theological and still applicable to other expressions of culture. The Second Vatican Council speaks with a loud voice in recognising an intrinsic humanity within those who were so long forgotten, who were rendered unmournable. Their precarity now makes them revolutionary, "privileged recipients"³²⁴ of the Council's message through their very precariousness, with the power to

³²³ R. Hutter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, p. 133.

³²⁴ Benedict XVI, *Address to the Brazilian Bishops in the Cathedral of São Paulo*, Brazil (11 May 2007), article 3. Quoted in Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), article 48.

become the promise of conscience³²⁵ by an escape from the desacralising legacy of rational modernity and its culmination in late capitalist consumerism.³²⁶

The Second Vatican Council's revitalisation of Catholic Christianity makes a series of moral demands that necessitate the restructuring of memory at its most fundamental; it "is not a memory which deceptively dispenses Christians from the risks involved in the future. It is not a middle-class counter-figure to hope. On the contrary, it anticipates the future as a future of those who are oppressed, without hope and doomed to fail. It is therefore a dangerous and at the same time a liberating memory that oppresses and questions the present because it reminds us not of some open future, but precisely this future and because it compels Christians constantly to change themselves so that they are able to take this future into account."³²⁷

If Scripture may "be reconstructed only as a world of images,"³²⁸ which it to say through culturally mediated means that are built on modes of memory, then the City's choices to remember and change itself through sequences of carefully cultivated cultural

³²⁵ Perhaps in analogic ethical participation of a role inhabited (especially in a post-Holocaust world) by the Jewish people. For a somewhat extreme understanding of the Jewish people as a corporate embodiment of conscience, see George Steiner, Yerushah Lecture 'The Roots of Darkness,' University of Cambridge, 2014.

³²⁶ D. Lal, *Reviving the Invisible Hand: The Case for Classical Liberalism in the Twenty-first Century*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 2006, x.

³²⁷ J. B. Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. David Smith, New York, Seabury, 1980, p. 90.

³²⁸ H. U. von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, 1: Seeing the Form*, Edinburgh, T&T Clarke, 1982, p. 84.

emplacements become morally critical. Indeed, they determine the very possibility of communication beyond the boundaries imposed by ethnicity, nationality, or religion. There is a need for self-awareness, through the observation of memory and its emplacements, of the processes that presently close Valletta to extended encounters with the non-Christian Other. Therefore, these must be opened in an immanent vision where culture is capable of containing an apprehensible reality of the invisible, suddenly made visible; the forgotten that must now be remembered, valued, and incorporated into the City's narrative. This is the space wherein the previously unmourned, the face of the Other that Levinas says contains the potential for such anxiety, can at last be seen and, as if for the first time, be known.

By establishing a space of invitation rather than endless extensions of privileged and exclusive territory, the Second Vatican Council's message articulates a similar appeal to abandon the totalising voice, in favour of hermeneutic strategies of listening. We can see this very literally in Valletta in several places of ecumenical (though as yet, not inter-faith) communion. These include St James Church in Merchants' Street, where African Christians from various churches (several of which, such as the fractured Ethiopian Coptic and Orthodox Eritrean Churches, are in conflict back home) suspend their disagreements and share a sacred site provided by the Catholic Church. Also, Our Lady of Damascus, in Archbishop Street, hosts a growing number Greek and Russian Orthodox Chris-

tians (and increasingly, Coptic Orthodox Christians) on their holy days.³²⁹ Meanwhile, St. Andrew's Scots Church, a Protestant place of worship, has held various ecumenical meetings between Catholic and Protestant groups, the first of which, however, only took place in 2010.³³⁰

Informed by the Council and thinking of itself as “the prolongation of Christ's mediatorial nature and work,”³³¹ the international Catholic Church offers theological justifications³³² from within its own magisterial teachings for a rewriting of Catholic narratives, and the opening of previously closed Catholic spaces. The mournability identified by Butler, the precarious face of the Other in Levinas, can now be grafted onto Catholicism's own narratives, with resulting implications and transformations for the diversity of spaces in Valletta, and their inhabitation. The City can now be a meeting space between the institutional Church and agents of socio-political change, accommodating an inter-faith dialogue that rests on on a culture of encounters that transform as much as they are transformed by the individuals and communities involved.

³²⁹ P. Newsham, ‘An Island of Christian Sanctuary’, *The Sunday Times of Malta*, 28/12/2014, <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141228/life-features/An-island-of-Christian-sanctuary.549973> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³³⁰ I. Gatt, ‘Archbishop welcomes those involved in ecumenical activities’, *The Church in Malta*, 25/1/2010, <http://thechurchinmalta.org/en/posts/5411/archbishop-welcomes-those-involved-in-ecumenical-activitiesl-arcisqof-jiltaqa%25e2%2580%2599-ma%25e2%2580%2599-persuni-involuti-fil-> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³³¹ H. U. von Balthasar, *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory, 5: The Last Act*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1998, p. 131.

³³² Ibid.

In this way, a revolutionary energy may be generated in Valletta, through a rereading of its spaces in the light of the Second Vatican Council. The City's recognition of the sacred can be at last be extended to other voices and bodies and narrative strategies. It may now inform the kinds of nationally sanctioned cultural diplomacy that it is called to practice, drawing communities together to engage in interfaith encounters. Indeed, the potential exists for authentic self-disclosure to occur in these rehabilitated spaces. The Church's mission (laid out in the Council's documents) to take its message of mutual encounter to the marginalised and dispossessed³³³ is well placed to inaugurate a new topography of Valletta, entrenched in places of memory's undoing. The City's piled debris may be sifted with a new purpose, a new priority that embraces the experience of the non-Christian even as it casts a critical and honest eye on the City's Catholic past. In this context, it is finally possible to enter a place where Maltese identity can be re-conceived; where the hermeneutic of listening may finally turn an eager ear to new voices, spoken through the experience of those whose mournability, whose humanity, is at last embraced.

It is in resonances and contradictions between the City's spatial memory and themes from the Second Vatican Council, rooted in the "long 1960s," that a challenging enactment of the missiological (but not aggressively evangelising) Catholic Church emerges. A reading of the Second Vatican Council's vision of the Church in dialogue with contemporary cultural, ecclesial, and political agendas holds the potential to transfigure Valletta, and Malta at large, in its multiple uses and reuses of place. This is the kind of

³³³ *Ad Gentes*, §2.

power that cultural diplomacy makes available by displaying the nation's potential to draw to itself the lives of those who inhabit its spaces, participating in the construction and emplacement of the national narrative.

In fact, the work of cultural diplomacy (and in Malta, the use it could make of the Second Vatican Council's reorientation to polyvocality) makes possible a reevaluation of ignored narratives, undoing ongoing processes of exclusion from dominant discourses that have so far characterised the narrative of the City. In light of such a change, the honest condemnation of mechanisms of suppression, conformity, and inhumanity becomes possible.³³⁴ These mechanisms are replaced by a celebration of diversity, and the opportunity of encounters between faith communities that have a shared claim to exist in the City of Valletta, to participate in its processes of memory and emplacement, and be united in pursuit of a common culture of peace.

³³⁴ J. Kavunkal, E. D'Lima, and E. Monteiro (eds.), *Vatican II: A Gift and a Task, International Colloquium to Mark the 40th Anniversary of Vatican Council II*, Bandra, St. Paul Press, 2006, p. 123.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TOWARDS A CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE CITY

Creating a culture of peace necessarily involves the work of cultural diplomacy among communities in collaboration with national institutions, in order to secure the participation of diverse social actors, engage on issues of culture, and maintain an awareness of the underlying conceptual systems that direct cultural predispositions towards peace or violence. It is equally vital that we recognise the role of religion, informing the “new period of innovative community politics and social upheaval”³³⁵ currently experienced across the globe today. The substance of this dissertation was formulated to explore the potential for this level of public engagement and social transformation, through the relationship between concepts of memory, emplacement, and religion in Malta, with a focus on the City of Valletta. This was done in order to discover possibilities of cooperation and peace-building between faith traditions, and the reasons behind a perceived lack of such encounters.

The dissertation has identified the nature and form of memory in the City, the quality of these narratives in the context of Maltese modernity, and how the Catholic nar-

³³⁵ R. Rubenstein, ‘From Cultures of Violence to Cultures of Peace: The Problem of Violent Systems’, *Rich Rubenstein’s Blog*, 15/8/2015. <http://www.rich-rubenstein.com/2015/08/from-cultures-of-violence-to-cultures-of-peace-the-problem-of-violent-systems/> (last accessed 15 August 2015).

rative of Valletta constrains the variety of interfaith encounters possible within its inhabitation. It has also explored the importance of a shared recognition of common humanity through the concepts of precariousness and mournability, and has asked whether the application of the Second Vatican Council's dialogue-prioritising framework to the narrative of Valletta may provide a means of fostering non-violent, expansive participation in the life of the City. Such a change, it has been argued, could be accomplished by making use of the City's pre-existing Catholic narrative within an approach built on the investment of cultural diplomacy³³⁶ through interfaith dialogue.

The general theoretical literature on these subjects as they relate to the emplacement of memory and national identity, particularly Jan Assmann on communicative memory and Michel de Certeau on emplacement, is inconclusive (or, indeed, silent) on several vital questions within the contemporary discourse of interfaith dialogue. The lack of analysis is especially clear as it relates to the expansion of remembrance and processes of emplacement for fruitful encounters between groups from different faith traditions. For this reason, the dissertation sought to address outstanding questions of concern, including:

³³⁶ Understood not simply as the activity of cultural relations conducted between states, but between the institutions of a state and the non-dominant communities, specifically faith communities, which are present within it.

1. Does the City of Valletta express its modernity in such a way that privileges the culture of Catholicism, to the exclusion of non-Christian memories, narratives, and bodies?
2. Does the application of the expansive, existential concepts of precariousness and mournability, within a framework provided by the Second Vatican Council, offer a means of encouraging the possibility for interfaith encounters within the culturally Catholic memory of Valletta?

In order to approach these questions, this dissertation has attempted to discover and then analyse the underlying tensions involved within the experience of Maltese modernity, the construal of Maltese national memory in the City, and the recognition of the mournability of the non-Christian Other. Particularly, this has focused on the political and historical particularities that seem to consistently privilege the ostensible ‘official’ Catholic faith of the island,³³⁷ to the possible detriment of effective interfaith communion, with Catholic-Jewish relations held up as particularly emblematic of ongoing trends. In response to this, the dissertation set out to explore processes of remembrance and inhabitation in Valletta, the way these processes reproduce patterns of power that effectively inhibit interfaith dialogue and possibilities of friendship among faith communities, and how the medium of religious culture can come to be a positively transformative

³³⁷ Where Article 2 of the Constitution of Malta defines the religion of Malta as the "Roman Catholic apostolic religion", <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8566> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

vector for effecting cultural change through interfaith dialogue in the context of a national obligation to enact processes of cultural diplomacy.³³⁸

The main findings of this dissertation are section specific, and progress from a treatment of modernity and the interplay of religious and secular conceptions of time (*Malta's Imperfect Modernity*), the formation of memory in response to these processes of modernisation within Maltese history (*Modes of Memory*), and the emplacement of memory within site-specific configurations of place in Valletta (*Emplacing the City*) that render certain modalities of inhabitation and remembrance possible. These sections were then qualified by a look at how the concepts of precariousness and mournability require a corresponding reevaluation of the construal of memory and emplacement in light of the need to embrace the non-Catholic Other (*Places of Mourning*) in a framework already supplied by Catholicism's global response to modernity, namely the Second Vatican Council, which has yet to take root fully in Valletta's self-narrative (*Catholic Encounters*). However, this response was shown to contain the potential for both initiating and strengthening interfaith dialogue. This concluding chapter will now synthesise these sections' findings to answer the study's research questions, and offer some recommendations for policy and practice.

In dealing with the imperfect modernity of Malta, which is to say the incomplete process of cultural secularisation experienced in Malta due to the conflation, at various

³³⁸ L. Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding: Strategies for the Transformation of Culture Shaping Institutions*, NYC, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 89.

points in Maltese history, between the Catholic Church and the state,³³⁹ we must acknowledge the claim that Christianity is “no longer a force”³⁴⁰ in late modernity does not hold water in Malta and the narratives of its capital city Valletta. Such difficulties are due in no small part to the atypical (certainly within a European situation) experience of modernity endured by Malta. The forces that dictate narrative processes of memory, and the ‘inhabited’ nature of memory within the context of the City, have been shown to raise points of concern for ethical imperatives that demand certain kinds of remembering,³⁴¹ a form of remembering that has been historically and practically exclusive of non-Catholic identities, with implications that are especially evident for migrant and diaspora communities in Malta today.

Understood in terms laid down by Judith Butler, this lead to the dissertation’s recognition of the social unmournability of certain lives³⁴² due to the ways they are excluded or deemphasised by the dominant narratives of the City. The issue of the precariousness of unmourned lives comes to the fore in dealing with the cultural conflict we find in Valletta, a reminder of those lives, bodies, and narratives that are effaced by a reluc-

³³⁹ A. Koster, ‘Clericals Versus Socialists: Toward the 1984 Malta School War’, in E. R. Wolf (ed.), *Religious Regimes and State Formation: Perspectives from European Ethnology*, Albany NY, University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 105-106.

³⁴⁰ M. de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. T. Conley, NYC, Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 33.

³⁴¹ J. Blustein, 2008, p. ix.

³⁴² See J. Butler, 2006.

tance to pursue their incorporation within the City's cultural narrative. This implies the need for decisions to be made, taken as part of a larger policy strategy through cultural diplomacy and interfaith communion, that consciously choose to remember differently; to replace monologic approaches to memory with polyvocal speaking and a hermeneutic of listening. This hermeneutic, at the heart of the Second Vatican Council (an important tool in the national context due to Malta's Catholic heritage), requires an openness to the truth of the Other, beyond the socio-political constraints imposed by the particular cultural manifestations of Maltese modernity.

“Each time we enter a new place, we participate in an existing number of multiple identities and histories”.³⁴³ It is the realisation of this plurality of voices and their emplacement that signifies the importance of finding links between cultural historical memory and its manifestation in place. This dissertation has worked to show that the places of the City must come to resemble, to replicate and reinforce, a variety of voices, rather than a single overarching (and exclusive) narrative. National strategies of inclusion must be prioritised by cultural diplomacy in its projects of interfaith dialogue, even within a context as heavily invested in its self-conscious storytelling as the variety of Catholicism present in Valletta. It is because of this trend towards exclusion, towards a vision of the City's narrative as enclosed, that “the power of place is diminished and often lost”;³⁴⁴

³⁴³ L. Lippard, 1997, p. 6.

³⁴⁴ L. Lippard, 1997, p. 20.

which is to say the power of place to incorporate difference to itself (without flattening it into a single, totalising voice) is rendered almost impossible.

However this absence, the loss of the visible and meaningful multiplicity of voices, continues “to define culture and identity. It also continues – as a presence – to change the way we live”.³⁴⁵ One way of understanding this dichotomy between forgetting and remembering, between absence and the haunted presence of place, is through an acknowledgement of the persistent humanity of those voices that are rendered mute by the monologic impetus of the dominant narrative. In other words, the realisation of a shared precariousness, the shared mournability of all life that participates in the vulnerability of all bodies held in place, and the value of all stories captured in memory. The need to respect and honour these participations is incumbent on the City³⁴⁶ if it is ever to host spaces of interfaith dialogue, capable of accepting different inhabitations by a diversity of faith communities. The distance between these communities and their traditions therefore serves as an encouragement to produce “a human community in which common epistemological or cultural grounds cannot always be assumed”,³⁴⁷ but must be built on the most fundamental of shared realities; the common experience of human life’s precariousness, and the vulnerable experience of mournability.

³⁴⁵ L. Lippard, 1997, p. 20.

³⁴⁶ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd Edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, (originally published 1958) 2008, p. 51.

³⁴⁷ J. Butler, 2004, p. 38.

This pursuit of togetherness in differentiation both disrupts the narratives of Maltese Catholic exceptionalism, the result of its historical experience of modernity, and sets the ground for the implementation of the Second Vatican Council's theoretical framework of listening and cooperation as a corrective to the damage done by Malta's imperfect modernity. The Council's perspective offers an entry point into the valuing of polyvocality and what that must mean for the nation's Catholic identity,³⁴⁸ a cultural approach that arises from Malta's existing monologic narrative and yet, rather than undermining it, qualifies and transforms it. By adopting the correctives inherent in the Council, and its embrace of larger trends towards human rights-based perspectives,³⁴⁹ the possibility of mutually respectful, enriching encounters between faith communities in Malta becomes a reality. Such encounters would expand the parameters of Valletta's narrative, affording new spaces within which to exercise the tools of cultural diplomacy and encourage dialogue.

The Council offers a message that at once condemns the mechanisms of suppression, conformity, and inhumanity that constitute a totalising, monologic (indeed, 'modern') narrative, which privileges one group at the expense of all others. Rather, the Council presents a celebratory promise of diversity through meaningful encounters between

³⁴⁸ D. Pratt, *The Church and Other Faiths: The World Council of Churches, the Vatican, and Interreligious Dialogue*, Bern, European University Studies: Peter Lang AG, 2010, p. 165.

³⁴⁹ J. B. Hehir, 'Religious Activism for Human Rights: A Christian Case Study', in J. Witte, and J. D. van der Vyver, *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Religious Perspectives, Vol. 1*, the Hague, Kluwer Law International, 1996, p. 105.

faith traditions.³⁵⁰ The framework not only makes clear that each tradition has a shared stake in the life of, and a shared claim to inhabit the spaces of, the City, but also the need for participation in its processes of memory. Communities from faith traditions other than Catholicism must become active agents in the memory and inhabitation of Valletta, if the City is to be a space for encounter and communion; a stage for hopeful dialogue between communities of faith, as well as a site of cultural transformation for society in Malta at large.

Several theoretical implications arise out of these findings. Firstly, the conceptual case for interfaith dialogue needs to be revisited in order to understand the importance of memory further, and the inhabitation of memory in place, thereby rendering the work of interfaith encounter and dialogue less abstract. Also, interfaith dialogue cannot be solely concerned with textual or dogmatic discussion (purely theological concerns),³⁵¹ but must be linked to specificities of time (the historical construction of memory) and space (configurations of place through which memory is enacted and re-presented). Finally, it is by the dual action of acknowledging and prioritising the role of memory and place in interfaith dialogue that the management of heritage and culture may become avenues for encouraging peace through cultural communication among communities (the work of cul-

³⁵⁰ *Nostra Aetate*, §5.

³⁵¹ P. F. de Bethune, *By Faith and Hospitality: The Monastic Tradition as a Model for Interreligious Encounter*, Gloucester, Action Publishing, 2002, pp. 24-25.

tural diplomacy), approaching each situation as a manifestation of multiple variables that are expressions of complex and highly inter-contextual realities.³⁵²

Policy Review and Recommendations.

The arguments presented in this work go some way to show the pressing need for policy review and reformulation on issues of interfaith dialogue. A new policy perspective grounded on the findings of this research would enable cultural and heritage projects in Valletta, and Malta more generally, which embrace opportunities for cultural diplomacy's facilitation of interfaith encounters and other complementary forms of cultural communication.³⁵³ The formulation of future research in Malta, and the creation of projects that make use of cultural capital to generate interfaith and intercultural dialogue, should, therefore, receive due consideration. These changes must occur within both secular and ecclesial spaces, making use of the tools of cultural diplomacy to engage the state and its institutions in dialogue with vulnerable communities, while acknowledging the specificities of the Maltese milieu.

³⁵² See S. B. Thistlethwaite (ed.), *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

³⁵³ With vulnerable groups such as refugees, as indicated in preceding sections.

For example, the fact that the state declares the Roman Catholic Church to have a privileged “duty and right” to define which principles are “right and wrong”,³⁵⁴ while also affirming the rights of each citizen to “full freedom of conscience and [to] enjoy the free exercise of their respective mode of religious worship”,³⁵⁵ presents an unresolved tension that problematises opportunities for dialogue. This requires some corrective in contemporary policy and institutional practice, and perhaps the need for changes to the Constitution itself. A growing awareness that these issues must be addressed has already appeared in Malta’s twenty-first century discourses on education,³⁵⁶ justice,³⁵⁷ health,³⁵⁸ and other avenues of service of provision.

³⁵⁴ Article 2, <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8566> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁵⁵ Article 40.1, *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ For example, see J. Debono, ‘Non-Catholics to be taught ‘ethics’ in classroom’, *MaltaToday*, 13/9/2011, <http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/12663/non-catholics-to-be-taught-ethics-in-classroom#.VedgqSS6hE4> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁵⁷ The Criminal Code, *Laws of Malta*, Chapter 9 Section 631. See www.justiceservices.gov.mt (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁵⁸ One example of this arose during a President’s Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society Interfaith forum session with members of the Buddhist community in Malta. Section 143 of the Code of Police Laws, Chapter 10 of the *Laws of Malta*, specifies that the dead should be interred after a maximum of 48 hours, yet certain sects within Buddhism require that a body be laid out for one week before burial. The public hospital’s morgue has accommodated this custom on several occasions, by storing cadavers in its mortuary refrigerator. (See *Report of PFWS Interfaith Forum Meeting with the Buddhist Community*, 15/6/2015, by request).

Such policies exist in a largely fluid and mutable context; therefore, they are not yet all enshrined as enforceable or justiciable rights. This is linked to an underlying assumption that the accommodation of individuals from faith traditions other than Catholicism should have their needs met on a pragmatic, case-by-case basis; such measures are patently insufficient. A movement to encourage the formulation of unequivocal policy (which can translate into legal norms that reinforce policy and make it actionable, coinciding with and bolstering processes of cultural development) must thus lead the way towards a transformation of Maltese society. This would be achieved by measures of institutional and community engagement, essentially through the tools offered by cultural diplomacy, by integrating community participation within Malta's cultural spaces in the very language of culture, and respecting the importance of religion in the lives of the many groups now living in Malta. Such a movement would correspond with this growing awareness, and the realisation that these are not 'charitable' gestures but deeply necessary manifestations of the shared precariousness, and thus humanity, evinced by sustained and authentic interfaith encounters with the Other. Which is to say, access to fundamental rights and freedoms understood both within a rights-based but also a faith-based perspective.

Not only would non-Catholics and non-Christians living in Malta benefit from such measures, but the majority Catholic population would, thanks to the levels of understanding and critical exploration involved in sustained dialogue, come into an awareness

of intrinsic privileges³⁵⁹ accrued by Catholic identity in Malta. Initiatives structured by cultural diplomacy to produce interfaith dialogue would be vital in divesting the national identity of its potentially oppressive social presence,³⁶⁰ for the benefit of all communities and their shared inhabitation of civic spaces. This would be done by engaging in the cultural work necessary to open institutions and communities to the need to build a more equitable and humane society within processes of memory and emplacement in the City, and the nation as a whole.

Various projects could emerge from such a re/orientation towards cultural diplomacy, by both government and the private sector, and the possibility of interfaith encounters encouraged by policy. For example, Valletta 2018 could offer an institutionally endorsed opportunity to celebrate the City's interfaith heritage, through creative initiatives open to input from national and international institutions, artists, curators, performers, and practitioners.³⁶¹ One way this could be achieved is in the exploration of historical memory and the mapping of culture (its presence in place), within Valetta 2018's existing mission to catalogue "all spaces across the Maltese islands which are used for cultural

³⁵⁹ Where privilege is understood as those mechanisms of advantage and prestige embedded within a culture, which maintain social inequality among different groups and communities. See K. J. Fitzgerald, *Recognising Race and Ethnicity: Power, Privilege, and Inequality*, Boulder CO, Westview Press, 2014.

³⁶⁰ K. J. Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 113.

³⁶¹ The topic was discussed at great length during the final session of VIVA's *Curatorial School 2015*, as part of the Valletta International Visual Arts Festival (co-sponsored by Valletta 2018). See <http://www.viva.org.mt/projects/curatorial-school/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

purposes, ranging from established cultural venues (such as museums, theatres and heritage sites) to public and open spaces”,³⁶² ahead of Malta’s tenure as European Capital of Culture.³⁶³

Such an initiative would at once celebrate, explore, and attempt to come to terms with the sometimes difficult history of Malta’s various faith communities and their emplacement in the intangible heritage and physical spaces of the islands. Projects and initiatives geared around these aims would also offer new opportunities for deepening the community-based work currently carried out (or not, as yet, envisioned) by various institutions and groups in Malta. These include Heritage Malta (the national agency for cultural management through museums and heritage development),³⁶⁴ the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (the national office that secures “protection and accessibility of cultural heritage” in Malta),³⁶⁵ and the many private groups and NGOs working in related sectors.

The secular perspective on policy described so far must be complemented, indeed amplified, by a concurrent change (of heart) in the Church in Malta’s implementation of

³⁶² Cultural Mapping Project, *Valletta 2018*. <http://www.culturemapmalta.com/about/> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁶³ Set to begin in 2018, with projects that are planned to take place across the Maltese islands.

³⁶⁴ For details on these projects, see *Heritage Malta*, <http://heritagemalta.org> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁶⁵ Sovrintendenza tal-Patrimonju Kulturali, *Government of Malta*, <http://www.cultural-heritage.gov.mt> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

the Second Vatican Council's call to open and free communication between religions and communities, as exemplified in the message of *Nostra Aetate*. It is unfortunate that the Church in Malta has not taken advantage of the 50th anniversary since *Nostra Aetate*'s promulgation, being celebrated in 2015, in order to implement some national interfaith strategy (perhaps the centenary celebrations will be more propitious). However plans do exist, in as yet nascent form, between the Malta Commission for Interreligious Dialogue and the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society to produce handbooks, and facilitate workshops for service providers and professionals, on how best to ease inter-faith communication in the provision of education, healthcare, and other public services.

There is no denying that it will take a degree of courage to bring some of the issues addressed by this dissertation into the open. For example, problems of identity regarding Malta's place vis-a-vis Europe and non-Christian religions; the safeguarding of certain places set aside for monologic Catholic use; Malta's cultural ambivalence with respect to the inheritance of its post-colonial past (both the Knights and the British); and the effaced legacy of slavery (the historical refusal to mourn certain bodies) in relation to the non-Christian Other. Each of these present unique challenges that must be addressed collaboratively, within and between affected communities.

Cultural diplomacy, which has been explored in this dissertation as an important vehicle for national change and community communication³⁶⁶ by fostering interfaith encounters, can provide a creative context (in the exploration of culture) within which new

³⁶⁶ M. J. Waller, 2009, p. 77.

approaches to such challenges may be encouraged. It also offers a platform for consultation from which future policy may develop. Communities are more likely to make these courageous steps if the Church in Malta, alongside the institutions of the Maltese state itself, also come together to facilitate the provision of safe and respectful spaces for cultural sharing and sustained communication. An example of this is evident in the work carried out by the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society Interfaith Forum, in collaboration with the Foundation's research entities, and various stakeholders and social actors.³⁶⁷ In Malta, this has been made possible in no small part because of the supra-governmental nature of the Foundation, through the involvement of the presidency.³⁶⁸

In conclusion, policy must be inspired by the tools of cultural diplomacy in order to reflect the needs and experiences of communities, drawing its force from what is most important to the people involved. This is encapsulated in the tangible and intangible experiences of communities' cultures and lives. It is vital that the value of cultural diplomacy be explored, and enacted through a hermeneutic framework of listening and encounter, in the awareness of shared vulnerability (the mournability of the phenomenological body), and the common use of places within the City, reconfigured to contain a plurality

³⁶⁷ For example, in its commemoration of Interfaith Harmony Week, community consultations, and the Foundation's work on various projects intended to foster community interaction and institutional communication through culture at both national and international levels. See <http://pfws.org.mt> (last accessed 7 August 2015).

³⁶⁸ A fact that also goes some way in mitigating concerns over the possibly propagandistic misuse of cultural diplomacy to facilitate connections among communities through national institutions for the sole benefit of those institutions.

of voices and narratives.³⁶⁹ Rather than persist in Valletta's current cultural trajectory, where Catholic narratives of memory and emplacement are seen as exclusionary or monologic and dominate the cityscape with a single vision of what it means to be Maltese, new cultural responses that highlight the increasingly shared nature of the City and its potential for social inclusion must be given priority, producing spaces that are hospitable to other narratives.

Research in this area is invaluable because it would enrich the cultural life of Valletta and the nation as a whole, with a transformative effect on the people of Malta, and Malta's relationships with diverse cultural communities. It would also provide a much needed platform for communication between these communities, some of whom are only now emerging in Maltese society, that have experienced isolation and are therefore vulnerable to violence³⁷⁰ and, in some cases, the risk of radicalisation.³⁷¹ The work of interfaith dialogue may prevent further threats of instability by fostering good will and a sense of connection.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ R. Scullion, R. Gerodimos, D. Lilleker, and D. Jackson (eds.), *The Media, Political Participation and Empowerment*, NYC, Routledge, 2013, p. 165.

³⁷⁰ Once again, this is of special concern regarding groups that are vulnerable in intersectional ways; for example, African Muslim refugees living in economically depressed areas of Malta.

³⁷¹ C. Baker-Beall, C. Heath-Kelly, and L. Jarvis, *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, NYC, Routledge, 2015, p. 19.

³⁷² See D. S. Brown Jr. (ed.), *A Communication Perspective on interfaith Dialogue: Living Within the Abrahamic Traditions*, Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2013. Especially Chapters 8 and 13.

Declaring the need for a national policy on cultural diplomacy that prioritises interfaith dialogue, and encourages interfaith encounters where such dialogue may take place, rests at the heart of this dissertation's vision for the future. Only then can its projected hopes for the dialogue-oriented growth of Malta's cultural sector become a reality. It is by a commitment to the principles of such dialogue in a hermeneutic of listening, on behalf of the nation's institutions of culture and the faith groups that reside in Malta, reified by a corresponding change in policy, that we may hope to achieve the full potential of sustained community engagement in the pursuit of interfaith communion. To paraphrase diplomat Richard Arndt, echoing Hugo Grotius; if war is a nation's last resort (*ultima ratio regum*) then the work of cultural diplomacy must be its first.³⁷³

³⁷³ R. T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, Washington DC, Potomac Books, 2005, xi.

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BIOGRAPHY

Pete Farrugia is an activist and student from the Mediterranean island of Malta. Pete is rapporteur for the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society Interfaith Forum, and a co-founder of human rights NGO Gender Liberation, which focuses on grass-roots initiatives among gender minorities. Pete graduated Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Theology from the University of Malta in 2013, and Master of Philosophy in Christian Theology from the University of Cambridge in 2014.