The Physical Theatre of War: Language, Memory, and Gender in Black Watch and War Horse

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The Physical Theatre of War: Language, Memory, and Gender in *Black Watch* and *War Horse*

Andrea Gunoe

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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July 2013

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ABSTRACT

The Physical Theatre of War: Language, Memory, and Gender in Black Watch and War Horse

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The public's perception of war is influenced by every media story they see, every account they read, and every story they hear. News telecasts and newspapers tend to lean towards a focus of the grand narratives of war such as political involvement and overarching strategy. Media such as books and film can tell a more personal narrative of the events of war and attempt to display how war “really is” through the use of written and visual language that focuses more on how things happened as opposed to simply what happened. Theatre provides a unique perspective on war as the audience and performers are in a shared space with performed events of war that are live and embodied by individual performers. Theatre’s unique attributes focus the audience towards a perception of the individual and his/her experience in war through the embodiment that is happening right in front of the audience. Physically based theatre narrows that existing theatrical focus to the body specifically in a way that makes the individual physical experience of the soldier the primary narrative. The politics and strategies of war will always be a secondary focus to the human body in the theatrical context.

In this thesis, I examine two productions that come out of the United Kingdom in 2007: The National Theatre of England’s War Horse and The National Theatre of Scotland’s Black Watch. Through a close reading of these two productions I demonstrate physical-theatre’s ability to highlight the human experience and importance in war as it focuses on the individual body and its relationships with other individuals. As these works are accessed through an examination of the visual and stylized language of physical theatre, the creation and recollection of memory in war stories, and the significance of gender in war, the humanizing representations imbedded in physical-theatre become evident.

This thesis comes as the United States and the United Kingdom are involved in conflicts across the globe; some in continuation of the same conflicts that existed at the time these two productions were produced. Soldiers have continued to face astonishing hardships in these endeavors. By highlighting the individual experience and human involvement in war, theatre going public perception can be drawn towards an awareness of the individuals who go to war and away from alienating images of and idealized soldier figures fighting for an overarching political cause.

Keywords: Movement-Based Theatre, Physical Theatre, War, Memory, Masculinity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who have helped me through this process; Dr. Megan Sanborn Jones, for providing endless insight and support while continually challenging me into reaching my potential; Dean Rodger Sorensen, who has always seen my talent the way I dream of seeing it; Gregory Burke, for his candid and open willingness to support the investigations of a young scholar; My family, for supporting my educational and career aspirations with undeniable belief and curiosity.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Sergeant First Class Allen P. Gunoe of the United States Army, who taught me the importance of seeing the worth of the individual. Hooah!
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Introduction

_We cannot assume that because a man was there at the time he is giving us a version of the war which is reliable, accurate, or useful._

— Daniel Todman, *The Great War Myth and Memory*

Daniel Todman references the tendency for documentaries and newspaper journals to use veterans of WWI for sources in recreating the events of the war in order to depict an idea of what “really” happened. He discounts this tactic, noting that the memory of the veteran soldier is rehearsed and repeated according to what others are saying around him. Todman also notes how the veterans will only remember their experiences “partially, depending on context.” He then discusses the danger of granting someone who actually experienced a war an “aura of instant credibility.”¹

While Todman’s assumptions of memory are well-founded as he notes the fluidity of memory in its ability to change, he makes assumptions of other histories that put them outside of that same fluidity of cultural influence. Historiographically, accounts of wars past and present based on non-personal narratives can and do hold a similar amount of cultural filtering, selection, and bias as personal narratives. The old adage that the history is written by the victors illustrates the foundation of this idea that history is not objective. Michell-Rolph Trillot demonstrates the further complications of all histories even when noting that history is written by the victor, thus showing the fluidity and adaptability of written histories, he emphasises this fluidity with questions, “What makes some narratives rather than others powerful enough to pass as accepted history if not historicity itself? If

Historicity is merely the story told by those who won, how did they win in the first place? And why don’t all the winners tell the same story?”

Non-personal narrative depictions of war events, either through journalism or entertainment, also have the ability to neglect one aspect of the war: the experience of the soldier. The further the account is away from a personal narrative, the more likely it is to discount the experience of the soldier as viable and important information. If a historical study is focused on politics or grand war movements, it will almost certainly bypass the individual soldier’s influence on the war.

Accounts of war (both from a personal perspective and those based solely on politics, strategies, and body counts) are important as they educate the public, inform politics, and create history. War accounts are necessary in a culture and world of war. The personal war story, either from the mouth of a soldier or meant to display a soldier’s experience, is also key to a true understanding of war. To share a personalized war story goes beyond giving a voice to the many times voiceless veteran, it provides a view of war that balances the sterilized news reel and places the individual (key to the essence of war) back into the overall war narrative. It also unifies the western idea of war around what is in common between wars. Prominent British military historian and battle theorist John Keegan describes this commonality,

“What battles have in common is not something strategic, nor tactical, nor material, nor technical... it is something human: the behavior of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation, their sense of honour and the achievement of

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aims over which other men are ready to kill them. The study of battle is always a study of fear and usually of courage; always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of subordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, and compassion; above all, it is always a study of solidarity.”

The stories of war that highlight the individual, which can occur through journalism but seem to occur more often in entertainment-based media, provide for this humanity in war. A focus on the body of the individual in depictions of those war stories helps to focus even further on that humanity, humanity referring to the human life that is involved in and affected by war.

War itself is grounded on the human body, “The military used body counts, instead of traditional battles over territory, to measure victory.” The body is the currency of war as each battle is fought and won by the human body. The human body on each side either successfully completes military maneuvers or dies to ensure defeat. The body is equally crucial in the depiction of war. The body can be a focus in descriptions in written and oral accounts of war but can be better focused on in physical depictions of war that rely on the body to tell the story. Physical representations of war go beyond acknowledging the body’s importance in war to actually highlight the individual body itself.

Depictions of war solely through the mediated lens of news telecasts, newspapers, and history books, provide a particular image of what war is: tactical maneuvers made by politicians far from the war front which influence large economies and cultures. Embodied

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performance can provide another, equally important, image of war as it emphasizes the human experience of war through the focus on the body. Jeanne Colleran supports this need for variety to avoid a reliance on these mediated sources as the only articulation of war, “We encounter a fundamental feature, however ironic it seems, of the mediated war we feel ourselves to be watching constantly: despite the relentless visibility, there is a capacity to hide the suffering body…”5 Judith Butler also dissects the form in which war is portrayed and notes the social and mediated frames that are placed around the public’s perceptions of war along with the danger of those frames. She says, “To learn to see the frame that blinds us to what we see is no easy matter. And if there is a critical role for visual culture during times of war, it is precisely to thematize the forcible frame, the one that conducts the dehumanizing norm, that restricts what is perceivable and, indeed, what can be.”6 The public discourse on war is necessarily influenced by the depictions thereof. The manner in which information is received creates that discourse and the public’s knowledge of what war is.

In this thesis, I argue that embodied live performance has the ability to emphasize human life, which is so crucial to war, as it uses real people to enact human driven war events that focus on the individual experience. Movement-based theatre in particular reveals the individual in war as the body on stage is not only represented, but it becomes an essential element and focus. When the human body is the focus of the telling of war stories the humanity of war is emphasized, bringing the narrative away from politics and

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strategy and toward the human lives involved in war. While other media forms have the potential to create a humanized vision of what war is, I argue that physical theatre is able to accomplish the task in a manner that is distinctive and necessarily focused on the human body.

The emphasis on the individual that is possible through movement-based theatre depictions of war can be seen in an examination of the theatrical means by which movement-based theatre depicts war, the importance of the body in the memory of war and the depictions thereof, and the use of the male body in depicting war and its relationship to the construction of soldier masculinity. The National Theatre of Scotland’s production of *Black Watch* and The National Theatre of England’s *War Horse* exemplify these humanizing depictions of war through movement-based theatre.

While I have never experienced war first person and am female, I have chosen to dissect depictions of war, how they are remembered, and war’s connection to masculinity, because I come from a military family in which most of the soldiers/veterans are male. I grew up on military bases and have grown to know military service as a way of life that influences a great number of people and families throughout the world. I have also chosen to consider these aspects of war representation in two productions that originate from the United Kingdom and deal heavily with historical heritage and military tradition in the UK. I am from the United States, thus have a different history and heritage. I recognize those differences and draw on my experience of my recent time studying in England and Scotland. I also examine most aspects of war from a “western” perspective that, while different in every country, shares some perspectives on and execution of war.
Along with being rich in heritage, the two productions that I examine in terms of style, memory, and masculinity both rose to popularity around the same time. England’s National Theatre’s *War Horse* debuted in the Olivier Theatre in October of 2007. The National Theatre of Scotland’s *Black Watch* was a part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August of 2006 but began its first tour in 2007. *War Horse* and *Black Watch* represent very different wars and very different stories (both in terms of structure and characters) but as the two productions premiered in the last decade, both seem to provide an immediacy and application to the current conflict in the Middle East and to war in general. The style of each production is radically different from the other but they share one certain commonality—-they depict the events of war in a stylized manner that focuses on the body and on the individual experience of war.

Both have also created a presence in the United States. *War Horse* opened on Broadway in 2011. It won five Tony awards including Best Play and is now on a national tour. *Black Watch* has been used as tool for cultural diplomacy and has toured all over the world. It made several tours to the United States between 2007 and 2013 winning awards in New York, Washington D.C., Seattle, and Chicago. A focus on *Black Watch* and *War Horse* displays movement-based theatre’s inherent focus on the body that ultimately brings the human into the focus of any production that is depicting war. War is humanized through this focus on the body and these productions.

*War Horse*

*War Horse* is an adaptation of the children’s book of the same name, written by Michael Morpurgo in 1982. It was adapted for the stage by Nick Strattford. The National
Theatre, West End, and Broadway productions were all directed by Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris with horse choreography by Toby Sedgwick. *War Horse* is a story that focuses on the journey of a horse named Joey through World War I. It begins as the father of a young man named Albert purchases Joey as a farm horse. Joey is sold into service to the British army but makes his way through the lives of many individuals including a French girl and a German soldier. The story also tracks Albert’s pursuit of Joey throughout the war and his experiences in battle. The production depicts cavalry and trench warfare along with tanks and other mechanical weaponry of World War I.

The production has a minimalist set that provides an area for the chorus to create images of scenery and battle. Stylized movement by the chorus includes slow motion, walking in formations, and other movements. However, the spectacle of the production comes from the depictions of the horses. They are giant puppets created by the Handspring Puppet Company out of bamboo and fabric. More importantly, several actors who are always visible to the audience control them. The movement of the horses is very lifelike but the puppets themselves are evident as such. They move realistically but look artificial. The movement of the chorus and the puppets provide an access point into the portrayal of warfare and the humanity that is highlighted in the production.

**Black Watch**

*Black Watch* was written by Gregory Burke for the National Theatre of Scotland and is considered one of their seminal works. It was directed by John Tiffany with choreography by Steven Hoggett and music direction by Davey Anderson. Vicky Featherstone, artistic director of NTS at the time, commissioned Burke to write about the
Black Watch’s (a Scottish regiment) involvement in Iraq. The story specifically focuses on events surrounding the death of three Black Watch soldiers and an Iraqi translator at the hands of an Iraqi car bomber in 2004. This event triggered a great deal of international media attention as the regiment’s assignment in the area came because the United States Army had requested assistance in an area outside of Fallujah that was deemed the “triangle of death.” They were sent there to relieve American troops who were being taken out of the area. Many saw the assignment as a publicity move by both American and British politicians. Shortly after this event, the Black Watch regiment was combined with several other regiments. This decision was received with outrage as the Black Watch has a long history that is a source of pride and tradition ranging back to the regiment’s founding in the 1700’s. The elimination of the Black Watch seemed to also mean elimination of a valued history in the community.

The play, instead of focusing on political ramifications of this event, was based on interviews with soldiers who were in the regiment and in Iraq in 2004. Burke’s actual interviews with the soldiers are depicted in the production, along with scenes based on the interviews that take place in Iraq. There are also scenes developed by Tiffany and Hoggett, which depict non-verbal aspects of war. All of the scenes contain stylized movement of some sort. The interview scenes in the pub and the barracks scenes in Iraq contain a more subtle style of movement that gives focus to what the characters are saying and the action of the scene. The non-verbal scenes are highly stylized and choreographed, which draws attention to the human body. Many of the scenes use non-traditional background music and traditional Scottish music that was arranged by Davey Anderson. Even with the use of music, the movement isn’t necessarily “dance.” It is physicalized depictions of war events.
that are sometimes set to music. The play focuses on the soldiers as a unit but uses the character of Cammy as point man who gives the audience a look into the life of a soldier and the history of the Black Watch.

Black Watch uses the body of the actor in interesting ways to depict the things that happened to the Black Watch in 2004. The moments of war that are depicted in Black Watch focus on the individual soldier’s experience and less on the overarching narratives of the events. The stylized use of the body assists in that focus.

Movement-based/Physical Theatre

Movement-based or physical theatre is categorically difficult to define and to express in writing. The language performed and understood by the body in movement-based isn’t easily described in words. Many practical guides for movement-based theatre have been written for the actor and director. Dymphna Callery gives a series of exercises in her practical guide Through the Body: A Practical Guide to Physical Theatre. Annette Lust’s Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen also provides exercises along with descriptions of several kinds of physical theatre. Anne Bogart archives her own process and theories from a director’s perspective in The Viewpoints Book and A Director Prepares. It seems that physical theatre scholarship orients itself toward application and away from analysis. This creates a vacuum for definitive definitions of the term. Grotowski’s 1968 work Towards a Poor Theatre borders the line between theory and practice as Grotowski provides his theories on via negativa while still giving an essential list of what he does when creating theatre and, more specifically, what he doesn’t do. He doesn’t, however, attempt to create a definition for an entire genre or classification beyond his own work.
In attempts to define physical theatre in the journal *American Theatre* Randy Grener states that it is a “highly visual genre-specific work.” He then describes it as a “a catch-all description that can be applied to any staging that is theatrical in nature, including dance or puppetry, but which does not fit within the neat parameters of performing a literary text.”

Callery echoes Grener’s emphasis on the relationship between visuals and text stating that it “is theatre where the primary means of creation occurs through the body rather than through the mind...somatic impulse is privileged over the cerebral in the making process.” She does not see physical theatre outside of the text as Gener inferred. She goes on to say, “This does not mean that the intellectual demands of the idea or script are jettisoned.”

She does, however, include the creation process into her definition and states that it must be collaborative in order to be named such. Annette Lust’s definition exists outside of a consideration of the text. She marks it as, “a visual form that expresses emotions, ideas, and character mainly through body movement.”

Each of these definers, working from primarily practical perspectives, does seem to align in one area: that the performance is primarily visual. It must be visual in a way that sets it apart from other theatre forms, all of which are visual in some way. In this thesis I suggest that movement-based or physical theatre is a highly visual form that uses the body to either tell the story or as a clear emphasis in creating meaning and mood. While most theatrical forms require a degree of suspending disbelief, the movement-based theatre as I discuss it has what Callery calls “a greater emphasis on exploiting the power of suggestion;

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Movement-based theatre is set apart from dance in this thesis as this power of suggestion is used alongside a text or depiction of a real event. Put simply, movement-based theatre puts an emphasis on the highly stylized and unrealistic movement of the body in order to create the world and the story in conjunction with a text or spoken word.

The physical theatre that I examine in this thesis has been created in the last decade but physical theatre has a long history that influences the way the body is perceived on stage. The WWI-era Italian Futurist movement is important to the foundations of my discussion on war and physical theatre. The Futurist movement treated war directly as it used the body to represent mechanization in an advocacy of war. Futurist theatre, however, contained themes of war but did not depict it as the productions that I analyze in this thesis do. Meyerhold’s influence on the body in performance during that same time is another foundation movement-based practice. Meyerhold’s separation from his fellow Russians’ realist movement by focusing on the body as language helped to influence the way physical theatre is perceived linguistically today. The concurrent and post-WWI theatre movements such as Expressionism and Dada also use stylization to discuss war and many of these performance styles use the body, although not exclusively, to portray a reaction to the horrors of war. However, none of these turn-of-the-century avant-garde styles portrayed actual acts of battle or war.

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In the 1960s, Grotowski’s physically-oriented theatre added the audience in the methodology. His theories, so focused on the body, deeply consider the importance of the body in relation to the audience either as implicated beings or as performers themselves. I focus on the importance of the body in performance as it influences audience perceptions as well, but in depictions of war. It is building on the foundations of language of the body as described by Meyerhold, the use of the body in preforming sentiments regarding war (seen in Futurist, Expressionist, and Dada movements), and regards for the audience interaction with the performing body theorized by Grotowski that I am able begin this analysis of physical theatre and war.

Chapter Organization and Methodology

Chapter one, “The Body in War,” uses the foundations of structuralism and post-structuralism to dissect the way that audiences react to depictions of war and the way in which they come to meanings from those depictions. I use these linguistic theories to do close readings of the puppetry in War Horse, stylized choreography in Black Watch, and the use of juxtaposition of audience expectation verses reality in Black Watch. The close readings incorporate the notion of kinesthetic empathy in relation to the derivation of meaning from representations. These theories support my argument that movement-based theatre is able to supply the audience with meaning that exists outside of the realm of the written word in that it ties to the emotional experience of war that is only learned through a kinesthetic connection to the body of the audience member from the embodied performer. This connection will draw an emotional meaning about the experience of the soldier that focuses on the individual and pushes the human experience of war to the forefront.
I use foundational theories of Saussure to discuss the implications of the way war is depicted and the relationship between what it being depicted to how it is being depicted. I use Derrida’s theories on the relationship between sign and signified, in that it departs from Saussure’s theory, to talk about the variable nature of the relationship between depiction and meaning. I discuss how audience interaction functions in that relationship to create new meanings for every audience member.

I also use the dance theory of kinesthetic empathy, which attempts to explain how an audience member derives meaning from the language of the body in the performer without the use of writable words or a set language structure. I discuss how kinesthetic empathy correlates to post-structural and structural theory.

In chapter two, “The Body in Memory,” I analyze Black Watch’s use of first hand accounts to create stylized moments of war and how memory is influenced by the telling and representing of those accounts. I will also analyze the use of cultural history in both Black Watch and War Horse and discuss how historical memory is passed through the repertoire in a way that recreates that history. I then use Carlson’s notion of Ghosting as is evident in any representation of a historical moment and note its function in the telling of history in Black Watch.

To do this, I use Diana Taylor’s notion on the archive and the repertoire and the body’s ability to convey information. Through a discussion of the archive and repertoire I discuss the creation of personal and communal memory through movement-based theatre. I will also be using Marvin Carlson’s notion of the Haunted Body and Joseph Roach’s notion of Surrogation to discuss the remembering that makes up “history” and how the public remembers their own heritage of war.
These theories assist me to construct grounding into physical theatre’s opportunity to portray “real” events and help to construct a means by which audiences, performers, and soldiers remember and learn of war through physical representation. I then discuss scholarship surrounding documentary theatre and the question of if actual events can be accurately represented in order to supplement this exploration as it expands on the notions of historiography inherent in Taylor’s theory. I also note a scientific theory of memory that supports the social theories of Taylor, Carlson, and Roach. Attilio Favorini’s theory on how an event is remembered and reconstructed in the brain will assist in a dissection of how memory is reconstructed for performance. My discussion of the archive and repertoire is used to support the argument that movement-based portrayals embrace an unarchivable emotionally driven depiction of war and history that, once viewed, is rewritten in the repertoire of the audience body in a way that influences the memory of the event, thus the event itself.

In the third chapter, “Masculinity in War, “ I take a gender studies approach to the creation of the hyper-masculine soldier character. I use the work of several gender theorists who look at the masculine ideal as a product and a proponent of war to discuss its influence on the depiction of war and the individual male soldier.

I look at scenes in Black Watch in which the masculine ideal is highlighted and subverted on the physical form of a biologically male body in order to showcase the focus on the individual over the soldier character. I also examine the journeys to manhood that take place in War Horse using theories that examine “manhood” as an artificial state. I incorporate that journey to manhood that is paralleled in unrealistic expectations of the
journey of war. I also discuss the gendering of animals in War Horse and the reflection on public perception of the genders of war.

These explorations will highlight the dangers in the societally built masculine expectations put on the soldier and his/her experience in war. This brings forth the argument that as movement-based theatre provides a focus on the actual body in performance, it provides a means of viewing the body for what it is and examining the gendering that is placed onto it: ultimately showcasing the actions of soldiers as performed by individual bodies that perform war acts but may or may not perform normative masculinity. This will again focus on the individual soldier as opposed to a gendered ideal.

Through an analysis of the stylization of the depictions of war stories, the way war stories are remembered and alter memory, and gender in the masculine soldier character of war stories, it is evident that movement-based theatre is able to break through boundaries and connect to audiences who need to know the experience of the soldier in war. As movement-based theatre uses war moments, memories of war, and the gendered body, it draws the audience into the experience of the individual human soldier and the human involvement in war. Black Watch and War Horse both bring the audience to a new outlook on war that can so often be boiled down to politics, numbers and strategies. These two productions demonstrate the possibilities for further depictions of war, both in distant and recent history, and the focus on the individual war stories that, while fluid and ever changing, are always “useful.”
The Languages of War

The kinesthetic imagination, however, inhabits the realm of the virtual. Its truth is the truth of simulation, of fantasy, of daydreams, but its effects on human action may have material consequences of the most tangible sort and of the widest scope.

—Joseph Roach, Cities of the Dead

In the haze of the scene before and with melancholy lighting in a shade of blue, the Sergeant walks onto the stage with a pile of letters from home. In the Scottish military, letters come on blue sheets of paper folded into thirds. As Stewerty takes the stack he finds his letter and tenderly unfolds it. Then, dropping his letter to the ground he begins a descriptive type of sign language perhaps describing the contents of the letter or perhaps his reaction to it. Other soldiers appear on stage and take their letters from the stack and begin to sign, each unique in rhythm and intensity. The language becomes a sequence that is repeated. The specific language is intelligible to none in the literal sense. There are no “words” assigned to meanings that are being expressed in order to create sentences or paragraphs. Instead each soldier enacts a language of his own that is read by the audience members in an instinctive way. The audience, without pre-learned meanings associated with these actions, then assigns each movement to their own meanings that are interpreted and individually understood but not explainable with written words.
This scene, titled "Blueys," comes from the everyday experience of real soldiers serving in Iraq and is physically expressed in the play Black Watch. The scene opens up a possibility for significant exchange of emotional feeling between the audience and the actors in portraying one of the difficult aspects of serving abroad—missing people left at home. Even though Burke conducted interviews with soldiers that provided a large amount of workable dialogue about specific events, the scope of the project sought to involve the emotional experience of the soldiers. Writer of Black Watch Gregory Burke has stated, “While I was researching the play, it quickly became obvious to us that we were going to have to find a whole different language with which to portray those emotions. Hence the movement, the music and the mime.” In order to portray the emotional experience of the solder, the creators of Black Watch needed an emotional language, able to point to a separate meaning than could be described with verbal language.

The body is used as a theatrical device that aids in portrayal of actual events such as war. These events are also spoken about with the written word or in verbalized language. When the body is used, a movement can serve the purpose of a word. As actors or dancers use their bodies to represent war they may be pointing to something specific like a particular battle, the way bodies move through space in warfare, or the reading of letters from home. The body acts as a word pointing to a meaning (i.e. a battle, experience, etc.) In these actions they are using their bodies to form a language equipped with signs (a symbol that references a thing) and signifieds (the things being referenced) just like a written language. This new language is made up of movements that act as signs that point to signifieds (such as the act of war) similar to the signifieds that are referenced by written language. However, the body in motion will necessarily arrive at its signified in a manner that is so different than written linguistics that it will ultimately arrive at unique signified (unique from written language and unique for every viewer) just as any change in medium reflects in the language and meaning to alter, even if only slightly, the meaning derived. The
physical interpretation goes beyond simply referencing the act of war, simply stated and referenced with the written word. Instead, the body can represent the emotional experience of the act of war: a different signified completely. As the physical representation, the sign, becomes more and more stylized the signified itself changes. The physical stylization is then not referring to and arriving at the act of war itself but the emotional experience of war, simply through pushing the sign to a stylized state.

I propose that each audience member has the potential access the signified that exists outside of the possibility of the written word, or the emotional experience of war, through a type empathy that is only available when witnessing the embodied portrayal of an emotional experience. This is not to say that other methodologies do not hold potential to create empathy, only to discuss the unique type of empathy available kinesthetically. This language exists in the body and is communicated only through physical representation. The kinesthetic empathy that occurs in the unspoken communication between the performing body and the audience will ultimately highlight the individual body, thus the individual soldier, and humanize the depictions of war. This is exemplified in the empathy obtained by the audience through the portrayal of war with human controlled puppetry in *War Horse*, the stylization of the human body that provokes empathy in the choreography of *Black Watch*, and the juxtaposition of audience expectation and the harshness of war that subverts a traditional Scottish glamourized image of war, thus yielding audience empathy, in the portrayal of the Scottish Military Tattoo in *Black Watch*.

The idea that the physical representation may arrive at a nearby signified as written language but through very different means is evident in the stage production of *War Horse* as the human body is implicated into almost every aspect of the act of war through the use
of puppet that are powered by individual human bodies. The acts of war, committed by puppets, are seen through a human lens. This language used by the production changes the signifieds of battle (a tank shooting at soldiers or a horse being shot) to signifieds that reflect the human and individual experiences involved in the signified actions.

*Black Watch* continues the distancing of the audience from the codified voyeurism of simple verbal or text-based descriptions of war as it stylizes the wartime practice of patrol duties. The stylization binds its depiction of the war to a signified that goes beyond the age-old patrol duties depicted or described in numerous accounts of war. The signified is then the physical and emotional experience of the soldier who enacts those patrol duties. This happens as the movement potentially provokes a physical response from the audience and creates an entire language that is centered in feeling and as such, points to a signified grounded in feelings that surround events as opposed to simply referencing the event alone.

*Black Watch’s* stylized nature also points to an emotional meaning as it is compared to a somewhat similar, yet essentially different, staging of warfare. As *Black Watch* seeks to subvert the tradition of the glamourized and spectacle-based Edinburgh Tattoo, which itself refers to war movements in a way that hides the brutality of war, it challenges the accepted signifiers of warfare in today’s culture as they ultimately refer to a signified very unlike the actual violence that occurs. This subversion creates awareness in the audience that enables them to continue to connect to the emotional journey of the individual soldier in *Black Watch*. 
Language of the Body

Structuralist theory deals not only with the structures of stories and narratives but is specifically focused on language itself. Saussure broadly argued that the assignation of meaning to language is arbitrary, that the meanings of words are themselves relational to other words, and that language constitutes our world.\(^\text{12}\) This is clearly a theory that applies to written and verbal language as it dissects the relationship between words and their meanings. It talks about the sign (word) and its connection to its signified (thing) and how those relationships build the world in which we live. This study of words and their meanings is also connected to speechless performance. Saussure spoke more specifically about the study of language beyond just words connected to meanings. He stated, “The characteristic role of language with respect to thought is not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas but to serve as a link between thought and sound, under conditions that of necessity bring about the reciprocal delimitations of units.”\(^\text{13}\) Sassure’s structural study, then, is interested in the way language acts as a link not between an object and a sound but between the thought of the object and the sound. The links between reality, ideas, and their representation (spoken about as words) can also be applied to the links between real events and their representations through the body.

The body acts as a means of portraying ideas just as words do. The body contains a functional language of its own. This chapter focuses on the link between that which is being represented and that which is representing. Saussure, and structuralist theory, focuses on the link between the sign and the signified as it functions in linguistics and in relationship

\(^{12}\) Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (LaSalle, Ill: Open Court, 1986).
\(^{13}\) Ferdinand de Saussure, *General Linguistics*, 110.
to other words and how those links and relationships function within language and social structures. The way in which I examine that link in this chapter borrows from post-structuralist theory and the concern for the reader/audience in providing that link in a way that is fluid and is determined by the person creating the signified in their mind.

The reader/listener of written/verbalized language, or the viewer of a physical theatrical language, experiences a representation (a sign) and creates a signified for themselves in a way that is relational (supported by Saussure) but without a necessary common fixed objective point. I argue that while both written accounts and stylized theatrical text-based accounts have meaningful portrayals that would attempt to signify war, the pathway (the link) that the reader/audience takes to arrive at a signified ultimately alters the signified: thus providing evidence of the inability of a written account, highly stylized or straight forward, and a stylized physical account to present the same information because the reader/audience member interacts with each in such a different manner. Derrida noted that even the written word (which exists with seemingly fixed meanings for words that create an objective link between sign and signified) is truly disconnected from the thing it describes. “Reading... cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it... or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place, outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general...as regards the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. There is nothing outside the text.”

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Here Derrida supports the idea that a written or spoken account of battle will shift depending on word choice, reader understanding, etc. It is true then that a depiction (of the same battle) using the language of the body will necessarily arrive at meanings separate from the traditional language account and neither of the accounts is more precise than the other. Even with the same intended signified from the author/creator, the form and content of the text (either wordless performance or otherwise) will lead to different signifiers in the minds of the reader/audience. Sign, signifier, and text are used in this chapter in a manner that reflects this understanding of the basics of Saussure’s notions of structural linguistics with a post-structural acknowledgement of the audience perception as an influence that keeps the meaning based on his/her communication with the individual text.

Because the focus is on the differences in the signs (that are meant to point to a shared signifier) and their interpretations by audience members, forms beyond just written language and stylized physical theatre are necessary to the discussion. Film and other visual depictions function differently than any other form or sign as well. The visual language of film with clear visual “signs” referring to signifieds of war function differently than highly stylized signs or linguistic signs without visual cues. Because of this, I also hold film up next to the other forms (writing or stylized theatre) to represent similarities and differences between different linguistics and the avenues of connections made by readers and viewers. While I come from a theatrical, and not a film, background I use specific films such as the documentary film Restrepo and the film adaptation of War Horse to exemplify the difference in meaning/language with the difference of medium. I do not speak regarding the way all films are received or interpreted. Instead, I provide these two
examples that are clearly very similar to *Black Watch* and *War Horse* thus providing very useful examples through their striking differences.

**Empathy through Puppetry**

*War Horse* is lauded as a “brilliant”\(^{15}\) production that portrays horses with the use of amazing puppetry from the Handspring Puppet Company in front of a striking set. Susanna Clap wrote for the Observer when she described the productions as, “A triumph of theatricality, this beast that so quivers with life is entirely manufactured - and is seen to be so, even while he looks so tender.”\(^{16}\) Its reputation precedes it as being a caring story as well. Paul Taylor writing for The Independent concluded that, “the piece is also profoundly cathartic in its moving demonstration that our relationship with animals can be one of the richest of humanising experiences.”\(^{17}\)

One aspect of the play and its production is consistently overlooked however. Perhaps one of the most important, or influential, aspects of the show is its lack of special effects in battle and in moments of crisis. Instead, the body makes every event occur. It fuels the entire play. *War Horse’s* reliance on the body as a means of communication acts as a sign of the actual act of war in battle but, in addition, creates an experience for the audience in which the signified act of war is filtered through a personal and human lens: thus providing a meaningful process of recognizing the act of war.


In separation from attempting a “realistic” portrayal of battle with the heavy use of special effects and mechanical spectacle, *War Horse* creates all of its moments of battle with the body as its base in spectacle, drawing focus away from fantastic exterior elements, and puts a focus on what is causing the events to happen: the human being because the human being is present in creating the motion that is the spectacle of the horse. The lifelike puppetry being performed by humans in the moment has the potential to be more important than the mechanizism that is the puppet: the frame for the human ability. *War Horse* is able to create a world that examines the human and the relationships that are had between humans and other creatures by establishing a convention of movement that draws attention to the individual. It also does this through its unique representation of all non-human aspects of the show through human controlled puppetry.

While war is an important theme throughout many cultures, the ability for theatre to produce war stories is difficult. An attempt at a representation grounded in realism requires a large amount of specialized effects. Even if a production of Henry V is being represented through realism (as opposed to stylization) the technical aspects necessary. This attempt will necessarily be lacking, however, as the theatrical surroundings (a stage, an audience, equipment, etc.) will always be evident. Written descriptions that need no physical recreation and mediated depictions that have the freedom of filming in actual locations have the possibility of taking advantage over theatre in realistic portrayals as they come close to a realistic portrayal either in the mind of the reader, of written depictions, or through the “movie magic” of editing and special effects that create clear visual images directly associated with actual things. These portrayals, especially written portrayal, use the sign to signified relationship as a key in its realistic portrayals.
The words used in written language, whether in written form or delivered by the human voice, are directly affiliated to a certain signified. When a book or reporter states that, “Three soldiers were killed by an IED,” the words mean exactly what they say. The knowledge of three soldiers and their death by explosion can be easily translated into thoughts and images. Possible implications of those words are conjured in the mind of the reader depending on individual experience but there is little argument or deviation from reader to reader in the actual understanding of the events when the wording is clear. When words (signs) are strung together in sentences and ideas the notions of guns, violence, strategy, or even and the soldier can be placed on something very specific in the reader or listener’s mind. This is possible because of the direct affiliation of words to their meanings in written languages. What is stated in words is directly ties to what the reader sees in his or her mind. Leeway is given in that sometimes written language purposefully gives meaning in an indirect way (satire for example) but this language has the ability to provide correlated pictures to words even when those pictures are brought out to provide and indirect meaning.

Film begins to create a differing avenue to the signified of war than the written signifier “war.” Film shows the audience a visual image (a sign outside of written language) that relates to the signified war act. A gun used in a film connects to the signified of an actual gun used in battle as it appears to be the same. The almost exact depiction of what a soldier “looks” like when being shot to death points to the signified of actual soldiers dying. This avenue of connection between signifier and signified is more direct and eliminates a degree of the arbitrariness of the written language. Visual language in film does not present what is real but the sign of the visual image of a gun has an obvious connection to the
signified real gun. In this, film provides a real visual language that works differently than written language. The theatre also contains a visual language but with a different physical presence. *War Horse* does not limit changing the language from the written language to a visual language only. It implicates the audience through its visual representation that provides a physical language, accessible through kinesthetic empathy.

Movement is a force throughout the production. Direction by Marianne Elliot and Tom Morris establishes a convention not of dance but of heightened body action on stage. The main characters in any given scene seem to move somewhat realistically, as opposed to the stylized body in *Black Watch*, and are usually at the center of a location created by other bodies that surround them to create the scene. Those bodies not in the scene are what establish a world where human life is necessary. People are in motion around a scene or through it, in a choreographed and meaningful way, which seems to reflect a kindness towards all people. These perimeter bodies watch on the scene and are implicated as onlookers, voting for the success of the participants, or as others who have had similar hardships. The humanity of the central sentimental characters is revealed as it correlates to those who are physically present in their lives and in their atmosphere.

The human embodiment of all animal characters in the production humanizes the world even more. The first moment of humanization comes in the creation of the fences of a farmyard. These fences are made out of wood but individual human bodies work together to support them. As the gate is opened, the bodies holding the wooden fences must move. Even the limits that keep the characters in or let them go free are held by the human intellect or control. The individual is continuously implicated in this portrayal. The lack of realism in the creation of the fences in no way distances the fences from the signified of an
actual fence. Instead it pushes toward an image of a real fence *through* the image of a
human body. It is the body that represents the fence. The signified real fence is then
present is the space and the mind of the audience in addition to the human production of
the fence pieces, the work of those who built it, and those humans who are effected by the
fence’s presence. This lens that keeps the human involvement with inanimate objects that
influence war in the mind of the audience is only obtainable as the human body performs
and the audience perceives. The view of the fence through the image of a human
individualizes the human involvement as it references a “real” fence in equal proportion
with that human involvement.

The implication of the human body is most prominent and arguably most influential
in the staged portrayal’s interpretation (and presentation) of the horse, who is the title
character, Joey. Joey is seen as the main character *and* the driving influence in *War Horse*.
The play could easily be interpreted as simply being about a boy’s relationship with his
horse in the trying times of WWI. The draw of the production, however, is in the method
that the horse is portrayed; this makes it about something else. It is easy to note that the
horse is neither a real horse nor a mechanized spectacle, but a carefully crafted puppet
being powered by three people. Without the human body, the horse would not move. The
human body powers all emotion, interaction, and battle duties that the horses portray.
What does it mean to have the human physicality be so necessary in this representation?
There seems to be an importance beyond movement alone. The story is about a
relationship with a horse but it is continually turning its attention onto the human figure.
The attention to the human figure occurs through the spectacle that is the puppet and the human ability to control it. The “special effects” of this epic war tale are limited in scenery, thus emphasizing the primary piece of spectacle (and the driving force of the production) the puppetry of the horse. The wooden and cloth structure comes to life and shape, as three puppeteer/actors inhabit it. The ability of the puppeteers is astounding and has the ability to titillate the audience’s sense of amazement in the look of the puppet and
the realistic movements that the actors create for it. A review of the original production by Michael Billington for The Guardian states, “[the] dazzling puppet design of Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler...ultimately make you forget you are watching fabricated quadrupeds.”18 This happens as you accept the human bodies that are powering it. The spectacle then does not come from the wonder of the puppet but the ability of the puppeteers who become part of the story, they become a lens through which the audience sees even to the point of a possibility for full acceptance.

The story’s emphasis on Joey as the central figure, the focus on his physicality in the spectacular puppetry, and the emphasis on his journey through WWI (as well as his relationships with the people around him) serve as a vehicle to point to the human involvement of war. The signified “real” horse becomes an image that incorporates humanity and relationships. War Horse director Tom Morris stated, “The danger is, it might work. It might successfully tell the story of a horse having a tough time. And that might put enough grit in the cream to make it a satisfying story, but it mustn’t just be about that. It has to be about what happens to people in war as well.”19

The visibility of the human life inside the animal through which the story is accessed puts the responsibility and the effects of the war back on the individual. As the animal is humanized in emotional connections and in physical depiction, the violence enacted on it is also humanized. It is no longer about a creature unlike us. The violence is now real and close to home. As the horse functions as the primary means of communication of the WWI

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19 Millar, Mervyn. The Horse’s Mouth: Staging Morpurgo’s War Horse. London: Oberon, 2007, 89.
experience, the body and its relationship to others are constantly being referred to. The portrayal of this war story cannot be divorced from the individual human experience as long as the horse is treated as having human emotions and as long as humans physically power it.

The focus on human involvement is only increased as the tank, a symbol of WWI mechanization, comes roaring onto the stage to create massive destruction. This is because the violence is aimed at, and perpetrated by, the clearly human warriors because even the tank itself if carried by several people. Their bodies force the tank to advance forward into battle and to rear up, much like a horse, when it hits those who are meant to be defeated. In the act of the human powered tank destroying other humans, the mechanization of WWI is playing second fiddle. This narrative that draws a focus on invention shortly before and during WWI is founded on the addition of battleships, communication radios, and automated weaponry to the battlefront. It emphasized the fact that outdated ground tactics stood no match to new weaponry to create a situation where new machinery was simply slaughtering insufficiently guarded men. “Many have blamed the catastrophe of World War I on European armies blind to the meaning of swiftly changing technology... war on the Western front locked the foes into close contact and highlighted the work of gunners and engineers. Strategy for much of the war seemed to mean little more than augmenting gunfire.”20

This narrative, while grounded in truth, allows for a focus on the men who are dead at the hands of new machinery but ignore the humans behind/in the machines doing the killing. War is still about human interaction. *War Horse*’s depiction of the tank focuses on the individuals powering the puppet of a tank. The human who powers the machine is again the focus. The bodies on stage that are enacting the violence and not the machines that they control, are the perpetrators and the recipients of the violence. Human life that is controlling the tank is visually portrayed, unlike many other depictions of tank warfare in WWI, as enacting the violence on the soldiers in its path. This gives an alternative to the mechanization of WWI that drives the history books and is showcased in most films on the era.

Steven Spielberg’s film based on the young adult novel *War Horse* (with no connection to the play) presents a scene in which a tank corners Joey the horse. This moment showcases Joey’s vulnerability but never depicts the people inside if the tank. It
appears to be the tank intimidating Joey, not individual soldiers inside the tank. The brutality of the introduction of trench warfare is usually nodded to but the portrayals of the war with an eye on its mechanization will result in visuals of tanks used to represent tanks used at the time. These faceless machines trample people and land all while firing at other machines and individuals. That which is being signified by a realistic tank is just that, a machine. As the human body is forced to carry the tank in this physical and theatrical depiction, the people engaged in the fight are implicated. The human decisions being made from inside the tank as well as the human lives effected by them are shown. The experience of the mechanization is present and the human involvement is referenced.

Michael Morpurgo, the author of the book *War Horse* that the play is based on, comments on the focus on individuals and their interaction during the war. He discusses the somewhat inability of the poets of the first world war to translate the hardships of the working class and the need to showcase the difficulties of trench warfare.

“Most of us grow up with the first world war poets. Well the fact is this; grand and wonderful as some of these poems are, and heartrending, most of them were written by officers, who came to the war with a certain class, a certain idea, a certain notion. The people I was talking to in Iddesleigh were, if you like, the fighting men. People who came to the war straight, without verses, and thinking, and philosophy and literature to either help or hinder them: they came to it straight. And I always wondered, with my listening to them, and my reading of history, how it was that these men did go up over the top, because people told them to do it.”

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22 Mervyn Millar, *The Horse’s Mouth: Staging Morpurgo’s War Horse* (London: Oberon, 2007), 83.
The physical representation of his story allows the interactions and pressures of the human being to be emphasized for the audience. The body's use in the representations of the fences, horses, and battle equipment seem to allow for an obvious implication of human involvement in war, and specifically in WWI. It functions to highlight the human experience in addition to showcasing the involvement alone. As the human being and the individual are exposed in moments of war and battle, the stylized staging with the body also promotes an emphasis on thinking about the human experience and the emotional and physical costs of violence. As the human body acts as a sign for war and war meanings, it is not limited to simply standing in as a reference to war alone. Instead, the theatrical use of the body foregrounds the human experience in war. Theatrical experiences in general, which include the use of the body to represent these things act as a means of knowing not just a representation of something. Sharon Friedman notes the implications of the differences in each medium’s portrayals and notes theatre as, “an apparatus for the construction of meaning rather than an index to it.” The body in motion has the potential to branch out away from portrayals that simplify war which are, “focused exclusively on the political interests of warring factions, numbers of casualties, and military victory of defeat.”

This is accomplished as the audience recognizes the body on stage and empathizes with that body’s experience. This is particularly necessary in the representation of Joey and in the representation of the battle vehicles. Movement theorist Joseph Martin examines the psychological and physiological experience of an audience member when watching the body in motion. Susan Foster summarizes his argument, “When we see a human body

moving, we see movement which is potentially produced by any human body, and therefore by our own...through kinesthetic sympathy we actually reproduce it vicariously in our present muscular experience and awaken such associational connotations as might have been ours if the original movement had been of our own making.”24 Each audience member has the potential to witness a motion and translate that into his/her mind as if he/she had had that experience.

In the act of kinesthetic sympathy the language of the body in motion moves beyond simple signs and signifieds as thought of in relationship to written language. The body in motion is actually a vehicle for the audience member to place his/herself into the representation. The signified is arrived at then not only through a set structure of a word (or motion) meaning, or referencing, something that really exists, it is arrived at through physical implications that are beyond language. The sign (the movement) is placed on the audience member as well as what they are representing, the signified. The signified actual warfare is then, in some small way, happening to the audience in that moment. The language of the body will then not only relate to the warfare and battle but how it might feel to be involved in the battle being represented. The audience is then able to see Joey on stage and place themselves into the bodies of those controlling his movements; they are able to put themselves into his place. A horse is not only being represented in this moment, the body allows a means for the audience to arrive at the horse’s experience and see him as a sign for the greater experience of living beings throughout the war. When Joey passes through the experience of becoming a workhorse, as opposed to a cavalry horse, the

audience participates and in implicated into the performance as puppeteers portray the physical pains and carrying a heavy load through terrible conditions. The audience, in some way, has the ability to feel the pressure on their own muscles as they see Joey (and his puppeteers) work through the pain.

The performers/puppeteers of the stage production of *War Horse* are able to connect to the audience through kinesthetic empathy. The beauty and spectacle of the puppetry involved in the portrayal of the horses and the mechanized weapons/vehicles of war draw the audience into the wonder of how they are being controlled, by the human body. The body’s presence in every aspect of warfare depicted in the WWI account assist in placing the audience into some of the aspects of the war experience and force them to consider the human experience that occurred at the time. The war depiction cannot remain as simply giving a sterile account of war occurrences. Instead, the empathy derived paints a picture of war that influences and is influenced by humanity, all through the theatrical language of the body. This can be done without the use of puppetry however. In stylizing day-to-day movements of soldiers during war and in battle, the body can again be emphasized and the audience can be drawn into the account, thus depicting the “reality” of war through a human and individual lens.

**Empathy through Stylized Movement**

As examined above, the visual representation of war moments provides an immediate connection to the signified moments of real war, both of WWI and the hardship of war throughout time, as it reaches beyond the arbitrary inferences of written language by giving visual cues. This theory, however, only exists in the connection between sign and
signified and implicates the audience only as they make the connection between one and the other. Just as written language provides a sign (a word) that has come to connect to its signified (the actual thing), visual language connects an image that appears like the actual thing that references its real life counterpart. Once the reader (or audience member) is considered in this theory on how meaning is created, the theory is complicated. Audience or reader understanding, along with all of the educational and ideological baggage of each individual, has the ability to shift meaning. Meaning, then, is not reliant only on what the sign is and what is meant to be signified, but can dramatically shift depending on the individual. This is just as evident in embodied language. Each audience member has the potential to connect the sign (or movement) to its signified aspect of war in a way that is completely unique. These multiple avenues of connection have the potential to create multiple signifieds across a single audience depending on each audience member.

Stylized embodiment pushes the different inferences of every individual. In mentioning stylization, I refer to a portrayal that uses a particular style of theatrical convention or movement that heavily relies on the audience to suspend disbelief as it depicts something real in a manner that comments on the thing it depicts. The crucial aspect of stylized convention is that stylization doesn't create a presentation that is trying to appear “real.” Rather, it has the ability to represent the experience of the “real.” Realism gives a representation of what can be seen or heard from an onlooker on any given situation. The stylized or symbolic portrayals of that same situation provide a means of expression that is sometimes meant to portray not what is really seen but what is really felt or experienced, still representing a version of reality, just one that is not visible. In reference to such expressionist theories, Leo Tolstoy wrote about communicating with the
body in *What is Art?*. He said "...one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through [That]...is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings."\(^{25}\) According to Tolstoy, this portrayal of external signs to the emotions of one individual to another did not just represent or refer to an occurrence visually. Instead, the external representation connected to the audience’s emotions to communicate what had occurred.

While Tolstoy speaks of the ability for an audience to feel the same emotions as the performer’s emotional state and the character being represented, it also seems neglectful to assume that emotions are felt the same between every individual or that the audience has the potential to feel exactly what is being felt by the performer. Instead, it is reasonable to account for kinesthetic empathy on the part of the audience member that recognizes and interprets the movement happening on stage to reach their own conclusions. The signified war moment being represented cannot simply be the war moment alone. The embodied and stylized performance must certainly refer to the emotional or physical *experience* of the war moment. Still acting as a sign, the stylized body reaches beyond simple reference to a “thing” to reference an interactive *experience* with the thing. The audience is able to translate that experience through kinesthetic empathy in which they take on the movements of the soldiers and interpret the feelings that come along with those movements. This places continued focus on the individual soldier as the individual body of a soldier provides means of audience interaction that point to emotions that can then be

placed back on the individual actor. This process is seen in the portrayal of nighttime watch duties in *Black Watch*, entitled the Gallant Forty-Twa.

Written in the late 1800s, The Gallant Forty Twa is a Scottish folk song about the Black Watch and the pride that comes with being a member. *Black Watch* adapted the lyrics to new music and used the song to portray duties of the Black Watch in Iraq. The images being depicted in this scene have changed throughout its life at the National Theatre of Scotland but holds to an interpretation of military duties during wartime. In the 2012 world tour the scene depicted two soldiers on patrol. They acted in unison as they paced the stage. The performer’s moved around the stage and fluidly moved from position to position, every now and then making a quick movement in unison that seemed to unify the performers with each-other and demonstrate the skill at which these duties were performed. The “patrol” bordered on choreography but most movements stayed within the normal movements of a soldier but with unison, exactness, and a playfulness of pace that pushed these regular motions into stylized movement. While this scene incorporated less stylization than several of the other scenes in *Black Watch*, it used unison and timing to create a sense of stylization along side the melodic folk song.
The layering of the folk lyrics, the movement music, and the stylized movements transport the audience into the world of the play. The patrol duties, which can be clearly stated in a codified way, are complicated and made real to the audience, even through its stylization. The theory, presented by Tolstoy above, that a feeling is being conveyed and shared, may not be too distant from what is happening to the audience in this representative moment. The audience member is able to see a reality of war through the stylized movement as they physically and kinesthetically empathize with the performer.

Early dance theorist and critic John Martin spoke about the embodied performance and how it, “conveys meaning because viewers, even though sitting in their seats, feel the movements and consequently the emotions of the dancer.”26 While it is impossible to tell exact emotions of the performer and how they translate to each audience member, Martin’s theory on the audience’s ability to feel movement is still relevant. Susan Foster, a current

26 Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*, 1.
dance theorist that talks about audience’s kinesthetic empathy states that, “Now at the beginning of the twenty-first century neurophysiologists are likewise claiming an intrinsic connectivity between dancer and viewer based on the discovery of mirror neurons—synaptic connections in the cortex that fires both when one sees an action and when one does that action.” The same part of the brain is reacting upon seeing a motion and doing a motion. The meaning of the motion has the potential of being translated to the audience through that similar experience.

The audience has the possibility to relate to the movement of the performer and to imagine or feel movement in their own bodies. The bodies on stage, stylized and representing patrol duties are also providing a means of proxy to help the audience experience these movements for themselves. The audience is implicated as they take on those movements. Instead of hearing explanations in word form that are translated and connected to other words and pictures, the representation is directly performed on the audience as they watch. This implication of the audience does not rest with solely placing the movement onto the audience through this empathy, it also carries information in each movement that further connects the audience to the experience of the individual soldier as opposed to the “patrol duty” alone. This furthers the audience’s ability to see the performance as not indicative of what war looked like but what it was like through the emphasis on stylization. Speaking about dance (movement) as a portrayer of information that is accessed in a manner beyond normal thought process, “Dance does not speak

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27 Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*, 1.
through the intellect to the heart as does the spoken word: it speaks directly to our hearts, and afterwards perhaps to the brain, to the intellect.”

While kinesthesia developed from a study into the way bodies move, it was quickly evident that these moments portrayed and carried information both explainable in written language and information isolated to movement alone. Psychologist James J. Gibson began to posit the ability for movement to carry information to the brain in the early stages of the study of kinesthesia. He theorized the sensory relationship to perception and how the world that is constructed in the perception of the individual is relational to their physical experiences. This demonstrates the importance of the soldier’s physical experience on their mental perceptions as well as showing a connection between this kinesthetic empathy in the audience that makes the audience feel things physically from the performance, which then influence how they perceive war.

The movement of the performer, representing the soldier in Black Watch, is in some way felt by the audience as the audience member’s brain creates the movement in his or her own thoughts. The information related to the movements (such as emotions connected to the movement, a degree of difficulty, or even a sense of purpose), both from the actors and from the audience member’s own experience, influence the reference point or the signified war experience. (How information can be passed through movement and the body will be discussed in greater detail in the second chapter.) The music and the lyrics are also connected to that movement as the interpretation of the sign of war and battle movements is filtered through those performance choices. As the Black Watch seeks to represent the acts of war through a personalized and soldier driven lens, it is able to communicate and

29 Foster, Choreographing Empathy, 7.
refer to the moments of war and the experience that is had by each soldier through the
stylized and physical nature of the piece that creates audience empathy.

The emotional scene that is created in “Gallant Forty-Twa” is riddled with symbolic
references to death and to strength and creates a paradox of pride and fear in death that
lingers in the heart of the soldier being portrayed on stage. In the original blocking of the
scene to two men laid on their backs for a portion of the scene as their arms and legs raised
into the air and the contracted in a beautiful way that somehow referenced pain and dying
but with fluidity and stylization. Branching out from the solely violent nature of many
presentations of the war experiences, the stylization is also able to infer violence in a way
that emotionally connects to the audience beyond gore.

Differently, film’s representations of war moments also exist in a visual language,
and can be stylized, but trend toward a more realistic portrayal of violence even in the
stylization of filming. While visual, film provides a contrast to stylized theatre in the context
of kinesthetic empathy and the notions of stylized movement. Film’s ability to create
realistic violence and death is almost unheard of in the theatre. Special effects and make-up
are often used but the images of the soldiers on their feet with their guns in a moment of
strength and flat on the ground the next has the ability to carry that similar information
along with the emotional impact that is has for the soldier. The movement creates clear
signs of violence but exchanges reality, or sometimes gratuity, for a different kind of
impact.

Director of Pig Iron’s Anodyne Dan Rothenburg speaks about another non-realism
based pieces on war and argues against “realism” in violence portrayal. He defends the
physical and stylized nature of the performance, “The more we thought about violence and
art,” writes Rothenberg, “the more authenticity seemed the worst possible ideal.”

Stylizing violence and the war experience allows for a certain type of kinesthetic empathy that functions differently than the sympathy that comes from realistic portrayals of violence. As the performers moved fluidly then suddenly brought up their guns and swiftly shifted their aim from side to side, the tension in the audience rose. With each swift motion that broke from the fluidity that had been established, the audience’s muscles tensed as if they were moving the gun itself. While I would argue that some of these more violent portrayal contain worth and function in their way to support meaningful connections to war, the stylized nature of physical theatre have a specific route to creating an audience-actor/character connection through the kinesthetic empathy of stylized physical pieces.

This stylization also pushes the notions of war out of a natural state and into one outside of every day life. While many people do not participate in battle on a daily basis, media provides realistic and naturalized accounts of war on a daily basis. Whether through film or news media, the realistic accounts that depict violence in a natural way are consumed by many. These accounts have the potential to shock viewers and allow for an understanding of what battle is “really like.” They do, however, also contain a risk of desensitization. As representations are based in realism and given in high quantities, the viewer may start to view war and violence as natural occurrences that, while horrible, are average and a part of every day life. War has existed throughout history and indeed invades the lives of many and these accounts provide humanity with a means of knowing what is

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happening throughout the world. The stylized representations provide a new means of “knowing” that is felt by the audience while also provoking the audience to thought.

The unusual portrayals of war movements and battle in movement-based theatre have the ability to push an audience into a place of thinking, as the portrayals are not what the audience is used to seeing. This can be combined with the alternate ability to involve an audience (through kinesthetic empathy) into a single performance. The combination of these ideas creates a paradox of physical and socially engaged performance that is as artistic as it is alerting. The synchronized movements of soldiers who randomly fall to the ground with a sense of grace is not commonly seen in war time.

The stylization of “Gallant Forty-Twa” provides signs and markers that refer to patrol and provides a humanized lens. It also represents a piece of war that is not seen everyday. While it represents the emotional experience of the soldier, it does not exactly represent what they do physically. This appropriate amount of distancing from the actual event has the potential to alert the audience to something new. The scene shows two men pacing about the stage as if on duty but the halt their positions in unison, make dramatically swift motions with their guns, and even adapt slow motion for part of the time. The scene plays with pace and timing to provide movement that is outside of daily life. It creates something that references realistic normal happenings but the bodies on stage shift what is normal in their use of timing.

The audience is distanced from some of the actual movements of war in a way that may provoke thought as it stands apart from any other accounts of war that they have experienced. Through the stylization the audience member must look at patrol duties from a new perspective and awaken to the idea of soldiers on patrol that may have become
routine in contemporary war accounts. This tedious and common practice is given a new life as the audience becomes distanced in stylization. They are made aware of the strangeness of the movement and therefore, the strangeness of the practice. Each audience member has the opportunity, once perceiving this new practice, to question what they will and come to conclusions about something as standard as soldiers on patrol as well as war in general. Sharon Friedman, theorizing embodied theatrical portrayals of war stated that, “dramatists revise the ‘canonized narrative of war’ that exalts heroism and naturalizes war’s brutality.”

The audience member is brought into the action through his/her own bodies in the process of kinesthetic empathy and is distanced from the action in mind as the movement is stylized and made new. The two processes combined create unique ability for physical theatre to represent war in a way that provides unique thought and feeling to those who view it. Addition of the combination of thought and feeling to the representation of war will necessarily point to a different referent than codified new reports or even portrayals based on realism.

**Empathy through Juxtaposition**

Every physical representation of war events for a live audience is not the same, however. Even between two performances that both identify as stylized, different connotations and understandings can be gleaned from these different performances. While I propose that that physical theatre can be used as a language that has the ability to point to acts of war through a personalized lens, I maintain that there are some performances

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31 Friedman, *Gendered Terrain*, 598.
which use the body to represent war but also distance the audience from an understanding of what war is like for the individual soldier. Many physical and stylized live representations allude to the actions and training of war with a result of further codifying the acts thereof. Portrayals of war in parade, tattoo, and other recreational forms have the capacity to influence the viewing body with information just as physical theatre does. The information passed through embodied empathy may suffice only as a pacifier to the issues of war if a performance neglects to alert the audience to either the violence of war, as found in realism, or the personalized experience of the soldier that is found in productions such as War Horse or Black Watch. The recreational forms of war representation have the ability to bring the audience further from war, or war experiences, as a signified as it creates a simulacra of battle that is less violent than actual warfare and less personal than emotional depictions of the war experience.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo provides an example of such a recreational representation of war. The tattoo was first performed in 1950. It is a performance of Military drill using instruments and formational movement that is performed for the public every year on the esplanade of the historical Edinburg castle. Over the years the tattoo has grown to include performances by other countries and non-military institutions. Many types of music and visual effects are now in use as well. It is attended and viewed by hundreds of thousands of patrons each year and is meant to demonstrate the heritage of Scotland and its military regiments.

The tattoo’s representation of standard military drill is certainly theatricalized, and even stylized, from its actual state in military training and is distant from actual warfare. The theatricality creates an image of the drill that is sterilized and depicts no amount of
violence or difficulty. The feats of the soldiers are in musical ability and marching precision and make little to no reference of other wartime skills. In essence, the tattoo provides a reference point to Scottish military life that is simulated, as all representations are, but with a shadow of joy and entertainment that is not experienced in actual battle. As the productions listed above stylize warfare in a way that exposes the individual and the difficulty of life therein, the tattoo romanticizes the experience. *Black Watch* used the Tattoo in several aspects of the performance as well. In using the tattoo, *Black Watch* was able to subvert the idealized notions of the tattoo thus using similar means to represent a completely different idea of warfare than the tattoo. Through the juxtaposition of the audience’s expectation of the tattoo, with a tattoo that highlights the harshness of war *Black Watch* subverts the glamourized image of war that the tattoo can push, thus yielding audience empathy.

Gregory Burke spoke about the decision to represent the tattoo in the production “The Edinburgh Military Tattoo is also produced by the army. It is a very sanitised version of military life. Marching bands, displays of athletic ability, drill. It in no way reflects actual combat, because, obviously, the reality of military combat is not something the general public would find entertaining…. the main way we subverted it was through the idea that *Black Watch* was a ‘tattoo’ about actual warfare, whilst preserving the drill, the music, the athletic ability that the tattoo also showcases”32 The creators of *Black Watch* set the production in a space that resembled the tattoo, used preshow music and lights similar to the tattoo, and even ended with a scene that depicted it. In the final scene of *Black Watch* with the title “Parade” is a completely physically based scene, which uses the markers of

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the tattoo to portray a connection to Edinburgh military notoriety while simultaneously subverting the “sterilized” portrayal that the tattoo provides. The description of the scene is simple,

“Music. The Bagpipes and drums start playing. ‘The Black Bear’. The soldiers start parading. The music intensifies and quickens as the parade becomes harder and the soldiers stumble and fall. The parade formation begins to disintegrate but each time one falls they are helped back onto their feet by the others. As the music and movement climax, a thunderous drumbeat stops both, and the exhausted, breathless soldiers are left in silhouette.”  

Director John Tiffany and movement director Steven Hogget adjusted the image or the sign of the tattoo, itself a sign of military warfare, slightly to demonstrate the effort that is required by the soldier in the heat of battle. The beauty of the tattoo then lies not in the ease and fluidity of the motion, as customarily depicted, but in the effort and the difficulty. This change creates a dramatic significance and meaning. The ending image is one that references a beaten but proud group of soldiers, each individual that fall and are lifted at his own moment, which managed to go forward in the creation of this final drill, even after losing other members of their regiment. The purposes of mastery, discipline, and unification that are inherent in military drill and are subtly present in the traditional tattoo are heaved into the forefront of the audience’s mind in the Black Watch depiction. As each soldier falls the difficulty in attaining and necessity for unity and discipline in times of war

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are made evident. The simulated ease that is created in the traditional tattoo is peeled off to expose, in the stylization of falls, an individual experience at the heart of unified units.

For the viewers who are accustomed to the simulated drill being performed at the tattoo a new affiliation is created upon viewing the parade represented in *Black Watch*. The illusion of war as affiliated heavily with entertainment and simple joy in synchronization has the ability to permanently affect the minds of the viewers and the exposure of the tattoo also being simulated in *Black Watch* can oppositely affect the viewer. The scene acts as a symbol of the effort of the soldier and the bonds that he is able to create with those around him in the midst of a battle, which is being fought for political reasons. It is divorced from the larger notions of war and is focused on the individual as the most important component of war and the ultimate thing being signified.

The stylized nature of physical theatre allows for the portrayal of violence in a way that not only allows for its reference under the restrictions of theatre, but also enfolds the violence in a way that fosters interpretation and thought from the audience in order to construct the actual event in their minds. The audience’s experience in interpreting the text of the physical language creates a filter for that which is being referred to that implicates feelings, the body, individuals, and even kinesthetic response on the part of the audience. The implication of the audience happens through a connection to what is being portrayed and performed on stage by the human body, thus creating a connection between individuals through performance. This connection implicates the soldiers being portrayed and brings the individual and personal experience of each soldier into the minds of the audience, creating a humanized version of war. The physical information that is “felt”
instead of understood mentally through a written language alone allows for the door to open to other feelings while watching the performance. The physical sign that refers to war does not rest on the signified of “war” only. It is carried away with the bodies of the audience members and the performers; their bodies having learned some of the experience of war and ready to continue feeling in relation to the signified war moments long after the production is closed.


**Memory of War**

*Writer: What was it like getting fired at?*
*Cammy: It's weird ay.*
*Stewerty: It f***s people up. Big time. (Beat) Rips them apart. (Beat) You seen the size ay the bullets we use in a chain gun? (Beat) You seen what happens when a bullet that size hits somebody?*
*Writer: Well... no... I haven't.*

—Black Watch “Pub 4”

“What was it like?” is something that many, if not all, soldiers get asked upon their return home. It is also a question difficult, if not impossible, to answer. Gregory Burke, writer of *Black Watch*, was one of many to ask that question of the regiment featured in *Black Watch* and the answers, the personal memories of the soldiers, became the final product for the National Theatre of Scotland’s seminal work.

The events that surrounded the Black Watch’s time in Iraq were highly mediatized. Television pundits, government officials, and reporters discussed the deaths of the three soldiers and the Iraqi translator across multiple media platforms. Many sides strove to use the events to gain momentum for their political positions both for and against British involvement in the conflict in Iraq. The communal and personal memories of the public about these events are constructed by these stories in the media. This access point allowed the UK public to learn of the events through a political lens. This information, supplemented with memory of wartime scenarios of the past, were what created public perception. This perception of what happened in this particular war instance, influenced by media, was poised to further influence war scenarios portrayed in the future in fiction and in the news, which was skewed slightly towards a more political perception of the events.
When Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director of NTS at the time, asked Gregory Burke to pay attention to the conflict with intent to create a theatrical piece, they knew that they wanted to take a different approach. Gregory Burke began to interview a specific group of soldiers that were in the regiment and who were witnesses to the November 4, 2004 death of the soldiers and interpreter near Camp Dogwood. They decided to garner as much information from the personal memories of the soldiers as they could. While the soldiers sometimes talked about the events as individuals, they were mostly remembering in a group setting. This is portrayed in the Pub scenes of Black Watch. Rehearsals for the production had already begun as the interviews were being attained and the interview process itself was eventually incorporated into the production and the script.

With the creative team’s focus on the memory of the individual soldiers and with knowledge that the memories would be expressed in a highly physical way, the emotional recollections of the soldiers would always be at the forefront of this creation. Each memory that was recalled by an individual soldier or the group as a whole would eventually be portrayed without many words or explanation in stylized physical scenes. Thus the questions asked by Burke and the means by which the memories were portrayed, expressed, recreated and reified in each performance moment, clearly signaled what an event was “like” not specifically “what happened.” The focus on emotional interaction with an event began at the memory process for the returned soldiers and was portrayed to the audience in such a way as to influence the memory of the event in the eyes of every audience member and participant.

In her book The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas, Diana Taylor makes a distinction between the archive and the repertoire as
means of creating and storing information. She discusses the archive as all sources of knowledge that are written, recorded, or physically stored that have traditionally been or can be accessed to write histories and create understanding. This includes books, videos, audio recordings, archived material possession, etc. The repertoire is not found recorded and stored but can be accessed for information as well. This includes live performance, fashion, oral tradition, customs, and many aspects of daily life. Taylor uses an analysis of the archive and the repertoire to discuss multiple means of knowing and how cultural and personal information and memories can be accessed through both experiencing the repertoire as well as studying it. She identifies that the archive and the repertoire can sometimes be fluid with the potential for an individual to write about aspects of the repertoire (making it archivable) as well as to record moments of liveness to function in the archive. Even in that fluidity the aspects of the repertoire still maintain distinction in the repertoire as they are not only learned the way archival systems are learned but also through means exclusive to the repertoire, such as emotional reaction, physical mimicry, and purely visual interaction with the piece of repertoire.34

Because of the tradition of the archive as being one of necessary selection, the means of knowing are being constantly controlled. The history of what has been included in the archive is undoubtedly riddled with bias but the current creation of the archive must still live under that requirement for selection. There is simply not a means of archiving every piece of information because of time and space but also in that many means of knowing cannot transmit information if archived. Therefore, the archive traditionally forgets aspects of a story or event that are not crucial to its purposes. Forgotten from the

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historic and cultural memory are certainly marginalized individuals and groups, those who lost conflicts and those whose views oppose those of the archiver, but it is also important to note the forgetting of imaginative, virtual, and the emotional information from the archive as there is difficulty in portraying those things through archival means. Because of this, the public memory of any event or history may lack many aspects of emotional and imaginative histories that were as impactful to an event as speeches and tactical maneuvers that are more easily archived. It is through the repertoire (specifically in actions of the body) that many of these forgotten aspects of culture can persevere. Joseph Roach claims that, “the ‘expressive movements [function] as mnemonic reserves, including patterned movements made and remembered by bodies.”

Black Watch and War Horse have to potential and ability to create new memory in every recollection for the storyteller, in that memory is adapted and revised upon recollection, and influence the creation of new memory for an audience as it necessarily deals with those unarchivable properties such as the body in motion and the emotional/wordless understanding that accompanies it. In as much as events of the past are accessible only through their memory, physical theatre can have the power to influence the actual events of individuals, groups, and nations. This is ever important in the creation and sharing of war stories, which contain information easily expressed in the archive along with those marginalized unarchivable aspects of war, such as emotional experience. Joseph Roach, speaking of the violence that exists in the history of circum-Atlantic slave trade, stated that, “While a great deal of the unspeakable violence instrumental to this creation may have been officially forgotten, circum-atlantic memory retains its consequences, one of

which is that the unspeakable cannot be rendered forever inexpressible: the most persistent mode of forgetting is memory imperfectly differed.” 36Black Watch and War Horse work especially to include those aspects of violent events that are forgotten in the archive.

It is the memory of those things usually forgotten by the archive that are being portrayed and interpreted in the physicalized telling of events in Black Watch, thus influencing the archive for the future and the knowledge of the event for the audience. As the audience departs from news articles and speeches and moves towards the performed event, they are exposed to the joys and torments of the soldier’s individual lives. The memory of the event is then changed and can be experienced differently by soldiers in the future. The future of warfare is then ghosted by the influence of these performance pieces and it is the physical nature of the piece that truly allows the emotional memory to come to the forefront, as well as making it difficult to archive, as the audience reaction to movement is often understood in a way that defies verbal or written language. It is a language on its own. The signs involved in physical theatre work with referents that are not always archivable, thus are usually forgotten even though those referents exist beyond the world of performance.

It is because of the changing nature of memory, and thus history, that I argue that physical and stylized theatre is able to bring out the unarchivable aspects of battle or surrounding events, such as emotional experience. The performance is then able to transfer that unarchivable information to its audience members as they become implicated in the action through learning that exists in the repertoire. The audience has the potential to

forever remember the history in their bodies and in their minds differently for the future, thus changing the event itself. As the audience is implicated they learn the unarchivable history being felt by the audience. The new information and the implication of themselves through the repertoire connect the audience to individuals and their personal experience. This connection brings in a focus on the individual in the audience’s memory of an event in the future.

In order to demonstrate the ways in which the repertoire, and physical theatre’s telling of war stories specifically, can influence individual and cultural memory, I use the telling of a specific memory of the soldiers’ in the regiment that Burke wrote and titled “Ten Seconds” in contrast to an archived documentary film Restrepo, which portrays similar events. Marvin Carlson’s theory of Ghosting is then used to examine cultural historiography in the scene titled “Fashion” to demonstrate the implication of the audience, the past soldier, and the current actor simultaneously through performance that exists in the repertoire. The influence of the repertoire in the accessing of memories as well as the influence of how a memory is accessed is then demonstrated in the “Pub” scenes of Black Watch. I then address efficacy in the telling of war stories through the repertoire that is ever shifting. Through an examination of the efficacy the benefits and drawbacks of an examination of what “it was like” in addition to “what happened” in our cultural memory become apparent.

Remembering Violence

One of Black Watch’s greatest accomplishments is captivating the audience despite the boredom of war life being a constant thread in the production. The emphasis on the
soldier’s every day experience as one of sometimes painful boredom in harsh weather seems to be founded on the accounts of the soldiers themselves. The ways that the soldiers entertain themselves are clearly represented, each with its own purpose. Some pastimes are clearly purposed to occupy time spent alone, others seems to represent a purpose of hazing. *Black Watch* represents one of the soldiers’ actual games in an overtly stylistic manner in a scene named after the game: “Ten Seconds”. This scene portrays the soldiers letting off steam through a game that can seem brutal and even cruel. In the game, two bickering men are thrust into the limelight and given ten seconds to fight, to beat each other as hard as possible, and to attempt to come out the victor, the most powerful. They are only allowed ten seconds however. Unlike boxing there are no safety pads or gloves. Unlike wrestling there are no rules. Within the confines of ten seconds anything is possible.

![Figure 6. Suchman, Scott. *Black Watch*. 2013. Photograph. American Conservatory Theatre.](image)

*Black Watch* portrays the activity with the possible intent to portray either what it was like to participate in the event or a symbolic reason why the event was necessary. *Black Watch*'s portrayal of the event has the ability to highlight the emotional repertoire and in so doing implicates the audience, thus, if it truly connects to the audience, changes
the event forever as individual audience members have the possibility of perceiving the event as something real to them, individually, in that moment and opening up the audience member’s mind to the individuals who did experience it.

This game is not unique to the soldiers of the Black Watch. The documentary film *Restrepo* portrays American soldiers participating in similar moments of violence against fellow soldiers. *Restrepo* portrays the actions as they “actually” occurred with one soldier provoking the fight with fellow soldiers encouraging the action with yells and even pushing. In *Restrepo*, this seemingly cruel but possibly effective activity is documented with a mixture of laughter and danger. *Restrepo* represents this activity as placed in the archive. It is a visual and aural representation that is filmed and can forever be pointed to: this is how it really happened and this is what it really looked like.37

While the transcript for the *Black Watch* interviews about Ten Seconds is not given in the body of the play, the representation of the moment is portrayed in such a way that different information is being expressed in the play than was expressed in the documentary. In the interviews that incited the soldier to recall the memory of the event, the recall could have been riddled with the emotional content that existed in the moment. It would then be told by the soldiers in such a way as to provoke the artistic team of *Black Watch* to represent the moment in a stylistic and daringly kind representation, in that the brutality was less of a focal point, of this act of violence. It is this representation that will now influence the soldier’s memory for the future as the scene transmitted pieces of information from the practice that may be foreign from any other archives of the same or similar events (such as the film *Restrepo*).

The scene “Ten Seconds” begins as what some would consider a normal fight between soldiers that are having a disagreement, surrounded by other soldiers, but quickly escalates to blows then fades into a highly choreographed routine. Music begins that is dramatic and epic in scale. Each soldier is eventually implicated as they all join into this fight for ten seconds then switch to a new partner. The fights are not only graceful but become supportive. Each soldier stylistically and beautifully throws punches but also lifts their opponent and moves in step with him. The style abandons the purely violent nature of the ten-second ritual and pushes it towards a moment of camaraderie and brotherly support. As much as the soldiers were fighting one another, they were also providing a means of expression for the other. Because of the stylistic nature of the scene with the flow and companionship that it conveyed to the audience, the moment implied an equal but different memory than could have otherwise been attained.

As the game is accessed through stylized movement, chosen with exclusion to any other method that could have also portrayed this event, the event itself will be forever changed. As attitudes and perceptions change by the audience and the soldiers, the event is different than it might have been if seen through an archived video or in writing. It is also remembered differently in the future by the audience who might have known about this ritual or by the soldier who experienced it. In the mind of the audience member who has seen this ritual for the first time in this stylistic portrayal, he or she has the potential to realize the event with the information that the stylized method portrays and go forward with that as his or her altered, even slightly, memory. With this knowledge in place, it is important to note that Richard Schechner’s definition of performance as a twice-performed
behavior or restored behavior. The soldiers of the Black Watch, and possibly many soldiers throughout the world, have participated in this ten-second ritual many times. Every time that the men did this they were essentially creating a performance that, to them, served a purpose. Through every interpretation of the event, or every time they participate in ten seconds, they are restoring a behavior. The purpose behind the performance is manifested, or altered in remembrance, as the actors take upon them the ritual with adaptation for an audience outside of the military.

The act is altered slightly through each new performance of ten seconds as the moment will always contain something new, whether on the battlefield or in production. Even on the battlefield the information about the ritual is passed through the body as each soldier experiences it for the first time: thus through the repertoire. As it is performed again and again in the soldiers’ minds and in recollection for an interviewer (playwright) the memory is further changed as memories and recollections are changed slightly with each telling, also dependent on why it is being recalled or where. This renewed interpretation that exists for every soldier in every performance of the ritual, creates a performance just as valid as the original in a manner that somewhat erases the previous performance all together. The repertoire of the ritual is mirrored in that performance is also a part of the repertoire and can thus spread the information in a similar way.

As the soldiers remember the event and relate it to the playwright, who then relates it to director John Tiffany, then on to the actors, and ultimately to the audience, the same and equally valid fluidity is applied to the memory. Just as memory adjusts with each recollection and telling, the event changes as well. The information that is housed in the

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repertoire of performance may change slightly and influences the way that the past event is accessed. As this is part of the history of the event, the event itself is changed. This empowers the performance to change and influence the event itself in a way that can be subversive or celebratory but is equally authentic as the original event as it is a continuation of a recollection into the same memory. The audience simply becomes implicated into the memory upon experiencing it for the first time, which is part of the change that occurs. This audience implication occurs in the communication between the performing body and the perceiving body only through the repertoire.

Joseph Roach describes performance of memory and states that it “illuminates the theoretical and practical possibilities of restored behavior not merely as the recapitulation but as the transformation of experience through the displacement of its cultural forms.” Any attempt to portray this event will ultimately lead to the event’s change. As the brutality of the ten seconds ritual is remembered through Black Watch with an undercurrent of camaraderie and support, the event is remembered as such by the audience, performer, or even soldier who experienced it first hand upon seeing the performance. Whether intended by the soldiers or not in their telling of the events, Burke heard and (with Tiffany) envisioned such from their memory. It is then a recollection of the same memory performance after performance. As the actors restore the behavior of the ritual, especially with the blessing and congratulations of the soldiers themselves, they are reenacting the behavior as much as they are modifying it.

The documentary film Restrepo provides a means of peering in on this ritual and does so from the archive. Emotional memory may be transmitted from the archived visual

representation but the reification of the ritual that occurs in live performance is relevant in its transformed state in every performance, demonstrating the continued change in the public perception of the soldier’s memory. The memory is enacted and transformed, in some way, to a new audience every night. Just as the soldiers will remember the moment anew and slightly different with every memory recall (even as one with love as part of its purpose), the audience will “remember” the ten second ritual of the soldiers’ for the first time. In this the memory will live on.

The ability for the performance of a memory to change the actual event and future memory is able to infuse the performance with information that is inaccessible from the confines of the archive. *Black Watch* represents the somewhat unwillingness of the soldiers who were interviewed to speak completely candidly about emotional reactions, deep founded feelings of respect for their mates, and their longing for home through the use of harsh language as well as depicting soldiers’ avoidance of questions that deal with emotional reactions. However, the knowledge of non-verbalized emotional states that cannot be accurately described, or described to the same extent, with words were still received by the audience. Lieutenant Colonel Matt Whitney of the United States Army recounts his experience in seeing the production and states that “What Gregory Burke and the creative team of the National Theatre of Scotland have brought to American soil is what a cavalcade of country singers and embedded reporters have completely failed to do for nearly eight years: to expose the hearts, hopes, triumph and pain of American soldiers to the people they serve.”\(^{40}\) The things that are exposed are impossible to interpret from the

writable language of this piece and are arguably unexplainable through archival means alone.

The physical nature of the piece, and especially “Ten Seconds,” allows for the memory of the events depicted in the piece to be enriched or recalled with the exposure of the emotional experiences of the soldier. Just as these elements are difficult to portray verbally, they are also difficult to archive here in writing. Rather, it is something learned and remembered through the body without a verbal language assigned to it. The language of the body in “Ten Seconds” accurately portrays and is received in physical response from audience and actor.

Roach discusses the ability for the body to portray knowledge outside of written and spoken language and to provoke reactions that are also outside those bounds when he states, “This faculty which flourishes in that mental space where imagination and memory converge is a way of thinking through movements—once remembered and reinvented—the otherwise unthinkable, just as dance is often said to be a way of expressing the unthinkable.” Themes are explored in ten seconds and paradoxes are exposed of violence and love, between friendship and hate, of tension and release, and between construction and destruction. These paradoxes are portrayed and understood only through the physical and stylistic representation of the body in “Ten Seconds.” The personal and cultural memory of the ritual moves out of the realm of pure violence but remains connected to it just enough to create something that can only be experienced through witnessing or participating in the performance. The initial event, which occurred for the first time

41 Roach, Cities, 29.
possibly while the Black Watch was in Iraq, can now be remembered by those who witness
the depiction with the knowledge gleaned from that moment.

This physical telling of the memory also allows the audience to be implicated into
the event itself, as an archived recall may not. When this stylized physical representation
moves away from somewhat alienating violence in a ritual never performed by the
audience and into a space that is received through the emotional body of the audience, they
are able to view and experience the event through a different mode of understanding. The
new understanding, the one laced with the paradoxical threads of support and trust along
with destruction and power, suddenly becomes felt by the audience and therefore
understood. The performers’ representation is filtered through the audience’s past
understandings of events that they find similar, perhaps memories of boys fighting on the
playground, boxing matches, or even accounts of war torture that could lace the memories
of the audience’s pasts and manifest themselves into the perception and future memory of
the event depicted in “Ten Seconds.”

Diana Taylor demonstrates the power for existing memory to influence all
memories that may come in the future. She states, “the power of seeing through
performance is the recognition that we’ve seen it all before-the fantasies that shape our
sense of self, of community, that organize our scenarios of interaction, conflict, and
resolution.”42 The scenarios that already exist in the minds of the audience will necessarily
change their interaction with the performance. Then as the audience takes on the new
information they may begin to identify with the same dichotomy that exists in the scene or
they may feel something different. As they feel and identify with the actors, and the soldiers

42 Taylor, The Archive, 143.
they represent, they are then part of the memory going forward. The knowledge of the audience physically receiving the information and the memory from the performance places pieces of the audience into the memory of the event itself. The soldier may not consciously decide that they are thinking of the audience when they continue to recall the event but the audience is now implicated into the exchange of the ritual and thus forever changes its memory.

This can also be seen in the depictions of the relationships between horse and human during World War I in *War Horse*. The shifting military tactics of WWI pushes for a memory away from cavalry and toward technology. As the experience of the horse and the human is highlighted in *War Horse* and with a particular aim of putting humanity at the forefront of the war, the production can actually cause memory of the war to change. Those who remember learning about WWI from a history book could have a different memory of their learning that is shifted slightly by what the audience learned through the repertoire, which highlighted elements of the repertoire such as silent relationships between animal and man.

**Remembering History**

The act of remembering is as influential as the memory itself. The archive and repertoire act together to reconstruct meanings and memories of the past. The traces of ghosting (as defined by Carlson) are key to the historiography evident in the scene “Fashion” as they demonstrate how the memories and histories of the recent and distant past can be evident in the archive, manifest themselves in the body (element of the
repertoire), only to have this moment archived, as well as live on, in the bodies of those who participate in it.

Up to this section, I have placed the repertoire as a somewhat favored side of a binary in order to demonstrate the influential and unique means of knowing that can be attained through the repertoire. The archive and the repertoire, however, act fluidly and information or pieces of knowledge are stored in each and move between the two. Black Watch includes one scene that shows an interesting relationship between the archive and the repertoire and the place in which histories (memories) exist. The scene embodies the ability for some aspects of knowledge to jump back and forth from the archive to the repertoire and back again, thus eliminating the classification for the two as a binary that is always opposite while not completely allowing for them to be placed merely on a continuum where the information can simply sit somewhere in the middle. Instead the information that is crucial to the memory of the Black Watch’s memory throughout history leaps from one to the other, exists in both places, and can also be clearly identified in one and/or the other but never “in-between.”

Marvin Carlson discusses the ways in which current performances, both on stage and off, often embody aspects ghosting, which place meaning and importance on the new performance based on performances/performers/information of the past. He states, “The ghostly reappearance of historical, legendary, figures on stage has been throughout history an essential part of the theatre experience.”43 Ghosting then allows for tales of history kept and accessed through the archive to come to light in the minds of audience and performer in acts of the repertoire. It ultimately implicates the entire past, histories, and memories of

all involved into the current performance, giving it its constitution and recreating its memory.

Diana Taylor discusses the notion of ghosting on all performances that reside in the repertoire, even daily performances rituals. She states, “My view of performance rests on the notion of ghosting, that visualization that continues to act politically even as it exceeds the live... the way I see it, performance makes visible (for an instant, live, now) that which is always already there: the ghosts, the tropes, the scenarios that structure our individual and collective life.”44 The ghosts of the past that were once accessed through the archive create a lens for each audience member as they experience a performance. The ghosts act as a means for constantly recreating the performance for momentary existence in this audience member’s mind and in the actor’s body, thus ghosting is a means of creating the repertoire. Ghosting exists in the psychological analysis of memory and the tendency for the mind to create memories in reference to, and in connection with, other occurrences. Attilio Favorini states that, “In this almost infinitely complex system of connectivity, memory is a system property that ‘depends upon specific neuro-anatomical connections’ an that is ‘exhibited as an enhanced ability to recognize and categorize objects in classes seen before’”45

The Black Watch’s rich history is important to every soldier that dons the Black Watch uniform, distinct with a red feather and a black tartan. In “Fashion” a soldier named Cammy tells the history of the Black Watch from 1715 to the events of the play. The recitation of the regiment’s history is an act that all soldiers in the Black Watch must

44 Taylor, The Archive, 143.
participate in training. In the play, Cammy does not simply recite the history, an act of the repertoire that embodies a finely tuned piece of the archive and has become tradition in the Black Watch. Instead the memory of the Black Watch is interpreted and performed by the character of Cammy as he puts the history into colloquial language and embellishes it with occasional personal commentary. Those familiar with the history of the Black Watch or have even seen/participated in the traditional telling of the history will have this experience of this telling of the history ghosted by their memories of the past, even with Cammy’s adapted personal spin. Those unfamiliar with the history may also ghost the performance with their knowledge of Scotland or their own general knowledge of the military.

“... like I say, formed in 1739. By George the Second. An you can see why they wanted us on the firm ay. We're useful c***s tay hay on board. We're warriors.

We’re Celts. The thing about Celts, apart from oral culture and disappearing fay history, was that they looked upon warfare as sport. It was their fun. It was what they did to relax. Beat. Tay us, this... this is f***ing relaxation.”

The scene also inhabits the repertoire as the scene is staged as a high physical fashion show, fashion being a key aspect of the embodied cultural repertoire. A red carpet is laid out and Cammy walks the created catwalk as he speaks the history to the audience. He never leaves the stage as the fashion progression occurs from 1739 to 2004. Instead, his fellow soldiers change his clothes for him in increasingly interesting ways. He is lifted, thrown, supported, and handled by his fellow soldiers who change each article of clothing with the progression of the history. While the staging is visually interesting and almost

acrobatic, it is also representative. The stage directions call for the movements to, “resemble a squad assembling and disassembling a military canon.”

This scene takes something so key to the archive, a linear history, and expands it to the repertoire. The meanings that can be derived are multiplied in that act. The historical references are relayed in an almost verbal archive but with nods to the current. Cammy’s language choices and his relaxed physicality take the history and give it immediate importance. Why is this character relating the history in this story? Why did he choose to say what he did? What is the history’s importance to what is happening now? The focus is drawn to the individual of Cammy and his use of the archive and how he is involved and influenced by it.

This idea continues with the importance of fashion to the scene. The public signifiers of what it means to be a soldier are physically placed on and peeled off of Cammy in front of

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the audience’s eyes. He goes from the vulnerability of his underwear to the prestige of the Black Watch tartan in seconds, only to go back to vulnerability and into camouflaged BDU’s (Battle Dress Uniform) moments later. The distance that the archive provides in any history of Scottish BDU’s is eliminated as the clothing is near to the audience and is being inhabited by and taken from a living body, a representation of a soldier. In the moment of performance the history and the body are one. He is physically being progressively changed and altered by means of the linearity of a historical timeline just as a static history might, the linear confines of the red carpet assist in that.

The aspect of fashion gives the audience access to the history and provides for a clear site of ghosting. As the soldier changes from one article of clothing to another, the audience is seeing these articles of clothing layered with any knowledge or memory they have of these garments. Each era of fashion provides for countless ways in which an archived history can actively be performing with the actor to create the performance in that moment. A notable film that takes place within any of these times may place the performance of certain individuals in those films onto Cammy. Newspaper articles or books
with photographs of men in the same articles of clothing may also begin to have a ghostlike performance in the piece.

The audience connection to the history is only increased in the physicality of the clothing changes. The complex lifts and creative holds are entertaining in this scene that might be considered removed from the plot of *Black Watch* but it also creates a tension that is ultimately connected to the history. With every new movement there is a sense of drama. How can they possible lift him in a new way? Is this dangerous? Will he fall? The audience is drawn to how Cammy’s body is moving and about his well-being. Each movement refers to an aspect of battle as well as the means to change his clothing. The image of a canon in an audience’s memory will certainly ghost the formation that is created with Cammy acting as the barrel of the canon with his mates on either side supporting his canon-like frame as well as changing his pants.

This attaches to the words that he is saying, the tie to the archive, and transmits feelings to the events being related. As the focus of the scene rests in between the soldier’s body in its current physical experience and the ancient happenings of the regiment, they become unified. The history has the same drama as the movement of the body and the body has the same validity and importance as the history. As the body is implicated in the history, the history is humanized and individualized. Taylor underscores this notion of the history being evident simultaneously with the present in a discussion of reading cultural performance as a way of knowing. “The is/as underlines the understanding of performance as simultaneously ‘real’ and ‘constructed,’ as practices that bring together what have historically been kept separate as discrete.”

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The archive of history is something that is necessarily past, done. With the performance of “Fashion,” the written history (archive) of history ghosts the live telling of history and allows it to remain in the archive while simultaneously leaping into the repertoire. “Fashion” also celebrates and enacts the verbal tradition of telling that history as a ritual as it implicates the current soldier and adds him to a part of the history, making the memory of the soldiers of the past ghost his current position and deeds (repertoire.) It also acts as a means of combining the soldier locked in the archive past with the soldier who has told his story countless times. In this telling it is the real soldier being represented by the character Cammy and the actor who plays that character. Soldier past, soldier present, character, and actor all ghost the performance of the lives and memories of the others. The memory of soldier, the one behind Cammy’s character, translates into an archivable script that is performed by the live body of the actor in a singular moment, only to exist on in some way in an archived video recording of the performance, in performance reviews, and even in this thesis.

Cammy orchestrates this concept of fluidity in the ability for aspects of knowledge and memory to drift from archive to repertoire throughout the entire piece as he stands as a representation for a particular soldier but also as the “everyman soldier.” The everysoldier that Cammy comes to be gives voice to one and to many. He then acts as a bridge in the archived history and the current live embodied memories of soldier’s past. The body in the live space is ultimately one of an individual but the ghosts of soldiering scenarios of cultural past will place Cammy into the traditional role of the soldier. Roach accounts for traditional roles being filled in his notions of surrogation that are discussed in the previous chapter but the notion of Cammy surrogating the role of the everysoldier does
imply a certain aspect of ghosting as well as the influence of the archive on the repertoire.

“Like carnival itself, they promote a sense of timelessness assemed on the apparently seamless repetition of traditional roles.”49 The timelessness is created in the current embodied soldier that exists in the moment with the audience.

The body of Cammy’s actor is necessarily implicated into the memories and histories of the past and visa versa along with the clothing that he inhabits in this scene. With fashion as an access point to all of the history of the regiment dictates the placing of those archived pieces of a system of the repertoire onto a current body that will be ghosted by all those who have donned that deep black tartan before and will continue to influence the memory of all who have seen Black Watch. It will ghost the future telling of these events just as it has been ghosted itself.

All performance has the potential to do this. Roach supports this supposition as he discusses the ability for performance to actively represent some knowledge that has come before while having the ability to change it. He states, “These three definitions of performance- that it carries out purposed thoroughly, that it actualizes a potential, or that it restores a behavior- commonly assumed that performance offers a substitute for something else that preexists it. Performance, in other words, stands in for an elusive entity that it is not but that it must vainly aspire both to embody and to replace.”50 Even as the ghosts of the past will necessarily influence the memory of the soldiers into their own history, the performance of Fashion in Black Watch can change the perceptions and memories of ghosts past.

49 Roach, Cities, 18.
50 Roach, Cities, 3.
Remembering as a Community

Black Watch provides an interesting look into the act of historiography from the mouth of one and the mouths of many. It provides not only a representation of the act of retrieving communal memory but is actually a product of such memory recollection. Several scenes throughout Black Watch depict the interview process that Burke had with the soldiers of the Black Watch. The telling of these stories is what ultimately became the play but Burke also wrote himself and the communal memory experience into the show. It provides a backbone to the narrative, a place for the non-linear pieces to come back to, much like actual memory.

As discussed in the section on “Fashion,” it is probable for an event to shift or change based on the telling of the event. The physicality of such a telling is important as it colors the thoughts and memories of the past. What of the act of retelling a similar experience with another person that lived it? The co-telling and experimentation that exists when stating, “remember when,” will ultimately influence the event, and the memory of it. The act of remembering something in a group mirrors the act of memory for an audience. Black Watch establishes remembering together as a norm. As an audience sees an event portrayed through physical means, they are allowing their memory to be altered just as if they had experienced the event with the soldier and if the depiction is physical, it will be in an individual way. Communal remembering influences the event just as witnessing a depiction does. Remembering communally also gives shape to a memory that may be one-sided just as a physical portrayal gives shape to the individual experience.
The act of war is a communal one. Soldiers train, work, rest, and fight as organized units, sometimes spending months and years together and certainly a great amount of time in close quarters. The communal act of war is reflected in Burke’s telling of how such things are remembered. When first propositioned about what the war was “like” the soldiers of the Black Watch quickly unified into telling the same story. Cammy begins by laying grounding for what it was like going into the war:

Cammy: It wasnay like I thought it was gonnay be. I don’t know what the f*** I thought it was gonnay be like, but it wasnay like what it was.

The character Granty quickly supports his memory,

Granty: I thought it was going to be exciting.

Rossco: I thought it was gonnay tell me something about the meaning ay life ay.
Writer: So what did it tell you?

Again, each of the soldier’s retorts build and supports a singular communal memory.

Cammy: That I didnay want tay be in the army any more.

Rossco: Me neither.

Granty: None ay us.51

It is possible that the soldiers truly had very similar experiences when going into war. It is also possible that they are stating that it was similar even if they feel differently, but perhaps as the soldiers come together to recount how it felt to first arrive in Iraq, their memories are coming into sync with each other as each piece of the memory recall is unfolded. Diana Taylor states that, “Cultural memory is, among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection... Memory is embodied and sensual.”52 So while much of memory (or aspects of memory in line with the repertoire) takes place in the body alone, the memories that make up a culture, those communal memories are created together in acts of imagination with others. These acts of imagination use images that are placed in the mind but are influenced by the sensory memory of the body. The sensory experience is just as influential in the telling of these memories.

In Freud’s exploration into the idea of memory, he holds to the events of the past as something more akin to the archive. He notes that, “I have only to bear in mind the place where this memory has been deposited and I can then reproduce it at any time I like, with the certainty that it will have remained unaltered.”53 This would provide a means of thinking of memories as a fixed point that needs to only be found. The communal act of

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52 Taylor, *The Archive*, 82.
memory in the pub scenes in *Black Watch* would then be soldiers assisting each other in finding the memory where it is located. However, it seems that the communal act of memory may be further from Freud’s archival assumptions and closer to the actual act of war: one of camaraderie, danger, and uncertainty. The community that is created in a shared space influences that.

In one of the pub scenes two soldiers remember why they joined the Black Watch.

Granty: But I always wanted to join.

Cammy: I met him on the way back from the recruiting office and he’d just got his papers.

Granty: I was like, f*** college, come awa way me.

Cammy: Aye. So I thought, f*** it. I’m gonnay day it.

Granty: And we were off.54

This portrayal of two soldier's joining the military exemplifies the importance of the community and other soldiers to their creation of self and can be applied to communicating communal memory. The communal energy that is present and the ideas that influence other’s memory exist in the body then influence the mind. As the soldiers work together to create memories they are providing new pieces of information from their own recollection. As each piece of information is added, the memory has a possibility to change for each of the other soldiers. Attilio Favorini explains that memory does not exist in a vacuum, as an image, instead; memory is created as it is connected to other things. Memory is not one location that needs to be accessed in the mind. It is created in the pathway to any location.

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As one piece of the memory is added to by another piece of information, the brain creates a new pathway to the first piece of information. In the ever-changing path the memory resides. The act of remembering then, is not finding where it has been “written” in the mind as Freud would assume. Instead, it is in correlation that memories exist. Pulitzer prize winner Gerald Edelman states,

“Memory would be like changes in a glacier influenced by the changes in the weather... the melting and refreezing of the glacier represents changes in the synaptic response, the ensuing different rivulets descending the mountain represents the neural pathways, and into the pond into which they feed represents the output... Memory is a system property reflecting the effects of context and the associations of various degenerate circuits capable of yielding a similar output.”55

The playful act of bouncing ideas and associations from one soldier to the next eventually creates a circuit that creates the memory for both the soldiers and the audience. The audience is able to feed off of the pub scenes and the retelling of war experiences to create their own connections. This leads to a new creation of the war event and the creation of “the soldier”. The soldier’s communal nature lives in the, “Culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very ‘events’ of a life.”56 The events of life and the creation of self by the soldier are influenced by the memories they chose to tell and to form as a community.

If the memories of the soldiers can exist only in associations, how does Black Watch influence association and actual memory? Favorini theorizes the theatre as a model for memory and the ability for memologists (term coined by Favorini to discuss those to theorize memory) to easily equate the workings of the brain to the stage and the tendency to remember in narrative form. The characters of the *Black Watch* are not only telling their memories in narrative form for the purpose of production. The narrative form is created in the act of remembering and the act of forming the passageways to the memory that are linear and even plastic (a term used by Freud to explain the remembering of an event from only a few angles thus creating a flat or plastic image of an event in order to place it in the mind in an easy to access narrative form). *Black Watch* then tells the narrative remembrances of the soldiers while expanding and changing them in performance to create a new narrative that can then be twice-performed.

Adding a body other than their own to the visualized memories of the soldiers takes it away from the plastic form, which still leans towards a simplistic and flat telling of a memory, and shapes it on the body with all of its repertoire and information. Favorini notes that as pieces of information are given, the memory takes a new pathway and thus changes the memory of the event forever. The addition of the body representing those memories only gives more opportunity for the brain to wire the information held in the memory to themes applicable to the living body, thus giving it the importance of the feeling human as opposed to the static image. Favorini quotes Edelman as he states, “A Map of neuronal groups, multiply interconnected, is akin to a species because the firing of neurons in response to environmental stimulus leads to the wiring of those same neurons into groups.”
'Neurons that First together wire together.' The memory is wired to the ideas and provocations connected to the body on the stage.

*Black Watch’s* ability to remove the communal memory from the pub and place it onto the body of an actor focuses attention on the individual body as well as provide a means of reenactment and reification for the soldier. Just as Schechner refers to performance as any twice-performed act, Freud implied that all memory was twice-performed. Freud referred to repetitions of the memory that would be enacted in the daily life of the individual until a repressed memory was dealt with. The soldiers of the Black Watch may be home now but their memories will always influence their current actions. Their current situations, however, will necessarily influence their memories of the past. This is represented in the transition from the first pub scene of the show into the first memory scene set in Iraq. The soldiers in the pub leave but the pool table remains on stage. Two soldier’s then come out from inside the pool table, cutting the cloth that kept them in with a knife. They emerge in full BDU (battle dress uniform) with guns in hand. They make no mention of the fact that they are in a pool table. They continue with life as normal in their surveying of their scene in Iraq. This demonstrates the current life of the soldier (inhabiting a pub) being ever present in their memories of Iraq.

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57 Favorini, *Memory*, 325.
While the memories are given straightforwardly to Burke by the soldiers, the containment of the memory in only word form remains alive only in voice and in one “plastic” dimension. As the actors portray these events that were highly publicized in Scotland for the public and talked about in pubs by the soldiers, the events are allowed to live and be reenacted. This gives shape with a means to change the memory of the event and the results of it. Favorini discusses this possible advantage of the live body and the ability to perform the memories of others. He states, “In the nature of a notes to self, complex in its motivation: of gratitude, exorcism, premonition, and therapeutic transcendence. The staging of the memory is thus cathartic, or what Janice Haaken calls ‘transformative,’ referring to the recollection of an event that serves as a psychological
marker from an earlier to a later form of self-knowledge.” 58 Scotland can come to remember this event in a new way that has the potential to shift the communal Scotland’s self-knowledge in reference to this event and war in general. This is symbolically seen in the war events that seem to happen in the pub: connecting the events of the past to the process of remembering them. Even the pool table in the time of remembering (pub scene) is implicated in the events of the past.

The Ethics of Remembering

With the ability for physical representation to teach something new to the audience through the repertoire, to influence and change memory of events, and to completely distort the further archiving of the event to something completely different than what is held in the archive, is the physical and stylistic telling of real events efficacious or even responsible? I argue that, while in constant flux, the representation of histories of the repertoire give a viable balance to the archivable histories and assist in rounding out the public view of war to one that is more realistic in that it values the experiences of the soldier along side the grander narratives of war found in the archive.

Current historiographic scholarship leans toward the unveiling of the histories of the marginalized in the telling of past events. In order to branch away from only examining the histories of the favored, more examination into other forms of archived knowledge and into the information stores of the repertoire are used. The danger arises, however, as the benefits of the archive are ignored. The archive’s bounty and value in the ability for historians to have evidences of which to study naturally places it in a place of importance in

58 Favorini, Memory, 324.
the cultural understanding of the world. It is with the archive in hand with a simultaneous view of the repertoire that balance in historiography can be found. With the support of archived evidence of memories and histories and a push to uncover or enhance the marginalized facets of history, historians are able to provide a new telling of history that is just as valid as the traditional.

Representation of actual events and memories in performance will always be riddled with similar holes to the archive. The performance will be performed from a perspective of an individual or group. Performance does, however, provide a usual sense of collaboration. This collaborative force that exists in the theatre assists in the expansion of viewpoints. That does not mean that similar minded people with shared views will not be an influence in performance. Performance must also use the same tools of exclusion to archive histories. Not everything can or will be performed. In *Black Watch* and *War Horse*, every aspect of the soldier’s experience cannot be covered. How can performance then be reconciled as a valid entity that will necessarily influence the memory of real historical events to audiences and performers?

Any theatre, highly physical or not, that seeks to accurately document events of the past will change them as it slightly influences public perception and discourse. It is through this change, however that our understanding of the world can grow. The static nature of the archive provides for a means of knowing that will have little change. Change in generally understood history does not seem plausible but each person and each generation will ultimately understand all history differently. As suggested by Favorini and Edelman, the creation of histories and memories is founded on the, “The firing of neurons [that] give
rise to subjective sensations, thoughts, and emotions.”

Theatre constructs another means by which to fire those neurons and provide another means of knowing. Theatre and the attempt to represent real events has the ability to make past events current and to increased discussion into what holes may exist in history that must be filled as well as a push to apply the written history to the way we think about it today.

The interpretation of truth, that must happen as each student reads a history book, is also used in the creation of performance. In talking about documentary theatre Carol Martin suggests that, “What makes documentary theatre provocative is the way in which it strategically deploys the appearance of truth, while inventing its own particular truth through elaborate aesthetic devices, a strategy that is integral to the restoration of behavior.”

The mind creates a strategy of remembering that also includes exclusions and margins. Performance seeks to assist in providing another lens to the same event.

The process of interpreting historical truth is begun by the performance when it is handed off to the audience. This may be dangerous but it is also a means of conveying those aspects of the repertoire that are so often forgotten. The future memory of the event is layered with emotional, personal, and humanized realities. These marginalized characteristics of histories will be interpreted by the audience just as a written history might. The historiography done by the performance and the analysis of it by the audience creates validity to the interpretation then performance of actual events. The soldiers of the Black Watch may find that their memories were told differently that they exist in their mind but the participation in witnessing that interpretation will somewhat change that event just as the conditions that surround any other recall of that event might influence it.

59 Favorini, Memory, 325.
The somewhat controlled aspect of performance to highlight the repertoire provides another way of knowing, not the only one. It is a way of knowing, however, that deserves attention.

It is important to note that while Black Watch, highlights previously marginalized aspects of the events that it represents, influences the memories of soldiers/actors/audiences, and changes the history of a past event; it is also becoming an event or a memory in itself. It is creating a moment that can be discovered and analyzed as a memory all on its own, distanced from what it represents. This implies that the piece itself comes with its own notions of ghosting, tradition, and history. In his forward to the written play (published after several tours of the production), Black Watch playwright Gregory Burke wrote,

“This new production is an all-new cast. In the unintentional echo of the actual recruiting policy of the real British army, one of them is the younger brother of one of the original cast members. Indeed, in a further echo, some of them were still at school when the original production of Black Watch was staged, just like many of the soldiers now serving in Afghanistan were probably at school when John Reid, the Defence Minister, made his famous comment that British troops in the country would probably never have to fire a shot.”

The meanings that are focused on in this piece continue to create meaning and ghost the events of the future. As British troops continue to be involved in conflict around the world, the experiences that they go through have to potential to be perceived through a lens influenced by this production. The National Theatre of Scotland’s dedication to tour

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61 Burke, Black Watch, viii.
this production around the world continually, sets it up as a marker of what it means to be Scottish and what Scotland feels about its involvement in these conflicts. While it is performed by a specific group, it has the ability to affect the memories of any who consider Scotland, its art, and its military.

The untold aspects of the repertoire that are conveyed and learned through this piece change the memory of the past, which is ultimately what influences the future. As the conscious mind uses and recognizes memories they work as a “spotlight of attention shining on the stage or working memory” this production also serves as a memory device, spotlighting the earlier forgotten aspects of war.62 Audiences of the production or those who feel the affects of the production through secondary means are influenced to enact change or build a future on these heart wrenching and physically based telling of the regiment memories; those memories that are so linked to its history. As stated by Cammy, “It’s history. The Golden Thread. That’s what the older timers go on about. It’s what connects the past, the present, and the future.”63

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62 Favorini, Memory, 319.
63 Burke, Black Watch, 25.
Gender of War

_The courageous man, therefore, in the proper sense of the term, will be he who fearlessly confronts a noble death, or some sudden [or perhaps imminent] peril that threatens death; and the perils of war answer this description most fully._

—Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*

True Manliness or *Andreia*, as Aristotle defines it, is embodied in he who confronts death in battle with the correct amount of courage. *Andreia* is then used synonymously as courage and manliness. In this ancient definition of this Greek word, manhood is directly accessed through war. The simple biological determination of sex is not only tied to war and violence, it is synonymous with it. The body, therefore, is as bound to gender as it is to battle in the eyes of the ancient Greek and, as it developes, to western civilization. 64

In this discussion on representations of the body's function in war and battle, the characteristics of the performing body cannot be ignored. Public perception of the warring body both influences and is influenced by the sex and gender of the performing body. The gendered body in performance is the ultimate cultivating device that houses a sense of certain humanity (a body) while also presenting centuries of cultural and historical tradition, expectation, and ideology. The body presents an audience with a tangible individual who is actively experiencing the liminal world of the performance. The *gendered* body then layers onto the individual with categories and meanings before the first motion or word is uttered.

The gendering of the body is not only key in the male or female audience member's reaction to a performance but also crucial to war. The gendered nature of war, both in

reference to participants being predominantly male and in the masculine structure of war, requires a culture of masculinity to function in the way that it currently functions. A masculine identity is used to create war just as war and battle experience is the ultimate creator of the “ideal” masculinity.

Many representations of war and war stories rely heavily on the masculine ideal that is placed onto the soldier character. With the masculine ideal is embedded notions of bravery and heroism. Not limited to propaganda, the idealized soldier hero as hyper-masculine plays out time and again in fictional and non-fictional accounts of battle. Theatre is no exception. Many times key traits of ideal masculinity become synonymous with soldiering. This occurs sometimes in the minds of those who create the theatrical piece or in the minds of the gendered audience who has come to the performance with preconceived notions of manhood and its correlations with battle.

These societally conceived notions of masculinity are/ have been created over centuries of history and have been connected to the soldier figure for just as long. Joshua Goldstein contends that the biological make-up of the male sex both influences and is influenced by societal constructs (and visa versa). He argues that when discussing biology or society, that the question should not be limited to a “nature versus nurture” approach but is rather a nature and/or nurture approach in that it is ultimately impossible to distinguish which normative male attributes lend toward biology and which to societal construction. Goldstein, Joshua S. War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
that some are simply societal with no influence on or by the body. This complicates a
discussion on the performativity on gender.

Goldstein’s argument that some aspects of masculinity are undeterminable as either
nature or nurture and that each aspect of masculinity that is proven as biological (not
societal) trait manifests itself a different way or to a different degree in each individual, still
supports that an idealized masculine figure (specifically as it is references to the
soldier/hero) is a social construction. It is important then to examine this soldier hero
figure when approaching the stories of individuals in war contexts. The broad
generalization of the male soldier in representations serves a literary purpose but alienates
the audience from individual interactions with the war in a context of the actual experience
of war. In *War Horse* the audience can connect with the officer who buys Joey because the
audience cares about Joey the individual. The sophisticated and daring officer quickly dies
in the plot of the play but the audience feels little at his death outside of worry for what
Joey will do now. The handsome masculine officer is not a person: he is an ideal. These
generalities can expand from one character in a story that still points to individuals to
entire depictions that use the general masculine soldier figure to replace individuality and
focus on “grander” aspects of the representation than human life.

As the masculine ideal creates unrealistic expectations for both soldiers entering the
field and audiences that interact with war representations, representations that focus on
the individual as opposed to the general idealized soldier bring the audience closer to a
portrayal that teaches about the actual individual experiences of war. Physical theatre is
able to do this best as the male body is visible to the audience in a shared space, as it breaks
down societally based norms in its portrayal and reflection of the male body, and as it
represents male bodies that both conform to, subvert, and sometimes fuel the soldier stereotype.

In order to discuss physical theatre’s ability to highlight the individual in a way that goes beyond the hyper-masculinity of the soldier figure, I explore the military dependency on masculinity as a gendered form that is relational and only created by comparison to women and to non-normative males, either homosexual or disabled.66 This is exemplified in the 4th pub scene in Black Watch and is subverted in the same scene as it demonstrates stereotypically feminine actions being portrayed by men, in movement, who still retain their normativity. The hyper-masculine male figure, as it is both created by war and is key in creating war, can also be seen in War Horse's gendering of the horse characters and their contributions to the plot/war. This hyper-masculine creation then contributes to an unrealistic view of the male individual, which builds to create an unrealistic view of what warfare is by civilians and future soldiers.

This view and the expectations of manhood promote a culture of silence that serves a purpose in war as well as mars its participants. Physical theatre provides an option of physical storytelling that stays true to the culture of silence created in the military while still showing individually oriented emotional trauma. Actual letters to home from soldiers in WWI display this culture of emotional silence that seeps into civilian notions of manhood. I show the contrast between this tendency in War Horse’s portrayal of a WWI soldier and his connection to home contrasted with an unspoken relationship with his horse.

Subverting the Soldier Stereotype

It is not unfamiliar to look into the study of socially constructed gender in terms of binaries. Never is this tool of social construction more prevalent than in military functions and the creation of the soldier identity. The male identity, and specifically and idealized male identity, is only formed in relation to what it is not. What it is, essentially what it is not, shifts varying on culture and time. These shifts lead to difficulty in finding a solid definition. John MacInnes discusses defining masculinity in a post-modern world: “Why is it that masculinity is an obvious concept which must therefore have a real social existence (so that people can readily produce lists of what it comprises and these lists are remarkable consistent), yet is incapable of any precise empirical definition, such that people will reject these same lists as useful or accurate descriptions of empirically existing men?”67 Perhaps an “empirical list” is impossible but replaced by a fluid definition of manhood that is not a standard list as much as it has historically been somewhat stable on three parameters of what it is not, which include women, homosexual males, and disabled males.

As the definition of manhood is positioned as the favored side of the binary in many western cultures to all three of these “nots” an individual in possession of true manhood is able to attain the gambit of traits attributed to this idealized masculinity (these traits are to be discussed in a later section). Jon Robert Adams, in his study of masculinity in the American war film, notes that even in representation this relational creation of masculinity operates only in a, “system of binary oppositions.”68

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As the characteristics of the true soldier (or true man) are formed and categorized to make up the “system of binary oppositions,” traits available to both male and female bodies will eventually be categorized to ensure the functionality of the system. The system changes with every culture. Goldstein discusses the shifts in masculinity in terms of work delineation inside and outside the home for example.\(^6^9\) The Anglicanized world may vary from individual culture to culture but seems to find some specific characteristic of the epitomic male. This idea is supported by Christina S. Jarvis in her study on the male body in a context of World War II. She states,

“These masculine identities are largely constructed in terms of cultural oppositions between “male” and “female,” masculinities are also defined in relation to one another... characteristics of hegemonic masculinity change over time and are always culturally specific, in twentieth-century American culture hegemonic masculinity has generally been associated with the values and representations of white, protestant, able-bodies, heterosexual men.”\(^7^0\)

What happens, then, when the manliness of men (or a soldier hero) portrays characteristics that are no longer only on the male side of the binary system? As physical theatre incorporates dance and resembles aspects of dance, the male form often performs acts that could be closer to the female side of the normative gender scale. The use of the male body performing hyper-masculinity and femininity simultaneously breaks audience assumptions and assists in the performing of individual war experiences.

\(^6^9\) Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 11.
The study of the body, gender, and war in a physical theatre context sheds light on the identity of the soldier in these war experiences. Jessica Meyer, who writes about masculinity and war specifically in British military life during WWI states,

“Concepts of courage, chivalry, honour, protection of the home and provision for dependents were negotiated by men, often through descriptions of the physical, but also through the use of cultural references and discussions of abstract emotions and ideas. It is in these negotiations that men’s subjective masculinities can be found and where we can begin to uncover how war changed understandings of masculinity for the men who fought in it as well as for wider British Society.” 71

The discussion of masculine identity on the modern western male is then directly dependent on the male body in war moments such as battle. The representations of these moments of war, then, are necessarily influenced by the action and implications of that same male body and its socialized connotations.

There is no single list that contains the commonly agreed upon traits of masculinity. The hyper-masculine idealized view of manhood, and soldiering, shifts with cultures and time. The image of masculinity reference stems from popular and mediatized representations of the male soldier throughout western society but as studied here, in the last century. The characteristics that I consider here are ones that are as tied to image and presentation as actual action, as prescribed by Jon Robert Adams in his analysis of the contemporary soldier hero. The image of the idealized man is grounded in his appearance as well as his action. Adams cites several varying and incomprehensive list of traits for commonly understood “true” masculinity. He states,

“Lists ... feature both attributes and actions. For example, Michael Schwalbe says that ‘a man must show that he is rational, tough, indomitable, ambitious, competitive, in control, able to get the job done and ardently heterosexual.’ And David Buchbinder claims that ‘men are generally shown to be stoic, bearing their agony discreetly, dismissing mortal wounds as mere scratches, and thinking of others-family, girlfriend, home, another soldier- rather than themselves’ Upon close examination, however, the lists betray the fact that attributes consistent with traditional masculinity can only be revealed via men’s actions.”

The actions and perceptions of the soldier and his military community are then influential in the representations thereof. The man embodies these traits to become the ideal male figure. That is why the soldier figure embodies these traits so fully: wartime and battle are a heightened experience of male embodiment. This is sometimes contrasted when the male body portrays evident embodiment of masculinity while it is also coupled with female traits.

*Black Watch’s* scene titled “Pub 2” is a powerful example of hyper-masculinity performing movement that could be seen by the public as feminine. This movement, however, creates meaning as opposed to ridicule. In the scene the soldiers are home from the war and discussing their experience with the Writer. The men begin to address why they joined the Black Watch regiment. Each have their own story to tell but many are influenced by the traditions of their families and the tradition of their hometowns. In a

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quasi-historical flashback the soldiers mention the recruiting practices of World War I and the recruiter from the time, Lord Elgin. Lord Elgin then enters the scene forcefully carrying a large sword, makes promises to the soldiers; he then sings a Scottish folk song about joining the war efforts. The presentation of this scene foregrounds masculine stereotypes while forcefully providing images that may be construed as feminine.

The language used by the soldiers is, as discussed in previous chapters, harsh and unforgiving. As Lord Elgin speaks he does so with a reminiscence of the time he comes from while sliding into contemporary dialect from time to time. The soldiers maintain their contemporary physicality and language throughout the scene as they converse with the WWI recruiter. The harsh language is highlighted against Lord Elgin’s initial propriety,

Lord Elgin: Now as you know, my ancestor led his men at Bannockburn and is buried nearby at Dunfermline Abbey. He led his men in a fight for freedom from the tyranny of a foreign power and the need then, as now... is great. Here on the table in front of me is the sword of my ancestor...

Granty: How much?

Lord Elgin: What? This is Robert the Bruce’s sword.

Rossco: Well, get Robert the f***ing Bruce tay go way you then...

Granty: We still want f***ing paid.73

This language assists in creating an image of the soldiers as a rough, rowdy, and masculine crowd. The harshness of the language compared to the somewhat delicate nature of their antiquated forefather encourages a view of the men as stern, to the point, and determined.

to get what they want. The niceties of delicate language are unimportant. The burly soldier ideal is set in place.

The image of masculinity in the scene continues in the use of phallic imagery. The scene foregrounds an obsession with weaponry, which is deeply phallic in nature for these soldiers but also for this particular community and possibly for all masculine men. Lord Elgin’s entrance consists of barging into the room running with the pageantry of smoke and lights creating a harrowing silhouette. Elgin holds the large sword high above his head at the base of the sword, the tip ominous in the air. As he runs in then slams the sword down on a bar table at which several of the soldiers (turned recruits in this scene) are sitting. The scene immediately becomes about the power of weaponry upon young men. The phallic reference of the sword has often been discussed and continues to play a role in the attitudes of the characters yearning to achieve true manhood. Henri Myrttinen notes the use of the phallus weapon symbol of masculine power. He states, “The notion of a sword, a gun or a nuclear missile being a phallic symbol or a penile extension has become something of a cliché. I believe it is important to be aware of the significance of weapons as symbols or fetishes of power.”  

The emphasis on stereotypes of masculinity, such as the phallic weapon, continues to permeate the scene.

Lord Elgin discusses with the men the benefits of joining the regiment and continues to enforce masculine stereotypes in the things that he is promising. The first benefit is money, presumably wanted by all but needed for a real man to support a household and to court women. The second continues the focus on male obsession with weaponry (and reference to phallic symbols).

Lord Elgin: What more do you want?...games of football with your mates, guns...

Rossco: We get guns?

Lord Elgin: Big F***ing Guns.

Rossco: Guns are f***ing magic.

This reference to guns and their place of importance and fascination for men (riddled with fascinations of violence, explosions, dominance, etc.) heats up the male stereotype in the scene.

The third benefit of enlisting in the military given by Lord Elgin is travel. Travel may be less gendered than other military recruitment benefits but he quickly references that one of the sub-benefits of travel is, “Exotic pootang and that.”75 This, of course, referencing the sexual promiscuity and sexual conquering that is most commonly associated with stereotyped masculine behavior.

Perhaps the most telling recruitment offer comes as a reward and a trait that has been applied to the soldier hero throughout history.

Cammy: What about glory?

Lord Elgin: Oh aye...aye...the glory. *Beat* The glory of returning...a hero.\textsuperscript{76}

This is where the beginning of the scene’s subversion of the hero ideal begins. The climactic build of heroic and masculine attributes finds an odd home in the sense of glory. The characters provide an essence of excitement and wonder at the thought of the attainment of this crowning masculine achievement. Remember, however, that in this scene the actors, clothed and carrying themselves the same as their contemporary counterparts, are playing the role of young recruits of WWI who have yet to see battle. The word “glory” rings with promise to these characters while their counterparts, ghosted with the lack of costume and character choice differences, are veterans who have returned to different circumstances.

In a different scene that presents an officer reading an email he writes home the officer talks about the motivations of their suicidal enemy, “They’re looking for glory, and they seem to be finding it in martyrdom.” He goes on to talk about his own soldiers, “Glory, however, is something which my boys are very unlikely to emerge with. The controversy around this war means that there’ll be no victory parade from us.”\textsuperscript{77} The soldier hero myth then becomes a little less true and the unrealized expectations of both audience and soldier are called into question. The officer’s reference to an abandonment of the soldier hero’s glory in the culture is clearly in reference to the politics surrounding the war. The moments of the play in which politics are examined and brought into the forefront always connect to some media reference. This email is a reflection on the media and cultural awareness of

\textsuperscript{76} Burke, *Black Watch*, 25.
\textsuperscript{77} Burke, *Black Watch*, 58.
dissatisfaction in the British government's decision to go to war and to deploy the Black Watch in a time so close to a US election.

The public’s step away from the glorification corresponds here with the publics’ shift away from supporting political leaders and directly influences the views of the soldiers who are fighting. Shad Meshad, a US Army medical Services officer who pioneered work on PTSD, discusses the mirrored effect of American media and cultural opposition to political war strategies in the Vietnam war and the influence it had on public perceptions of soldiers, "Media coverage put the combat servicemen in the spotlight, portraying them as perpetrators of death and destruction, unlike the heroes of past wars... [They] came home to criticism and blame... through no fault of their own." He goes on to discuss an image of the soldier as killing machines at the whim of political leaders. In this reference the soldiers are still seen as hypermasculine males but are viewed in a less favorable light. The idealistic and overly masculine nature of the soldier is then seen as a possible killing machine with aggression that is no longer glorified.

This glorification of the soldier ideal has the ability to create change in an abandonment of the unrealistic and unobtainable soldier ideal but also clearly contains dangers. The glorification of the soldier figure as well as the demonizing of the same figure equally presents broad generalizations that hinge on media and public perceptions and opinions of political leaders and war in general and not on the merits or accomplishments of the individual soldier, each in the field for different reasons for being in war and with ranges of adherence to any idealized or demonized vision of the soldier figure. A view of the soldier under a socially constructed image has the possibility to blind the public eye to

78 Adams, Male Armor, 75
knowledge of what war truly entails and the work that a combination of individual soldiers produces that create the war effort. In either glorification of disgust, the soldier figure is a hyper-male capable of all of the good or all of the bad of male normativity.

The hyper-masculinity of language, sexual references, weaponry and glory is then further shifted towards an awareness of the individual with the beginning of stylized movement in the scene. Lord Elgin begins to sing a folk song about recruitment as two soldiers characters, embodied by the actors who play the soldiers who are killed in the end of the play, enter the scene in WWI military attire. The three men in “Pub 2,” Elgin and the two kilted soldiers, begin to do a traditional highland step dance as they sing. This dance, somewhat similar to clogging, uses primarily legs motions. Arms are sometimes at the hip and sometimes raised gracefully in the air almost in ballet’s third position. The dancers hop from one leg to the other while making intricate foot patterns in the air and on the ground. The dancers are light on their feet and seem to elegantly shift from position to position. The other young recruit characters leave the stage leaving only Cammy remaining with those singing and dancing.

While men have traditionally performed the traditional highland step before the highland games, the majority of performers today are female. The masculine tradition of the dance may be held in the eyes of some viewers but could be lost on others with their only knowledge of the form being in its contemporary state, or as relating to other non-professional forms of dance performance (a field mostly dominated by women).

The character of Cammy seems to be unaware of a masculine tradition as he chuckles under his breath at the men delicately lifting their legs in the air and bringing them down as the tap the floor in interesting sequences. An obvious reference to the one of
the many historical contexts important to the Black Watch, the physical movement of the actors is still very present. The bodies in motion are performing in real time and in close distance to Cammy and to the audience. The contemporary prejudices of dance are then layered onto the performance whether a historical references exists or not.

Dance itself has a broad history of male involvement in western culture and in many cultures around the world. Several key historical shifts could mark the beginning of a decrease in male involvement in dance and dance like movement. 1840 marks a shift towards the consideration of men as clumsy and not built for dancing. Just a few years before that shift marks the consideration of dance as “a low-status occupation, not sequestered by the dominant male group.”\textsuperscript{79} This view distanced the art form from the masculine attribute of being able to provide and care for one’s family as well as the traditional attribute of the ability to find pride in one’s work. The art form was not suitable for true men and was only suitable for the lesser sides of the binary system which defines manhood: women and effeminate men. Contemporary dance can be viewed somewhat similarly. Against the hopes of many dance educators and professionals, “Dance is traditionally a female populated field, which society still tends to view as feminine”\textsuperscript{80}

Cammy gradually gives in to the other soldiers and attempts, miserably, to dance along. He fumbles around but eventually fully joins into the movement of the scene. This character (inhabited by an evidently male body) had been epitomizing the masculine

soldier stereotype moments before. He had not willingly taken on female characteristics until this point. As the audience perceives this character as relatively unchanged in attitude yet physically performing a “female” act he, and the other three male actors, are unable to rest in the realm of the idealized masculine man. However, he is not performing acts that change his biology or appearance of biology in the scene. He is not showing any social markers of femininity other than the movement of his body. The expectations from either side of the binary are diminished in this act as he cannot rest on either side but has not performed any act to make him deviant of normativity. If masculinity is defined by what it is not, Cammy is outside of the realms of masculinity in a body that male. The movement, still powerful and an example of male agility and strength cannot be completely masculine. Cammy ceases to be an idealized hero or demonized killing machine. He simply becomes Cammy, a soldier connecting to the traditions of his regiment and wrestling with the discovery of his own motivations for joining the military.

Adapting and Adopting the Soldier Stereotype

In his in-depth study on biology vs. society in the construction of the ideal masculine soldier hero, Joshua Goldstein examines the ancient considerations of masculinity in order to find their origins. Goldstein finds that ancient and contemporary cultures that participate in war, which he defines as “lethal intergroup violence,” vary widely in both the types of warfare (or the way war is fought) and in gender roles/constructions in terms of child rearing and household/out of house hold labor division. He argues, however, that

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most do not vary in the gender roles in war. He notes that any exceptions to male gendered warriors, “together amount to far fewer than 1 percent.”

This determination about the history of war greatly contributes to both the formation of masculine gendered norms as well as to their place in war and in our discussion of individualism in these norms of war. The importance comes as the origin of masculine gender norms originates in a context of war and stems from it. Goldstein addresses the notion of causality in the creation of gender, “Causality runs both ways between war and gender. Gender roles adapt individuals for war roles, and war roles provide the context within which individuals are socialized into gender roles.”

Goldstein does argue a specific moment of causality as he states, “killing in war does not come naturally to either gender, yet the potential for war has been universal in human societies. To help overcome soldiers’ reluctance to fight, cultures develop gender roles that equate “manhood” with toughness under fire.” This, he argues, “enables war.”

The argument that the imminent need for warriors ultimately pushed cultures to idealize strength and bravery in order to feed the war effort lends credence to the argument that the idealized man is directly tied to the warrior, the soldier. The needs of battle provide a definition of soldiering that is founded on strength, aggressiveness, and Aristotle’s definition of manliness/courage (andreia). This is then spread into civilian culture that promotes warrior status as the true definition of masculinity. If male gender construction is influenced by war and war strategies are reified by this gender construction, the furthering of these constructs in war contexts must certainly have

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82 Goldstein, War and Gender, 10.
83 Goldstein, War and Gender, 6.
84 Godstein, War and Gender, 9.
85 Goldstein, War and Gender, 251.
meaning. The hyper-masculine ideal is either propagated or questioned through each representation. The discovery of this ideal figure can occur through a focus on the body, which is layered with the biological and societal markers, in performance. Understanding the soldier figure with a view of his hyper-masculinity, and the dangers and benefits of such a figure existing in popular culture, enables realistic and productive understandings of war. This productive understanding through performance has the ability to influence two groups: 1. audiences/artists and 2. civilians/soldiers. These new understandings of the social and biological influences on the soldier figure can influence the relationships between the audiences, civilians, soldiers and artists as they work together to create and enforce the masculine soldier image. A key aspect of the hyper-masculine soldier that is key to the relationship of soldier to male stereotypes and expectations are evident in the journey of becoming a “man.”

These relationships come from the relationship between civilian masculinities and the warrior figure. An argument that the courageous man (Andreia) has been the definition of the ideal common man since the time of Aristotle and has remained unchanged seems to set every man up for failure. How could cultures throughout history have retained these same characteristics for normative males? It is completely possible that these words that describe the normative male and definitions have shifted in the course of history and understood differently today but as the wide varieties of wars throughout centuries maintain a basis of violence and killing, it is reasonable that a margin of the essence of the terms may have remained intact. Courage, for example, may relate to each generation differently but seems to have maintained an essence of bravery in the face of physical harm just as Aristotle defined it as Andreia.
Jessica Meyer makes another argument as the longevity of the ideal male/soldier figure by using the theories of Eric Leed who also specialized in the gendering of WWI. She says, “Men’s wartime identities were, according to Leed, ‘formed beyond the margins of normal social experience.’ This, he argues, ‘was precisely what made them so lasting, so immune to erosion by the routines of postwar social and economic life, as so difficult to grasp with the traditional tools of sociological and psychological analysis.”86 The character needs of the warrior to be equipped for battle, such as bravery and strength, has changed less over time than other characteristics of society but as long as a culture created an idealized view of the warrior, the prescriptions for civilian masculinities would follow suit.

Specifically in the time WWI in England, the rise of the industrial worker who flocked to the city, abandoning servitude of family and the agricultural labor that it supports left a generation of men lacking the characteristics of the idealized man. The war may have begun for political and national needs but it was also seen to provide a training ground for young men to reach their potential. Meyer continues, “war, it was argued, would turn these physical weaklings and moral degenerates into ‘men’ by exposing them to masculinizing experiences or eliminating them through violence”87

This push for men to become the ideal soldier figure in order to achieve true masculinity may have assisted the war effort in many ways as individuals strove to maintain characteristics of bravery and strength. As much as an individual strives for these characteristics, however, is not necessarily indicative of actual achievement of these ideals.

87 Meyer, Men of War, 3.
Just as each male body contains a different amount of hormones, is a different height, and has different aptitudes, each man came to a different adherence to the normative soldier code. It is then when the civilian population peers into the experience of war with an eye single to the soldier stereotype that the individual is lost. His true attributes are swallowed by the warrior, and masculine, traits he is meant to have obtained. Adams argues that this is only exacerbated by representations that can, “persistently foreground disjunctions between soldierly experience of war and civilian attitudes toward it. Among those attitudes is the time-honored notion that war makes men.”

The consideration of an event or life experience as the granter of manhood is evident throughout many cultures and times. This is unlike women, who are perceived as naturalized as feminine from birth, equipped with the biology and necessary hormones to rear children and provide comfort. Men, however, are generally brought into masculinity by rites of passage that fix their gender. Events to enable manhood are evident in cultures of East Africa, Australia, American Indians and many other cultures. The existence of rites of passage are clearly visible in both the United States and the United Kingdom’s military systems that both feature basic training in which the participants are encouraged to adopt a particular attitude, presence, and manhood in order to be considered successful as a true soldier. This process is mimicked in civilian athletic activities, in both training and hazing. These events contain a liminality in which a “boy” enters and is changed to a “man” in physicality and demeanor without actually participating in the real battle that will secure their manhood.

89 Goldstein, *War and Gender*, 264.
This process of traveling from delicate youth to the obtaining of true manhood is evident in *War Horse*. While Albert, the young man who joins the service in WWI to find his horse, makes a journey in his own right to manhood through the war process, the true representation of masculine evolution is represented in Joey, the central horse character. Even though Joey is a male character, he is powered by male and female puppeteers. The actual bodies in the piece are both genders so it is truly the outward gender construction that makes Joey into the masculine horse that he becomes. Joey, over Albert, calls attention to himself and his journey to characteristics of masculinity in that his journey is both emotional and physical. He is also compared to other masculine figures throughout the production that prove or disprove his manhood along the way.

Joey begins the story as an emotional companion to Albert and as a prize to be purchased by men trying to prove their own masculinity. This occurs in the opening sequence in which Joey, at this time small, young and illegitimate (references as the product of a “night of passion” between a drought horse and a thoroughbred), is up for auction and becomes a source of competition between Albert’s father, Ted, and his father’s brother, Arthur. This evident test of manhood comes by the exposing of Ted’s motivations. Albert’s cousin states, “He never went the South African War like Father. Father came back a hero. Uncle Ted stayed here like a shirking coward.”90 Joey becomes an object of this competition, thus beginning the production in an objectified female position. The movement of the other actors holding barriers to keep Joey in intensifies this image of Joey of a feminized being.

Further, placing this process onto a non-human character that the audience is meant to relate to as having human-like qualities takes it a step away from the physical depictions that we have discussed in previous chapters. Is it, then, a useful representation in the understanding of the socially, and sometimes necessary, construction of the soldier hero image? The horse being used as a metaphor for humanity in the entire production enforces the notion that he exists as a female until he proves his manhood when he becomes a hero. Irene Lopez Rodriguez notes the use of animals as metaphors for “lesser” beings including homosexual men and women. “The social degradation of women finds its way into language through the figurative uses of cow, bitch, vixen, and seal.”91 This ensures that Joey will be seen as a feminine creature until proven otherwise: similar to male human bodies living outside of true manhood until they make the journey.

Ted eventually wins Joey and Joey becomes a companion for Albert. As Albert only verbally states the affection, the physicality of the young horse is essential to this relationship. Not only is Joey voiceless but also his standoffish aptitude is emphasized in order to show his eventual physical cooperation to Albert’s commands. As Joey uses his body as the gender mixed puppeteers maneuver Joey’s body in a way that Albert and his family see fit he increases in affection for the boy. Again Joey plays a traditional female role, one who can be mastered then thanks its captor for the opportunity.

The character and “frame” of Joey faces his first test of manhood in strength and ability comes in the form of ploughing a farm. The stage is relatively bare and the test is only depicted through the apparent exertion of the horse, a puppet being animated by

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actors inside. As Joey overcomes impossible physical challenges and shows only enough physical emotion to indicate the difficulty, he emerges successful and is one step closer to manhood as his success secures the farm for his family (his owners).

While this is still in the realm of civilian masculine accomplishment, it fits well into the masculine rolls of the English during WWI. Jessica Mayer points to the necessary roles of the ideal soldier in WWI, “Two identities emerge most clearly... as ideals to be emulated and striven towards. The first is the heroic, associated primarily with the battlefront and the homo-social society of the military sphere, and only secondarily with the home front that men sought to defend. The second... was the domestic, located much more clearly in relation to women with its emphasis on men’s roles as good sons, husbands and fathers, as both protector and provider.”

As Joey gains the attention and glory of the plough event he is able to provide for his family and his emotional companion, Albert, who would be unable to accomplish this physical feat on his own.

The physicality of the hyper-masculine image comes in Joey’s comparison to other horses. Joey, in a moment of climactic energy, has appeared from backstage as much larger and more majestic horse brown in color and with the ability to rear to great stature. He is quickly sold into war and is confronted with another horse that would be an antagonist but eventual friend to Joey throughout the story. Topthorn, this other horse, is compared to Joey is size and in his black color. He is perceived as being more menacing and perhaps more powerful. Again, Joey takes on feminine characteristics in the system that places the more physically powerful and emotionally steady on the dominant male (Topthorn). The audience’s first experience with Topthorn is in a moment of movement in which a pistol

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round is fired in the vicinity of the horses. Both of the horses wince at the sound but Joey shies and attempts to run, not able to portray the courage necessary to manhood as shown by Topthorn. As masculinity is displayed by what it is not, Joey remains unmanly.

Throughout the war, however, Joey is able to overcome the adversities and challenges of the war. Topthorn is killed during the war after being unable to withstand the physical demands. Joey emerges as the physically and emotionally steady individual who, while receiving injury, becomes a source of strength and a service to those who surround him: exemplifying the warrior ideal.
Joey’s constructed journey to manhood was also a journey to the ability to master his emotions and gain a stoic sensibility. As Joey demonstrated physical feats of endurance he mirrored those accomplishments with the ability to mask emotional difficulty. This is seen in his physical dominance of pain in the plough scene and also in a scene in which he is caught in barbed wire, in which he withstands great pains and exits heroic. He is able to achieve quintessential manhood through both of these processes. Meyer continues to speak of a masculine ideal in British culture during WWI, “The figure of a soldier hero, defined by qualities of endurance, adaptability, courage and duty, was ultimately able to maintain its status in British culture as ‘one of the most durable and powerful forms of idealized masculinity in the western cultural tradition.’”

The silent representation of a journey into manhood certainly emphasizes the physical experience of this evolution. This representation, however, does not contain pointed moments of subversion to the soldier ideal. *War Horse* tells a coming of age through war and battle story that may be in harmony with any other story of war that is depicted using normative masculinity.

One way in which this representation assists in the exposition of the masculine soldier hero as a constructed ideal is its lack of language from the main character, the horse. While he lacks human physicality in his outside “constructed” shell, he is able to push beyond the associations of soldier characteristics with words such as hero or glory. Joey takes a journey to masculine ideals and wholly achieves them but finishes the process physically the same, powered by human bodies of both genders. Other than growing to adulthood Joey remains a horse, not a man. He can reflect the proper characteristics in an

ideal way and still remain apart from the characters who can go back into civilian lives of freedom and humanity. This ultimate unintended symbolism reflects any other soldier striving for the masculine ideal. While the characteristics could be natural or obtainable the physical being is always relatively unchanged. Under the characteristics that the individual achieves he is always accompanied with the many other characteristics that make him an individual unlike any other.

The emphasis on the puppet also still renders the individual human actors who animate visible to the audience. The characteristics of masculinity achieved by the horse are only visible through a discarding of the individuals who foreground the falsity of the horse. The actors’ presence provide a knowledge of theatrical convention which must also display that no one character, such as a horse, are experiencing this journey into manhood. Instead, a community working together powers the shell of a horse towards this ideal. The community sets the standard and the community holds the being to the standard. Joey then represents a paradox of the ability for one to achieve this ideal that actually combines with one’s emotions and personality while never being able to leave the “natural” body that was once just a male, unaltered by societal prescription, and not a “man” or soldier; both parts equally creating the person who lives and fights.

These representations continue to construct notions of manhood by exemplifying a hyper-masculine character, or character on a journey to hyper-masculinity, thus not specifically seeking to alter perceptions of masculinity in war while clearly pointing to the nature of the negotiation between representation and expectation.
War’s Culture of Silence

In Brent Blair and Angus Fletcher’s article “We Cry on the Inside: Image Theatre and Rwanda’s Culture of Silence” they present cultural ability to heal after the horrible genocides in Rwanda over a decade ago. They address the existence of several large memorials scattered throughout Rwanda that pay homage to the dead and the atrocities that touched the lives of every individual in the country in some way. These monuments are not indicative, however, of the willingness of the Rwandan people to speak about their personal tragedies or even the event in a broad sense. Even people who work at the monuments are unable to speak about what happened to them during the genocide.

Blair and Fletcher point to a cultural trait that exists in Rwanda that impedes some of the healing and remembering to prevent future violence that normally can occur in cultures ravished by such violence. This is the trait of silence. The cultural tradition of not discussing difficult events of the past has placed Rwanda into a position where, “the lack of personal communication has been directly connected to a rise in ethnic tensions.”94 Many family members have no idea what happened to each other during the genocide and with no ability to discuss the events parts of the healing process are incomplete. While negating a strongly held cultural tradition from a truly western perspective could be suspect, an acknowledgement of the difficulty in prosecution, continued limits in economic exchange, and a possibility of repeating the past are some serious byproducts of this silence.95

This is not unlike the cultural traditions of the military in conjunction with the expectations of the masculine ideal. Any soldier is likely to confront many horrific scenes

and experiences during their time of deployment. Even though the public is mentally aware of the things that happen in war, it is another thing to experience them first hand. Death tolls stated on the evening news even along with any account of the war will not come close to what the soldier experiences every day. These activities of battle, however, are so closely tied to manhood that whether the public or future soldiers have a true understanding of the nature of war, the perception of soldierly masculinity depends on it. Essentially, “War provides society with definitions of manhood, while, simultaneously, men experience war as the antithesis of society’s definition.”96 The definition provided by war is unattainable as war is never what one expects.

Speaking about media involvement in Operation Dessert Storm, Jon Robert Adams states, “The public experienced [it] largely through television screens, in a seemingly “live” format that was also highly anesthetized and corpse-less.”97 These portrayals, without personal accounts provide for both unrealistic expectations for war as well as unrealistic expectations of manhood. The answer seems simple. There must be provision for more personal accounts from real soldiers, which are seen by many people, to adapt public perception to the realities of the war experience. This is difficult, however, as the community of manhood, especially in war situations, has created a “culture of silence” with similarities (and obvious differences) to the post-genocide Rwandan culture. Both communities have a tradition of silence and both have deeply influential experiences with violence. *Black Watch* emphases this aspect of masculine soldier culture in the pub scenes and most of the scenes set in Iraq and it challenges this culture of hiding emotional trauma

in its stylized scenes that focus on emotion.

One way to achieve a community in which there is an open dialogue, as proposed by Blair and Fletcher, is through theatre exercises of a physical nature. They used activities associated with Image Theatre, a technique developed and taught by Augusto Boal, which incorporates members of the community into exercises that use gesture, shape, and tableaus to express feelings and experiences without the use of words. These exercises sometimes opened up into discussion but sometimes simply used movement as a form of communication. It was able to provide a means of expression beyond that of words. I propose that physically focused representations of war have the ability to portray the experience of war in a way that mirrors the culture of soldiers themselves, one of silence.

The Duke of Wellington, famous for defeating Napoleon at Waterloo, is quoted as saying, “The soldier is obliged to conceal his fears lest he cause a panic.” The battlefield is “a place almost without mercy and utterly without pity, where the emotions which humanity cultivates and admires elsewhere- gentleness, compassion, tolerance, amity- have neither room to operate or place to exist.”98 This quotation displays a great amount of information about the history of the British military but it also seems to reflect western military philosophy in general. As it focuses on the skill set required for battle, on order to avoid causing “a panic” it, as discussed in the previous section, creates an ideal for soldierly conduct, which bleeds into the definition of even civilian masculinity.

This sentiment is also reflected in American military culture. Goldstein notes the training of cadets at West Point where, “new students are shouted at, ‘You can’t display emotion around here!’ One who cried when severely harassed was labeled unsuitable

98 Goldstein, War and Gender, 267.
officer material— the reports containing ‘undertones concerning masculinity and possible homosexuality of a cadet who cried or could not control his emotions.’ US army life revolves around a “taboo on tenderness,” not a celebration of violence."\(^9\) These accounts imply that the thread of emotional silence continues today and is also prevalent in the military of the United States. It also makes a connection between the masking of emotions in wartime situations to the adherence to emotional fortitude in the daily life of the masculine male. The focus on homosexuality as an inference of emotion exists in the structure of binaries that create the masculine ideal. If the homosexual man shows emotion, the heterosexual and hyper-masculine man cannot. What begins as military tactic contributes to an entire culture unable to express beyond the happenings of war to what it felt like to experience it.

The influence on civilian masculinity then feeds back into the military. While notions of stoic emotional control is needed in battle, thus an attribute pinned to the heroic soldier, it bleeds into the public as an attribute of any “man” and takes the need to maintain emotional silence out of battle and places it on the soldier post-battle. It seems impossible that any violence is completely emotionless however. As Adams stated, “Something has to break somewhere and usually it’s the men.”\(^{100}\) The emotion seems to manifest itself in someway, which breaks from the perceived normative emotional silence.

This attitude is examined in *Black Watch*. As mortar bombs are being launched by the enemy and heard landing very close to the camp, several of the new recruits duck for cover as the soldiers that have been there for a while laugh, “That got you f***ing moving... Welcome to cam Dogwood... Friendly locals.” The sergeant enters and joins in harassing the

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\(^9\) Goldstein, War and Gender, 268.

\(^{100}\) Adams, *Male Amour*, 2.
young recruits who are easily showing their emotions and ducking in fear as the sounds of explosions keep coming, “They’re just saying hello... have you no read jihadi infantry manual...The infidel shall be attacked at the rising ay the sun and at its setting.” The sergeant who had been standing through the sounds of explosions, the rest of the men on the ground by now, stands for true emotional control as he ridicules the others. The scene closes, however, with one last blast sound, this one closer than all the others. The sergeant is seemingly unable to control his emotions and maintain pride in his courage and drops to the floor as the lights go black.¹⁰¹

This scene represents two aspects of the culture of silence. Even as the authority figure ridicules the fear that is prevalent in his subordinates, he is not exempt. The stoic mastery of fear in the beginning of the scene ultimately gives way and it does so by the body. His pride has him stand tall over the young recruits to be idealized as a man of character that they should strive towards becoming like. His body lacks this mastery as he falls to the ground, indicative of his fear. The second is the ability to maintain a culture of silence in the representation of the experience of the soldier during through movement. Without any explanation, the audience is able to feel the fear in the Sergeant simply in contrast to his physical nature before the fall. As his body hits the floor and his arms go into protective position over his head, the audience can read what the Sergeant would not say. This moment did not exist in a highly physicalized scene but provides a small example of what the body can say.

As stated in a previous chapter, the soldiers were not verbally forthcoming about emotional experience in interviews Gregory Burke, playwright of Black Watch. They stayed true to the military “culture of silence” from which they came. The performance, rich with emotional portrayals through movement, rang true to these soldiers when they saw the performance.102 Lieutenant Colonel Matt Whitney even described the productions the play as an “apt description of what it’s like.”103 This emphasizes the physicalization of the soldiers’ experience as an appropriate way to address the needs and experience of the soldier who often want their experiences to be known without having to tell them verbally and go against their manhood.

Medical officials in the US government see trends attached to emotional silence, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and masculinity. “Careful scrutiny of the largely positive shifts in approaches to treating psychologically damaged soldiers reveals persistent, onerous connections between a soldier’s ability to function and his perceived manhood.”104

104 Adams, Male Armor, 5.
The soldier’s ability to, at some time express their experience and to witness the expression of others experiences, can help lead to healing but is prevented in the traditional sense by the notion of manhood. In a PBS documentary about PTSD an voice over of an interview with a military doctor states, “I’ve talked to soldiers that say I would much rather be an amputee than to be psychologically injured. ‘At least when you looked at me you could see what my problem was.” The making visible of an injury or experience seems to hold value in that culture.

While psychological disorders are not visible, any traumatizing event can be placed into that same invisibility when only addressed through vocal or linguistic portrayals. The physical showing of an invisible experience can give an image to the internal injuries of battle that have been buried for generations of soldiers in many cultures. Colonel Dave Grossman is a military psychologist who addresses soldiers before deployment to battlefronts. He told PBS that, “on any given day [in the united state’s three major twentieth century wars, the military] had more psychiatric casualties than all the ones killed by the enemy.” He is shown giving a speech to soldiers in which he tries to eliminate some of the expectations of what it takes to have bravery and the mental results that follow battle, “We know about the dead, we know about the wounded, but grandpa isn’t going to come back and tell you about the day he went section 8 [referring to a category of discharge for mental instability in the US military that is no longer used today].”

The letters of WWI exemplified the side of the masculine ideal that both masks feelings and takes care of those at home as the letters that have been archived have a thread of reassurance that runs throughout. The letters don’t convey danger as much as a

lack of fear and assurance that the front isn’t as dangerous as it may seem. Many talk about the trenches but do not account for the danger of mechanized warfare incorporated in them. Those who did feel free to write their emotions and about their hardships still felt the need to keep their letters confidential. “R. Macgregor marked one letters to his father, which described the explosion of a mine that killed 20 men, with the words. ‘NOT TO BE PUBLISHED”106

This is true of Albert’s letter home in War Horse. He writes home, “Dear Mother. I am all right. I’ve found a good chum called David, he’s very handsome, and he’s writing this letter for me. And they’ve promoted me to lance corporal.”107 This reassurance that he is all right was constantly negated by his emotional connection to his horse. His attempts to find Joey throughout the play demonstrate that but the actor also physically demonstrated it when Joey was purchased, when Albert was teaching Joey, and when Joey was taken away/returned.

These emotional outpourings were consistent in that they came from words and from physical expression while the words he wrote home were matter of fact in his intent to look for his horse. His search for Joey throughout, even signing up to find him, and discussing his intent on finding Joey with several characters including his David. Albert becomes emotional upon thinking that he is about to face his death and speaks emotionally to a picture of Joey saying, “You don’t have to listen to be blithering anymore Joey.” He is unafraid to show true emotion to his horse even in his reuniting moment with Joey is full of tears and physical intimacy. This lack of fear to show outwardly emotion to his horse

106 Meyer, Men of War, 16.
demonstrates the soldier’s true feelings about war but are masked when communicating home. In those communications everything is fine and the home-front is being cared for, as a real “man” would do.

Any representation of the individual’s experience in war assists in reexamination of what war is and what it is “really like.” Every individual comes into the war experience with different expectations and fears. The normative masculine ideal that promotes a hyper-masculinity of heroism and silent courage perform a task in recruitment and in the act of war. Physical theatre has the potential, however, to display the male body both normatively gendered and outside of normativity in a way that breaks down the unattainable ideals of the soldier hero.

While the definition of hero can be fluid and dependent of the perspective of the individual, the unattainable heroic male stereotype is brought into question through subversive performance that leans on the masculine male ideal and slightly shifts it by
playing with gender binaries. As physical theatre draws a focus to the male body, in alliance with the soldier hero body in female or homosexual male acts, the gender binaries that build the image of the elusive soldier hero are shifted and perhaps become more individualized.

The understanding of the origins of the masculine ideal then assist a discussion of the relationship between the public and the military in the formation and reification of the masculine soldier image. A study of the use of characters in *War Horse* and how they are used to tell an age old journey into the idealized manhood demonstrates that some of the components of the hyper-masculine image are societally structured and questions their function in war and in life.

The consequences of the ideal soldier image are seen in an examination of the attribute of stoic silence and the body’s ability to assist in the bravery attributed to silence and in the dismantling of the need for silence in manhood outside of a battle setting. The culture of silence can be embraced and surpassed in the silent but powerful expressions possible in the body and in physical theatre. The body, no matter the gender, in a shared space with the audience always creates a springboard into this gender discussion. The physical nature of movement-based theatre furthers that exploration in gender as it gender is focused on, idealized, or subverted. A focus on the body, its gender, and its sex, along with character and societal attributes necessarily examines the individual and the portrayal of their experiences including and beyond the gendering of the body performing and the expectations bound in it.
Conclusion

When I asked Gregory Burke about the artistic process of creating Black Watch in regards to movement from a playwright’s perspective he related something slightly shocking about this Olivier Award winning play. He noted that he paid very little mind to what would be happening physically as he wrote and developed the text. John Tiffany and Steven Hogget also thought little about how the movement that was being developed concurrently with the text would ultimately unite with Burke’s written scenes. Music was also being created independently. When the team came to fit the three pieces together and they began adjusting everything to create a cohesive whole, “Sometimes the script was rewritten to fit it, sometimes the choreography had to fit the script. Sometimes the music had primacy, sometimes the story. Sometimes the blocking, sometimes the text. We just had to take everything we had, from everybody and throw it all in the pot. That’s why a week before we opened it was a mess, and we were all terrified. But, because we had spent all the money and because no-one has invented a time machine, we just had to bash on....” 108

His description aligns with the previous definition of physical theatre. It isn’t the body or word alone that bring forth this work of art that is described as movement-based. It is the history and stories of individuals that can be archived combined with a medium that portrays some of the most unarchivable parts of experiences: those things understood only physically. The written language that is so valuable with realistic visual language in addition to the portrayal of these events with stylistic motions of the body provide for a means of knowing that is completely unique.

The final moments of War Horse and Black Watch share something significant as the exemplify the marriage of the body and text. Right before the soldiers of Black Watch break into their final wordless march of the faux-tattoo military parade, the soldiers notes why they decided to fight,

Cammy: No for our government...
Nasby: No even for Scotland
Cammy: I fought for my regiment
Stewarty: I fought for my mates

Then the Officer gives one last battle speech

Officer:... Let us make sure it goes as well as anything we have done in the past and is one that we can be proud of. 109

The soldiers mark how their government or even their heritage of Scotland was not enough to make them fight: it was human connection. The relationship that these men had was the reason why they fought and the reason they were able to keep going. These relationships tie back into the notion of glory and pride. The pride in being a soldier, and in war itself, was what one could accomplish with and for others.

The speech did not act alone. Directly following the actors, all clad in battle uniform perform the Black Watch’s subversive rendition of the military tattoo. The idea of the soldier’s attempt to find pride and honor only to find camaraderie as the true focus of war as the men attempt to stand tall and perform their noble but physically impossible task only to continually fall short. As the soldiers lift each other from their falls and stumbles the focus of the officer’s speech, and the production as a whole, comes into focus on the soldier.

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109 Burke, Black Watch, 72.
*War Horse* mirrors this sentiment of human connection both physically and in the final moments of dialogue:

Rose: A man, and a horse

All: Only remembered for what we have done.

Rose: It can’t be —

All: Shall we at last be united in glory? Only remembered for what we have done.

Only remembered for what we have done.\(^{110}\)

The horse and his soldier finally arrive home to their family in this final scene as the chorus sings about being “united in glory” as a way to be remembered. The ability to obtain glory directly hinges on relationship between man and his horse or the man and his family. The physical reuniting of the once boy turned man by the face of battle with his family and his horse. The physical relationships overwhelmingly augment the sentiments of the song.

Both of these productions sum up their shows with an emphasis on relationships between individuals as key to the “reason” why we go to war or how you can find success (glory) in war at all. For these characters, it isn’t about the long line of heritage and governmental pursuits at the end of the day. It is the individual soldier and his relationship to other soldiers and those he is fighting for at home. The final parade scene of *Black Watch* along side the boy riding his horse as the final image of *War Horse* bring this theme to fruition. The soldiers of Black Watch talk about fighting for each other then marched with difficulty to the steps of the parade, supported in every moment by their fellow soldiers. Albert and Joey return home with heads held high because they were together.

The acts of war that are represented in these two works are able to bring their

\(^{110} War Horse Performance.\)
audiences to an understanding and a connections with the individual soldier and the relationships that they were able to create through a physical focus that draws attention to the body of the individual and eliminates the destructive stereotype of the idealized soldier, creates new individually focused memory of war, and speaks in a new stylized physical language of war. This much needed individualized representation places humanity into scenes of war that actually represents what happens in war: soldiers use their bodies to fight, to feel, to learn, and to build relationships.

As the audience interacts with these pieces, the performances are able to leave the plane of performance and influence war itself. Through kinesthetic empathy an audience feels some of the plight of the soldier and is implicated in the actions of war. Through physical theatre’s ability to provide of new individual focused routes to memories or information, the reality of human involvement in war past are able to be seen. As the audience studies and interprets the male body along side its layers of social construction, the soldier becomes less of a figure and more of an individual. These processes may only last for a couple hours in a theatre but provide a new relationship between each audience member and the events that occur in war.

This focus may not provide protests, support rallies, or large policy changes but it does influence the public discourse and places the human ever more closely with a part of life that will, in some way, touch the lives of every individual audience member, artist, civilian, or soldier. Through a mindfulness of the actions of the human, both in receiving and causing harm, public discourse can influence policy and tactics that use individual soldiers to enact war. It also creates a connection between those who have, are, or will fight to the things that they are fighting for. These productions and other physical
representations implicate the audience into war to help them consider why war is/has been fought what it really means to, “[Fight] for my mates.”
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