In *History and Memory*, Le Goff writes that 'collective memory is […] an instrument and an objective of power.'[1] To what extent is collective memory shown to be both an instrument *and* an objective of power in Anouilh's *Antigone* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* with regards to both script and performance?

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The concept of 'collective memory' is often seen as representative of the specific range of values, beliefs and traditions which unite individuals through the idea of a shared past. Its complex relationship with the achievement and assertion of power over societies is central to both *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and Jean Anouilh's adaptation of *Antigone* which directly address this relationship as a means of reflecting upon the contemporary societies of their production. The contextual significance of this discussion of power is clearly seen in the political regime of McCarthyism and the Collaborative politics of Nazi-Occupied France which formed the backdrop to these plays respectively. With these political parallels in mind I shall look at this relationship's portrayal in the themes and content of the plays, but also the ways in which the issues raised by each text can be seen to reverberate in its own role in relation to collective memory within its performative context.

The use of collective memory as an 'instrument' of power is demonstrated in both texts in its use as a device through which the social forces of authority gain and maintain their control over society. In *Antigone,* Creon's denial of burial for Polynices to exemplify the consequences of rebellion is shown to use the religious significance of this denial within the collective memory as a means of evoking fear and obedience in the citizens of Thebes: 'Is your brother's ghost really doomed to wander for ever if a handful of earth isn't thrown on the corpse?'[2] By portraying Creon's doubt in this 'mass-produced mumbo-jumbo' (35), Anouilh emphasises the conscious nature of his use of collective memory to suit his needs. This oppressive use of Polynices' memory is also reflected in the smell of the corpse which acts as a constant reminder of his power: 'But to make these clods I govern understand what's what, the city has to stink of Polynices' corpse for a month.' (38)

In *The Crucible* the autocratic society of Salem in 1692 is depicted by Miller as one in which the strict doctrine of Puritanical Christianity within the collective memory of its citizens is constantly reasserted by the officials of the Church. The use of the threat of God's judgement and punishment to evoke consistent fear and hence ensure unquestioning obedience is emphasised through Parris' repeated reminders: 'There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning' and forms a clear parallel to Creon's use of memory in *Antigone* .[3] Religious memory is explicitly described by Miller as 'a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into a surrender to a particular church or

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[1] Jacques Le Goff, 'Memory', in *History and Memory,* trans. by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp.51-99, p.98.
[2] Jean Anouilh, *Antigone,* trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Methuen, 2000) p.35. Hereafter referenced within the text.
[3] Arthur Miller, *The Crucible,* in *Plays: One,* (London: Methuen, 1988) pp. 225-332, p.246. Hereafter referenced within the text.

church-state.' (*Plays: One,* 249) By reflecting upon the ongoing significance of this use of collective memory as an 'instrument' of power Miller is thus able to draw comparisons with the similar phenomenon he was experiencing in his own contextual moment of the fifties as part of the rise of 'McCarthyism': 'the terror in these people was being knowingly planned and socially engineered'.[4]

Manipulation of this collective memory is also reflected through the character of Abigail Williams, who appears uninfluenced by these pervasive Puritan beliefs: 'I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women with their covenanted men!' (*Plays: One,* 241) Similarly to Creon, Abigail's deliberate use of the shared religious beliefs of her society to her own defence gives her the power to control others by evoking fear: 'Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn *your* wits?' (303)

The separation between the internal consciousness and external behaviour of both characters allows us to regard their roles in relation to Schechner's theory of performance.[5] Schechner identifies the dominant characteristic of performance as 'strips of behaviour' which are 'separate' from the performer and used like a mask, or in other words, an *instrument* of performance. With this is mind, clear parallels can be drawn between the outward display of psychologically-distanced collective memory and the adoption of such 'restored behaviour' as is supported by Kershaw's assertion of the centrality of memory to this concept: 'restored behaviour is memory made manifest'.[6]
Furthermore, a connection between the performance and power which are enabled by these devices is also invited.

These parallels are supported by the use of 'restored behaviour' within the girls' testimonies. Based on the 'centrality of live performance to legal procedure argued by Auslander, the liveness of the girls' accusations as performance can be seen as the sole authority held by their evidence.'[7]The 'strips of behaviour' of fainting, screams and reference to signs such as birds and cold winds (303) are shown by Miller to originate in the collective memory of superstition through their suggestion earlier in the play by other characters: 'A sudden cold wind, perhaps?' (256) The selective use of this behaviour to suit the needs of individuals is evident in the accusation of Elizabeth in accordance with Abigail's desires, and the implied influence of Thomas Putnam over his daughter's accusations which adds a capitalist motivation to those of personal vengeance underlying the witch hunt as a whole. 'This man is killing his neighbours for their land!' (294) This manipulation of 'restored behaviour' and the collective memory of superstition it reflects therefore gives these individuals the power to control the fate of others for their own personal gain. A power which is attributable, according to Schechner, to the fundamental separation implicit within its definition: 'Because the behaviour is separate from those who are behaving, the behaviour can be stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed.' (*ROB,* 36)

This role of pre-existing collective memory as an 'instrument' in the establishment of power is inextricably linked with its nature as an 'objective', or conquest obtained as a result of power. Le Goff states that, 'To make themselves the master of memory and forgetfulness is one of the great preoccupations of the classes, groups and individuals who have dominated

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[4] Arthur Miller, 'Introduction to the *Collected Plays'* in *The Theatre Essays of Arthur Miller,* ed. by Robert A. Martin (New York: Viking Penguin, 1978) p.154
[5] Richard Schechner, 'Restoration of Behaviour', in *Between Theater and Anthropology'* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) pp. 35-52. Hereafter referenced within the text as *ROB.*
[6] Baz Kershaw, 'The Death of Nostalgia: Performance, Memory and Genetics', *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) pp. 159-74, p.173
[7] Philip Auslander, 'Legally Live', in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) pp. 112-131, p.113

and continue to dominate historical societies.'[8] This power to create and destroy collective memory according to one's interests is explored in *Antigone*. Creon's freedom to choose whether to allow Antigone's actions to enter collective memory is a result of his power to destroy the individual memories possessed by the guards: 'I'll get rid of those three men' (31). This ability to save Antigone from death in accordance with his own subjective interests, namely his son's marriage and his own fondness towards her, clearly reflects the beneficial nature of such a mastery of collective memory.

Such benefits are also seen in the treatment of Eteocles and Polynices. By withholding his individual memory of the two brothers, '...no one else knows but me. Eteocles, that paragon of virtue, was no better than Polynices' (44) and creating in its place a false collective memory of Eteocles' virtuosity Creon is seen to once again exert control over his citizens. Here the inseparable nature of the manipulation of collective memory as both an 'instrument' and 'objective' of power is clearly demonstrated. Its importance as an 'instrument' in the maintenance of hierarchy is summarised by Connerton: 'our images of the past commonly serve to legitimate a present social order'[9] and is of clear contextual significance to Anouilh due to the oppressive Nazi-censorship and propaganda which the play was itself subject to according to Freeman's introduction to the text.[10]

However, by drawing upon the theory of Schechner, its significance in a wider context of 'history' can also be seen. Creon's reinvention of the past to achieve his goal of peace and order exemplifies Schechner's performance model of '1→5a→5b' where 'the project-to-be, 5b, governs what from the past is selected or invented (and projected backward into the past), 5a' (*ROB*, 39). Following this theory further, Schechner states that the original event, the brothers' deaths in this case, is not only forgotten through its deletion from collective memory but is erased from history altogether; by being replaced with the 'non-event' of Eteocles' tragic murder 'its actuality-in-history is lost.' (*ROB*, 50) Through his control of collective memory, Creon is therefore shown to influence not only the present experiences of the individuals around him, but history itself: 'History is not what happened but what is encoded and transmitted.' (*ROB*, 51) This extension of one's influence to the collective memory of future generations is a conquest which is often monopolised by those in power; for example through the creation of monuments, and can therefore easily be seen as an 'objective' for its accomplishment.

The sense of possession portrayed by Anouilh in Creon's references to his singular ownership of true memory (41, 43) also invites reflection in the audience upon 'the control and ownership of information'[11] identified by Connerton as a political issue of continuing significance. This issue is addressed in *The Crucible* in the form of what Le Goff terms 'written "artificial memory"'[12]. The authority held by written memory throughout the play, for example, Hale's books which are 'weighted with authority' (*Plays: One*, 251) and 'you dare not touch the warrant' (281) is one held by those in power alone. Danforth not only creates collective memory through the composition of confessions to be displayed publically, but also rejects the authority of the individual memories presented to him in written form; the deposition presented by Giles Corey (294) and Mary Warren's confession, 'I accept no depositions.' (289) This freedom to select which individual memories may enter the collective memory forms a direct link with the control over history discussed previously in relation to *Antigone* and is therefore once again shown to be an 'objective' of power in this play.

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[8] Le Goff, 'Memory' p.52
[9] Paul Connerton, *How societies remember,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p.3.
[10] Ted Freeman, 'Commentary' in *Antigone,* p.xlvii
[11] Ibid*.,* p.1
[12] Le Goff, 'Memory' p.62

Returning to *Antigone,* this control of history as an 'objective' is seemingly contradicted by Anouilh, who presents his ruler as unwillingly obligated to take on power and the control over collective memory it allows: 'like a labourer starting a day's work.' (4) Whilst removing all sense of 'conquest' from this character's power, Anouilh presents an apparent justification for the use of collective memory as an 'instrument' through Creon's genuine belief in its necessity in society: 'Someone has the steer the ship. It's letting water in on all sides.' (39) The manipulation of memory to achieve such a "greater good" can be compared with André Leroi-Gourhan's description of the 'equilibrium between routine and progress'.[13] The power to select the 'intervention of individual innovation that produces a better survival' according to Leroi-Gourhan is clearly reflected in Creon's choices and can thus be interpreted as an unselfish and necessary aspect of power. The connection which Leroi-Gourhan claims between 'the constitution of the apparatus of social memory' and 'the problems of human evolution'[14] is therefore one raised for consideration by Anouilh in this play: 'Can you imagine a world [...] Where the animals have said no to the instincts of hunting and love?' (41)

By encouraging the audience to identify with this character's rational arguments in contrast to the inconsistent idealism of Antigone, Anouilh's play has often been interpreted as a defence of dictatorship, for example seen in the contemporary response of Charles Méré: 'The real hero is Creon, the just ruler, a slave to his duty'.[15] This interpretation had particular significance in the context of the play's initial production by allowing Anouilh to bypass the German bureau of censorship, through the pro-collaborationist meaning attributed to this portrayal of necessity: 'collaboration was just a sad necessity, a way of sparing France a worse fate'.[16]

However, the promotion of Antigone over Creon as the play's heroine, in which Anouilh departs from Sophocles' original, has often led to a contradictory interpretation. Through this character Anouilh presents the fundamental concern with the manipulation of collective memory, described by Le Goff as its potential for the 'enslavement of human beings.'[17] Such 'enslavement' is seen in the characterisation of the guards. Their introduction by the Prologue as 'the agents- eternally innocent, eternally complacent - of justice' who are 'completely devoid of imagination' (5) suggests the negative lack of ideology or aspiration which is opposed by Antigone in her rejection of empty 'happiness' (46). This loss of identity is explained by Connerton: 'the mental enslavement of a totalitarian regime begins when their memories are taken away'[18]. Here, such 'forced forgetting', to use Connerton's term, is seen in the loss of the dreams of youth which Creon urges in Antigone. Through the guards' representative nature as 'the same as everyone else', (5) Anouilh therefore suggests the further significance of collective memory as an instrument of power over the very *identity* of the individual. By ending his play with the image of the guards' indifference Anouilh highlights their nature as a warning for the audience of the oppression of identity which accompanies the privileging of such a singular, subjective perspective of "the greater good" and raises the question as to 'Whether that job should or shouldn't be done' (38) upon which the central, unresolved debate of the play hangs.

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[13] André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le geste et la parole*, 2 vols. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1964-65) quoted by Le Goff in 'Memory' p.98.
[14] Ibid., p.98
[15] Charles Méré, *Aujourd'hui* (1944), quoted in 'Commentary' by Ted Freeman in *Antigone,* p. Xlvii.
[16] Ibid., p.xlviii
[17] Le Goff, 'Memory', p.99
[18] Connerton, *How Societies Remember,* p.14

In *The Crucible* this connection between 'forced forgetting' and the identity of the individual is also portrayed. Once again, Leroi-Gourhan's 'equilibrium' can be identified in the opposition between the indispensable nature of the traditions maintained through religious memory discussed earlier, which allowed the Puritan settlers to survive in 'this space so antagonistic to man' (*Plays: One,* 228) and the need for progress claimed by Hale: 'we would be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships.' (277) As in *Antigone,* this progress, as a means of achieving the "greater good" of the cleansing of the town of witchcraft, involves disregarding certain aspects of the collective memory, in this case the fundamental values of Christian morality and common sense. These memories are encapsulated by Miller in the term 'conscience', the loss of which is directly associated with the loss of individual identity in what he describes as the play's fundamental theme: 'the handing over of conscience, to another, [...] and the realisation that with conscience goes the person, the soul immortal and the name.'[19] This loss of 'the name' as representative of individual identity is seen throughout the text in the signed confessions which parallel the signing away of the soul to the devil of which they are ironically accused, and is emphasised through Proctor's refusal: 'How may I live without my name?' (328) The relevance of 'forced forgetting' to the experience of McCarthyism described by Miller: 'It was as though a whole country had been born anew, without a memory even of certain elemental decencies...' therefore causes this reflection upon the consequences of misuse of collective memory to be interpreted as a clear warning of specific contextual significance.[20]

This critical stance is however complicated by the role of the plays as performance. The importance of theatre as a means of reinstating and creating collective memory is described by Carlson as the central role 'theatre has always played in a culture repeating again and again to its members its own particular stories.'[21] The potential of this control over collective memory held by the artist as a device of political application, or 'a valuable tool for inculcating, reinforcing, and celebrating particular social concerns' is clearly exemplified in the social message, or warning, portrayed by both plays in relation to contemporary politics.[22] This influence over the emotions and political perspectives of the audience; achieved according to Carlson through the selective retelling of 'those stories, myths and historical events that were best suited to achieve these ends' is seen in the recycling of cultural sources in each. [23] In my opinion, this selective process forms clear parallels to the use of pre-existing religious and superstitious memory described earlier in relation to both plays as a means of evoking the desired response of fear and obedience. By making use of these historical and mythological forms of collective memory for a similarly subjective purpose, both writers can thus be seen to mirror their characters in using this memory as an 'instrument' of power over the individual.

This relation to collective memory in the wider performative context of the plays themselves has further parallels with that of their content due to the manipulation which accompanies the selection of cultural sources by both writers. Anouilh in particular has admitted a complete disregard for accuracy in his use of historical subject matter to provide the characters and situations needed for his individual purpose.[24] The various adaptations of this subject matter identified by Freeman in his commentary on *Antigone* can thus be seen as a conscious manipulation of collective memory which forms a clear parallel to that of Creon discussed previously. The implications of this are clearer in *The Crucible* where Miller's

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[19] Arthur Miller, 'Introduction to the *Collected Plays*' p.162
[20] 'Introduction to the Collected Plays', p.153
[21] Marvin Carlson, 'The Haunted Text' in *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), pp. 16-44, p.24
[22] Ibid., p.32
[23] Ibid., p.33
[24] Ted Freeman, 'Commentary' in *Antigone,* p.xxv

relation to history is less clearly defined. By opening his 'Note on the Historical Accuracy of this Play' (*Plays: One,* 224) with the statement 'This play is not history in the sense in which the word is used by the academic historian', Miller implies its nature as a different kind of 'history', which Adler views as a personal 'reading *of* history'.[25] This subjective interpretation is acknowledged by Miller in his description of his historical research: 'When I looked into it now, however, it was with the contemporary situation at my back [...] One finds, I suppose, what one seeks.'[26] The conscious nature of this subjective distortion of collective memory is more explicitly described in Millers 'Note' as the results of 'dramatic purposes' which once again parallel the subjective motives seen to drive the manipulation of collective memory by Miller's characters. Whilst this subjective interpretation and conscious manipulation is indicated within the introduction provided in the text, its notable absence from the play in performance has resulted in the play's popular misinterpretation as historical truth and can in this way be seen as the rewriting of both collective memory, and consequently history itself. This consequence or 'objective' of power raised for consideration within the plays can thus be seen to reverberate in their external contexts.

Therefore, in conclusion, despite exploring the negative implications of the relationship between collective memory as both an 'instrument' and an 'objective' of power in the societies of their setting, both plays can themselves be seen to make use of collective memory in a similar manner. By selecting and adapting historical and mythological memories to meet their own subjective aims within performance, both Miller and Anouilh exert their own artistic power over the collective memory of their audiences as a means of influencing the individual, thus subjecting themselves to the criticism portrayed in their content in an interesting contradiction.

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[26] 'Introduction to the *Collected* Plays', p.155

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