Visual Studies 2
Visual Diary



Margaret Atwood - Happy Endings

Keywords:

- Love
- Relationships
- Expectations
- Plots
- Outcomes

"The only authentic ending is the one provided here: *John and Mary die. John and Mary die. John and Mary die."*

"So much for endings. Beginnings are always more fun. True connoisseurs, however, are known to favour the stretch in between, since it's the hardest to do anything with."

"That's about all that can be said for plots, which anyway are just one thing after another, a what and a what and a what. Now try How and Why."

This piece of texts tells of different stories all however resulting in the same outcome. I interpreted this as a metaphor for life and think that the author is telling us that no matter the beginning and the middle, the ending is the same for us all, so instead of worrying about the future we should focus more on the journey.

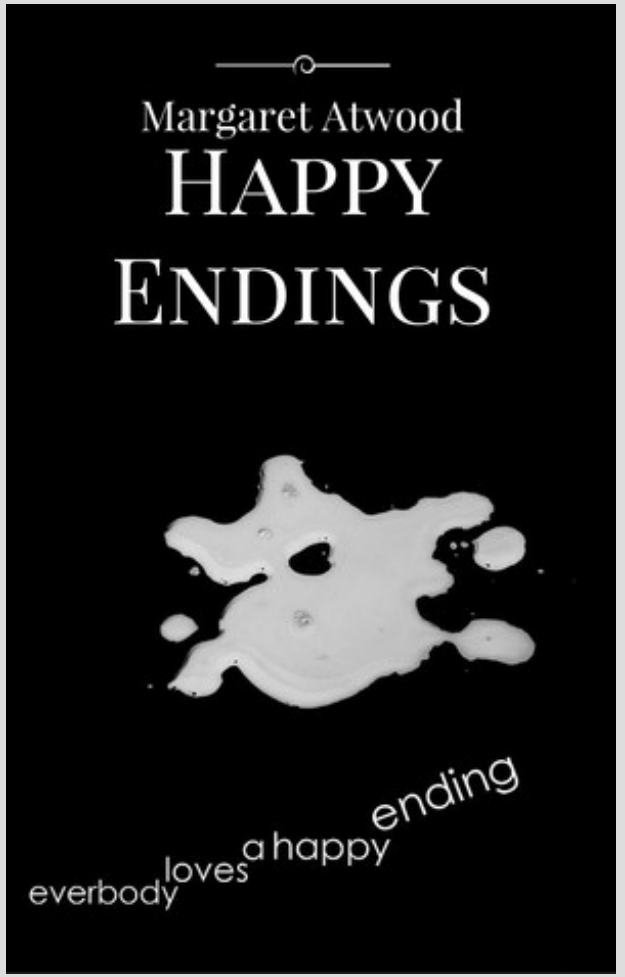


Fig 1. *Happy Endings,* 1983

Angela Carter - The Company of Wolves

Keywords:

- Werewolves
- Sinister
- Violence
- Naivety
- Desire

This text is a different take on little red riding hood, as a child she is naively fearless. She meets a huntsman in the woods whom she grows to trust and desire. He then says he could get to her grandmother's quicker with his compass if he left the path, they make a bet and of course he arrives first but it then becomes apparent that he is a werewolf. He knocks on the door mimicking red riding hood and is invited in. He then eats the grandmother. It seems he will do the same to red riding hood but the story ends unclearly as the last line is "See! sweet and sound she sleeps in granny's bed, between the paws of the tender wolf."

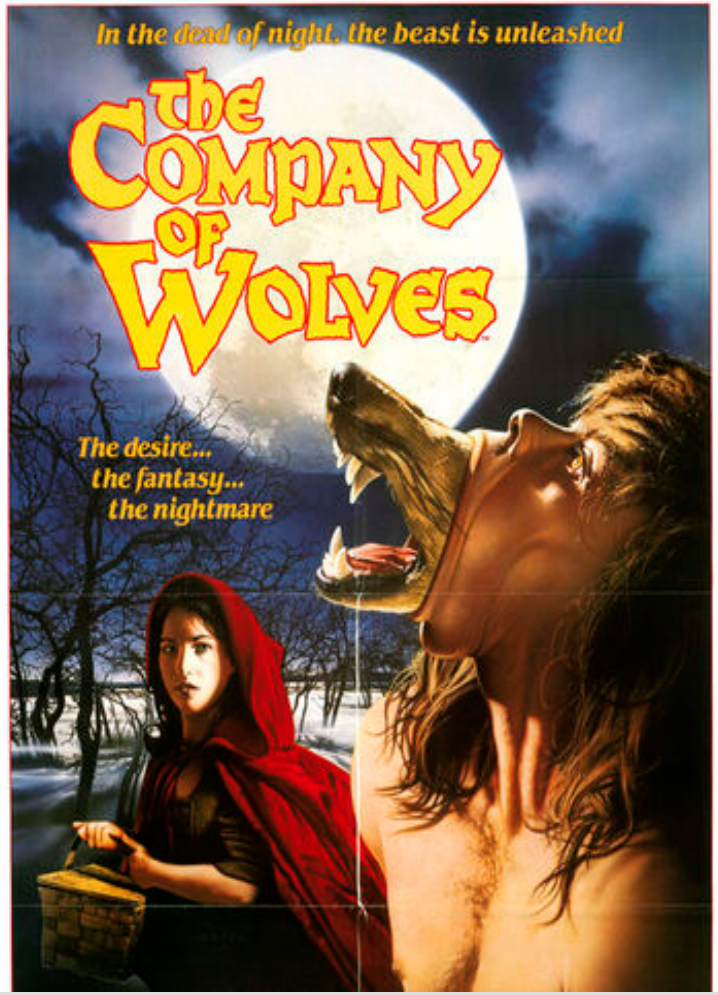


Fig 2. *The Company of Wolves*

Haruki Murakami - The Year of Spaghetti

Keywords:

- Passion
- Loneliness
- Obsession
- Detachment
- Reluctance

The story takes place in 1971, a man is very passionate about cooking spaghetti and does so all the time, we can tell this by how descriptive and how highly he speaks of the whole process. However he always eats by himself. One day he receives a phone call from a friend's ex partner, she says he owes her money but our protagonist doesn't want to get involved. He instead lies and tells her he is making Spaghetti although it doesn't feel much like a lie as he always is doing.

Afterwards he feels a little guilty about not helping the girl, but he again states it's because he doesn't want to get involved with anyone. The story ends with "Can you imagine how astonished the Italians would be if they knew that what they were exporting in 1971 was really loneliness?" - It's worth noting here that Italian's are big on family. The man's obsession with Spaghetti and reluctance to help is probably due to how used to being alone he is.



Fig 3. *Spaghetti*

Kristen Roupenian - Cat Person

Keywords:

- Guilt
- False-expectations
- Regret
- Attention
- Intimacy

This text is about a girl who meets an older man and despite not being that attracted to him she enjoys the attention. After a few drinks she becomes intimate with him but doesn't enjoy the experience and soon regrets it. He becomes very invested in her and she is too scared to hurt his feelings. She feels a lot of guilt but still doesn't communicate honestly and effectively with him out of fear and disgust in herself.



Fig 4. Elinor Carucci

Ken Liu - Paper Menagerie

Keywords:

- Heritage
- Prejudice
- Shame
- Familiarity
- Magic

A boy with an American farther and Chinese mother doesn't know much of his mother's background. She makes him origami animals. He is Asian-American and as he grows older he wants to fit into American culture, he experiences racism and bullying and he begins to hate his heritage and tries to push it away, pushing his mother away also.

She passes away and years later he finds letters she wrote him on the paper animals he had discarded in the attic. She tells him of the hard life she had as an orphan in China. Sold as a slave and beaten but then finds a good life with his farther. She was overjoyed with the birth of her son and was hurt and bewildered when he pushed her away. He feels much remorse for this but sadly it is too late for him to rebuild a connection with her.

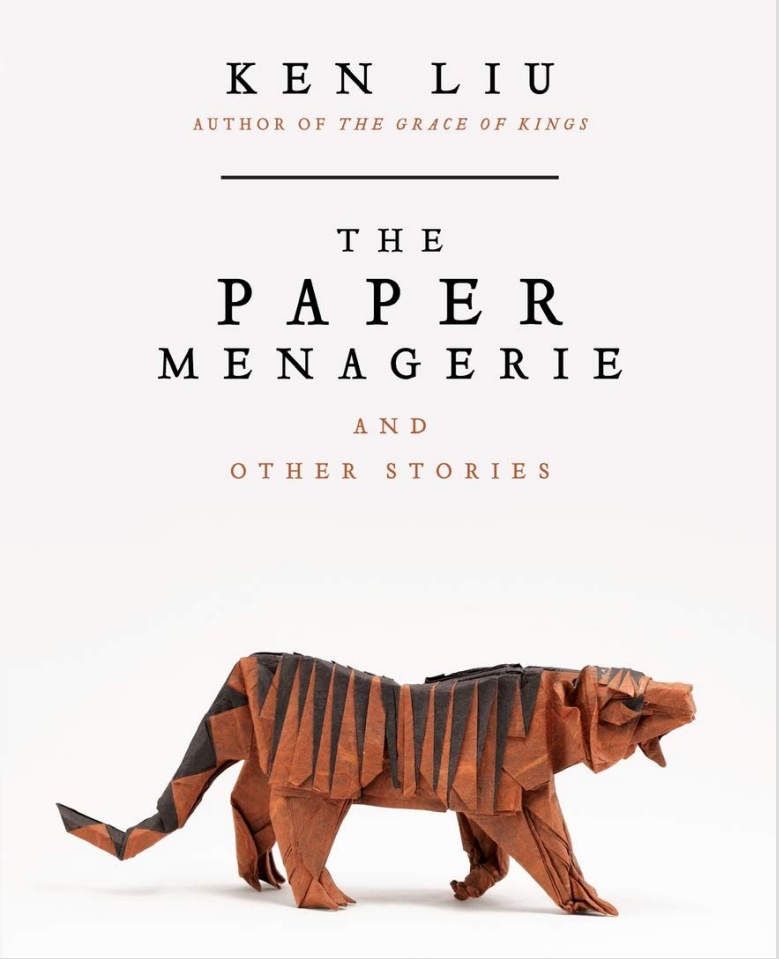


Fig 5. *Paper Menagerie,* 2011

Roald Dahl - Lamb to the Slaughter

Keywords:

- Love
- Anger
- Violence
- Revenge
- Deceit

Mary is a pregnant house wife waiting excitedly for her husband whom she loves to come home. He comes home and begins drinking a lot of whiskey and says he has to tell her something. It is not mentioned what is said but he says he will make sure she is looked after financially. From this we can only assume that he is divorcing her. She goes to fetch a leg of lamb for supper but he tells her he is going out. She then hits him over the head with the leg of lamb and he falls to the ground, she has killed him. She goes to the shop to buy vegetables to go with the lamb and acts as if nothing is wrong.

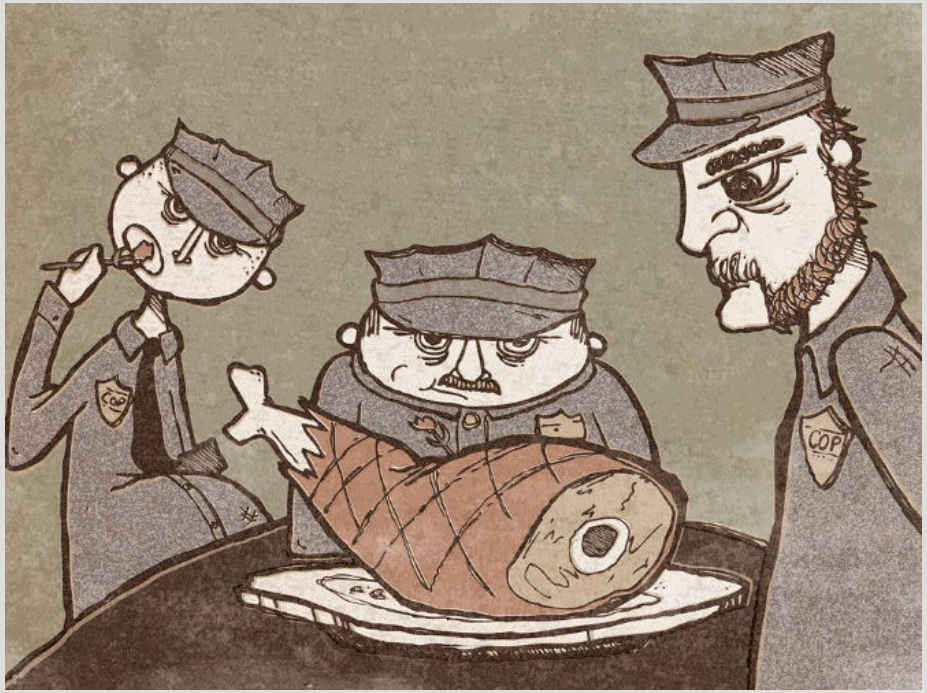


Fig 6. *Lamb to the Slaughter*

She tells herself that everything is natural and if she should find anything amiss at home that it will be a shock to her. She calls the police and they begin to console her and search for a weapon. She ends up offering them the leg of lamb to eat and the story ends with ""“Whoever done it, they’re not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need.” One of them belched. “Personally, I think it’s right here on the premises.” “Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?” And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle."

Gabriel García Márquez - The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World

Keywords:

- Community
- Empathy
- Desire
- Tragedy
- Surreal

A drowned man washes up in a small village, he is taller and heavier than any other man the people have seen, only his shape makes him distinguishably a man as his skin is covered in mud and scales. The women made a fuss over how handsome he was and felt sorry for him for his huge size, they referred to him as Esteban. They were all marvelled by him and gave him a magnificent funeral. Not tying an anchor to him as they sent him off the cliff unlike what they would usually do, so that his body could return if it wished.

The story ends with "they also knew that everything would be different from then on, that their houses would have wider doors, higher ceilings, and stronger floors so that Esteban's memory could go everywhere without bumping into beams and so that no one in the future would dare whisper the big boob finally died."



Fig 7. *The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World*

Alice Walker – Everyday Use

Keywords:

- Heritage
- Education
- Irony
- Distant
- Sentiment

The text is about a family with African heritage, they have little money, but the mother manages to save enough to pay for her eldest daughter to get a good education. Whilst her youngest remains at home and like her is unable to read. This contrast in the different lives that they had led creates distance between the family. Her eldest daughter takes on a new African name and wears African clothes to try and feel more connected to her heritage, yet she doesn't really understand her roots at all.

When she comes home to visit, she finds the old family quilts and asks for them. Her mother however wishes for her youngest daughter to have them as she understands the sentiment behind them more and will have them for everyday use. Whereas her eldest daughter wishes to just hang them up for display. The eldest daughter Dee isn't happy about the decision and claims her younger sister won't appreciate them like she will. The irony here is that despite being educated she has less of an understanding and attachment to her heritage than her sister, despite trying to portray the opposite.

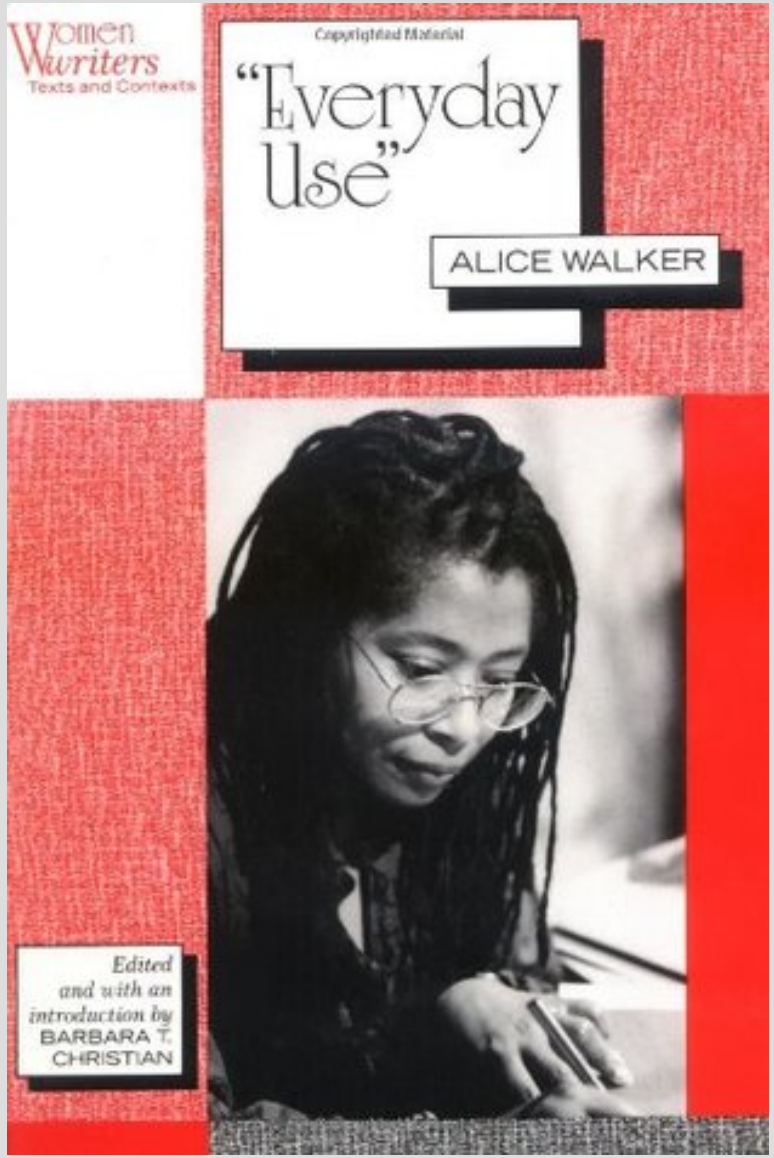


Fig 8. *Everyday Use,* 1994

Origami

Origami is the art of paper-folding. Its name comes from the Japanese words “ori” meaning folding and “kami” meaning paper. The art of traditional origami involves folding a square sheet of paper without gluing or cutting it in order to create something aesthetic (Richman-Abdou, 2017).

Around 105AD paper was invented in China. Around 900AD marked the appearance of paper gold nuggets becoming common place at Chinese funerals. Eventually origami became a very popular art form. Modern origami more commonly represents inanimate objects. (Richman-Abdou, 2017).

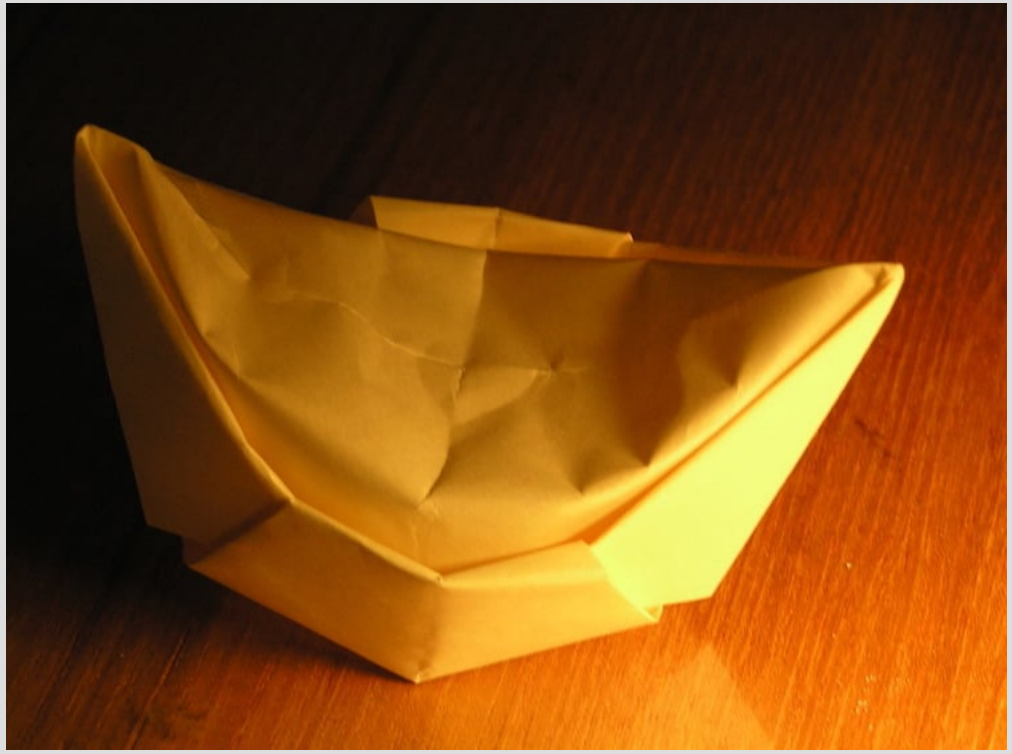


Fig 9. *Chinese paper fold,* Benjwong, 2007













The story Paper Menagerie features an origami tiger, so I decided to create one with the help of a YouTube video (Mr. Easy Origami, 2019). In the story the boy finds the paper tiger in the attic, so I took some photographs of the one I made up in my attic. Then I took some of it in front of some candles with Chinese characters on to further illustrate the Chinese heritage within the text. Upon reflection I decided to investigate the concept of heritage more and more specifically my own as I would like to respond in a way that is more personal to me.

Family Heritage

A person's heritage is unique to them, it is usually considered to be important elements of our family's identity. It can be to do with things such as ethnic background, nationality, culture and values or can even be about something the family has remained passionate about and passed down throughout the different generations such as music, sports, art, religion or even a family profession (Morton, 2019).

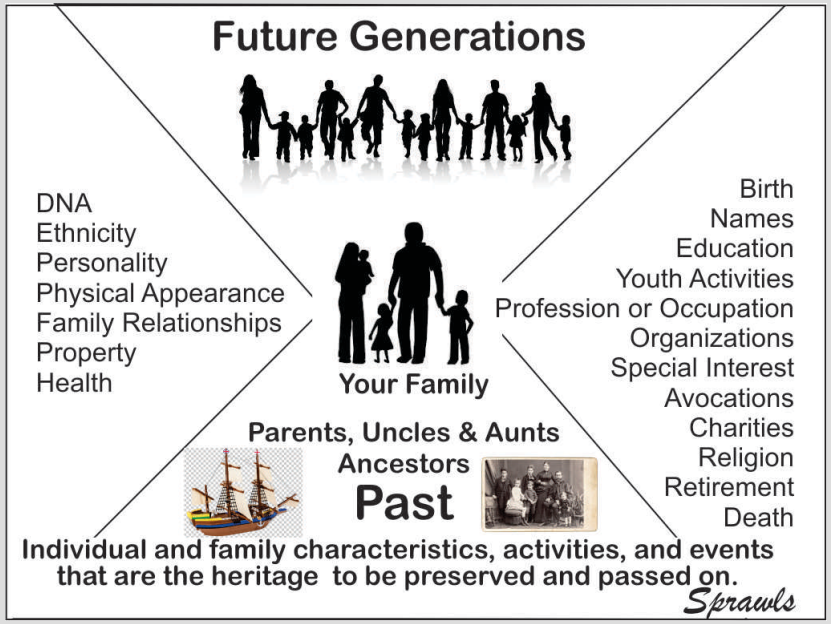


Fig 10. *Future Generations,* Sprawls



Fig 11. *J. Perruzza & Sons Ltd,* Duncan Payne, 2014

I was always aware that my great grandparents were Italian, and that the family had owned an ice-cream business which is still running to this day. I spoke to my grandparents to learn more about it and as well as this did my own research online.

The business was founded by Joseph Perruzza who at the age of 14 ran away from his home in Italy and stowed away on a boat before arriving in Liverpool. He eventually settled in Kendal, staying with some ice-cream merchants the Terribiles who were from his hometown in Italy (The Westmorland Gazette, 2002).

After working with the Terribiles Joseph started selling ice-creams by himself in 1902 with a horse drawn cart. He eventually upgraded to a motor bike with a side car. In 1910 he married one of the Terribile's daughters and went on to operate a café where they made ice-cream on the premises. His grandson Tony continues to do this to this day. The family also sold ice-cream in Preston as pictured (The Westmorland Gazette, 2002).



Fashions in Ice-cream Motors.

ONE of the familiar sights of the Market Square, Preston, is a group of motor ice cream carts, which are almost a local institution. During last week's Preston Guild they were moved from their accustomed station, and simply kept "on the move," following or, rather, seeking custom where the crowds were.

It will be noticed from our illustrations that one of these cars lacks nothing in the way of embellishment and extravagant body design, and even has a typical seaside scene painted on the side valances.

The Preston ice-cream motors are fine examples of clean, well-kept vehicles, and their service capacity is more manifest during the busy holiday seasons, at field days, parties and shows, etc., than during the ordinary run of town work. They visit shows held in the districts outside Preston, and sometimes cover daily mileages impossible to the old-fashioned out-of-date horsed vehicle.

If a sentence could summarize the way to the success achieved by the ice-cream merchant who uses light motors, it would be: "Follow the crowds."

The ice-cream merchants' motors have discovered the happy knack of telling their own story simply and forcibly.

Two ornate light motor vehicles with which Preston ice-cream merchants "follow the crowd."

Fig 13. *Fashions in Ice-cream Motors,* Preston Digital Archive

During the Second World War Joseph's sons Frank and Enrico joined the army whilst Domenic joined the navy (The Westmorland Gazette, 2002). After speaking to my family, I learned that because of their heritage they were treated differently. For example, they weren't trusted to go on watch in the army. This encouraged me to do more research as in the Paper Menagerie story there are also themes of racial prejudice.



Fig 12. *Alfred Terribile,* Preston Digital Archive



Fig 14, *Ice-cream Merchant*, Preston Digital Archive

Italians in Britain During the War

On May 10th 1940 Mussolini declared war on the Allies. Angry mobs of people attacked Italian restaurants and ice-cream parlours. A lot of Italians that were living in Britain at the time were imprisoned, even those who had fled their home country after being involved in the anti-fascist movement. They were held in camps and then appeared before tribunals which would classify them into different groups. Some imprisoned, some allowed to leave but with restrictions placed on their movements and others allowed to go free (Simkin, 1997).

Winston Churchill actually defended the policy saying that it was necessary to "collar the lot". Some employers started to fire all foreigners, in some cases just because they had foreign ancestors. The Government also became involved in discrimination against foreigners. Some local authorities turned them out of their council housing. Even The Home Guard rejected the applications of some men with foreign origin (Simkin, 1997).



Fig 15. *Italian Prisoners-of-War Working on the Land*, Michael Ford, 1942

Development of Ideas

In the Paper Menagerie text, the boy and mother try desperately to fit into American culture but experience a great deal of judgement from the society around them, this creates deep feelings of shame. However, they do find familiarity and solace in certain parts of their heritage, this being the origami.

I want to create my photographs to reflect my own personal heritage and to illustrate the difficulties that my family faced, more specifically during the war time. For my family it was the ice-cream business that gave them joy so I plan to incorporate that into my photographs.

Other things I plan to do are make my photos look old and worn as if from around the 1940s. I also need to think about how to make it clear that the images meanings can be distinguished as having connections to the war. One way I plan to do this is using a poppy. Another idea I have is to create a collage using newspaper articles and pictures that I have.



Fig 16. *Ice-Cream Cone,* Jennifer Causey, 2015

Walker Evans

Walker Evans was a key figure of 20th century photography. His work tries to capture the essence of an ever-changing American culture. His documentary style emerged in the 1930s as he witnessed the social and economic hardships caused by the Great Depression. Something that is notable about Evan's work is that his photographs do not need to be presented chronologically. His work was constructed around themes in order to support his message regardless of the time and place that they were taken. He was interested in people and often photographed share-croppers, manual workers and beggars. In his essay *People and Places in Trouble* he wrote "They speak with their eyes. People out of work are not given to talking much about the one thing on their minds.". Something that was more unique at the time is that his subjects often helped with the construction of the images adding another dynamic to the work by making it more collaborative (Huber, 2017).



Fig 17, *Sharecropper's Family, Hale County, Alabama,* 1936



Fig 18. *Roadside Stand Near Birmingham,* 1936



Fig 19. *Dock Workers, Havana,* 1932

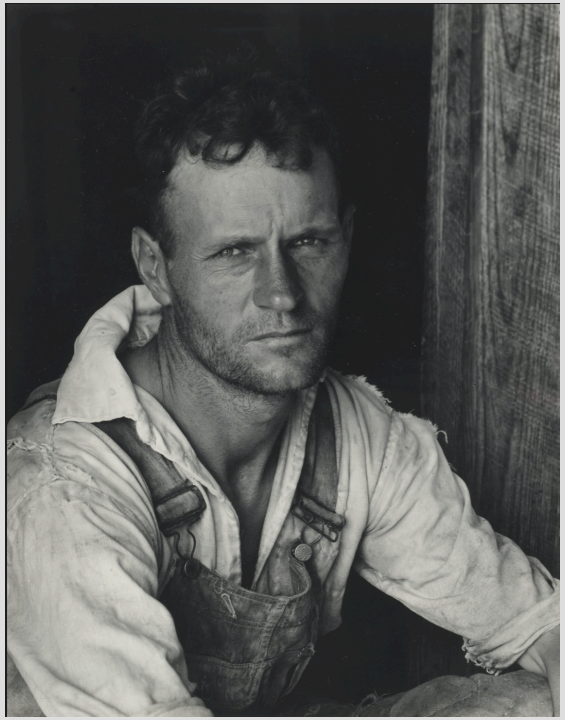


Fig 20. *Sharecropper, Hale County, Alabama,* 1936



Fig 21. *Two Members of a Prison Work Gang,* 1935



Fig 22. *Sons of the American Legion,* 1936



Fig 23. *Coal Miner's House, Scott's Run, West Virginia,* 1936

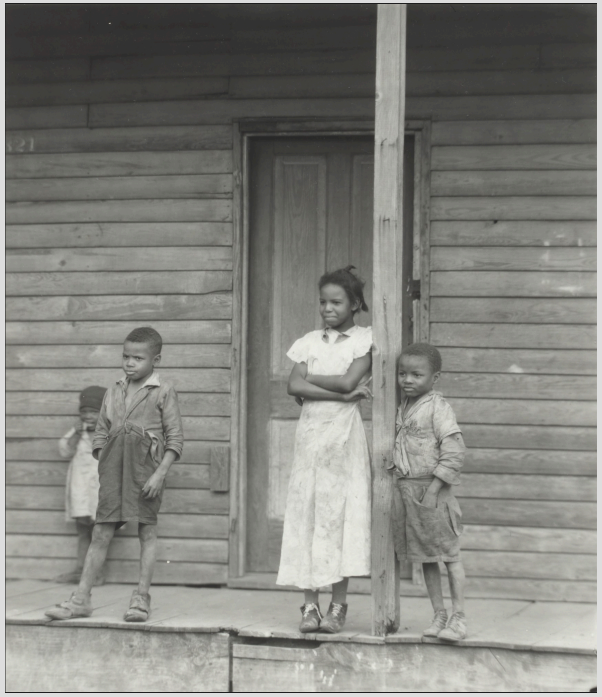


Fig 24. *Children, Vicksburg,* 1935-36

Margaret Bourke-White

You Have Seen Their Faces is a book published in 1936 by Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell. It illustrates the difficulties faced by sharecroppers in American during the Great Depression. Bourke-White was originally assigned to photograph a drought but unexpectedly ended up turning her attention towards the human condition. In *Portrait of Myself* she writes “I was deeply moved by the suffering I saw and touched particularly by the bewilderment of the farmers. I think this was the beginning of my awareness of people in a human, sympathetic sense”. Her work documents social conditions as well as human dignity and courage in the face of adversity (Martin, 1982).



Fig 25. *Statesboro Georgia,* 1936



Fig 26. *Lake Providence Louisiana,* 1936



Fig 27. *Belmont Florida,* 1936



Fig 28. *Elbow Creek Arkansas,* 1936

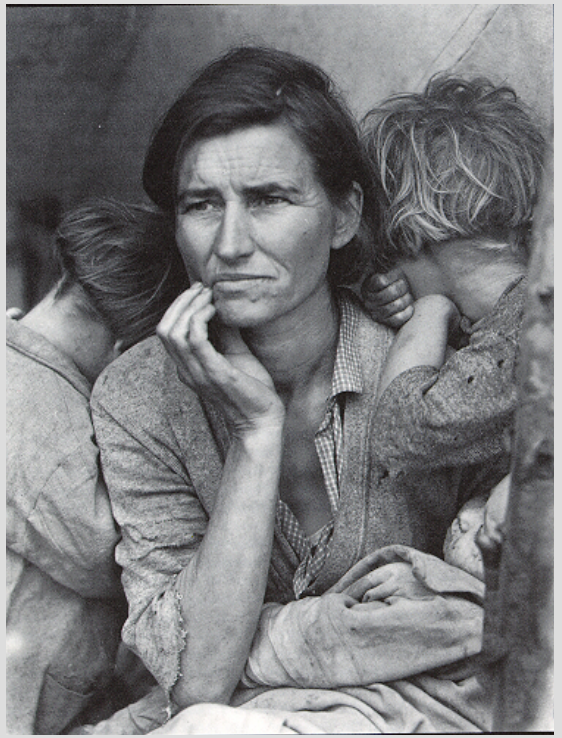


Fig 29. *Dorothea Lange, California,* 1936



Fig 30. *Highlands Tennessee,* 1936



Fig 31. *Natchez Mississippi,* 1936



Fig 32. *A Tobacco Sharecroppers Family,* 1936



Fig 33. *Two Residents of Putnam County Georgia,* 1936







Inspired by the work of Walker Evans and Margaret Bourke-White, I decided to photograph a portrait of my grandfather posing as one of our ancestors who would have faced discrimination as an Italian living in Britain during the war. Evan's and Bourke-White's work illustrates people experiencing hardships, this is often very apparent through the serious tone of the images and facial expressions of the subjects. The Union Jack in the background represents the photograph being taken in Britain and the strong patriotic attitude held at the time. The ice-cream represents the man's own heritage and like in the Paper Menagerie text this is the one thing he finds comfort in despite feeling out of place. I also made the photographs black and white to be more reflective of the time period I am trying to portray. Upon reflection I have noticed a modern garden light in the two portrait images so this would have to be cropped out.

Collage and Photomontage

"Derived from the French verb coller, meaning "to glue," collage refers to both the technique and the resulting work of art in which fragments of paper and other materials are arranged and glued or otherwise affixed to a supporting surface." (MoMA Glossary of Art Terms).

The collage was pioneered around 1911 by artists Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. It was a way of breaking through the limitations of painting and producing new ways of illustrating reality. Newspaper clippings became a popular element as their text added a deeper message. The political mood of the early 20th century helped to popularise the collage; a lot of the art form made a statement. It was a way of demonstrating human craft and skill in a time of industrialisation. A collage composed solely of photos is known as a photomontage, this is a good technique for creating compositions that wouldn't be possible in camera (Lars).

With the rise of the quick and easy digital image, today photography is less about in camera technical skills and more about combining images to make a statement or tell a story. The modern collage can look quite different, there is no longer a need to cut and stick images together as we have digital manipulation tools such as Photoshop making it easier than ever to experiment (Lars).



Fig 34. Barna Kovacs, 2020

Dada

"Photomontage is often used as a means of expressing political dissent. It was first used as a technique by the Dadaists in 1915 in their protests against the First World War." (The Tate).

The first world war confirmed the deterioration of society, this as well as capitalism, nationalism and corrupt politics inspired the Dada movement. From 1916 until the mid 1920s artists declared an assault on conventional art as well as rational thought itself. Dada was more about the message of the art as opposed to the aesthetics of it. It was paradoxical in that it embraced as well as critiqued modern culture. The movement experimented in pushing the boundaries of what art could or should be, often using satire. Collage and photomontage were common techniques, using things like newspaper clippings to aid in their message and reference current events (MoMA).



Fig 35. *Kleine Dada Soiree,* Theo Van Doesburg and Kurt Schwitters, 1922

“The beginnings of Dada were not the beginnings of art, but of disgust.” (Tristan Tzara).

“For us, art is not an end in itself, but it is an opportunity for the true perception and criticism of the times we live in.” (Hugo Ball).

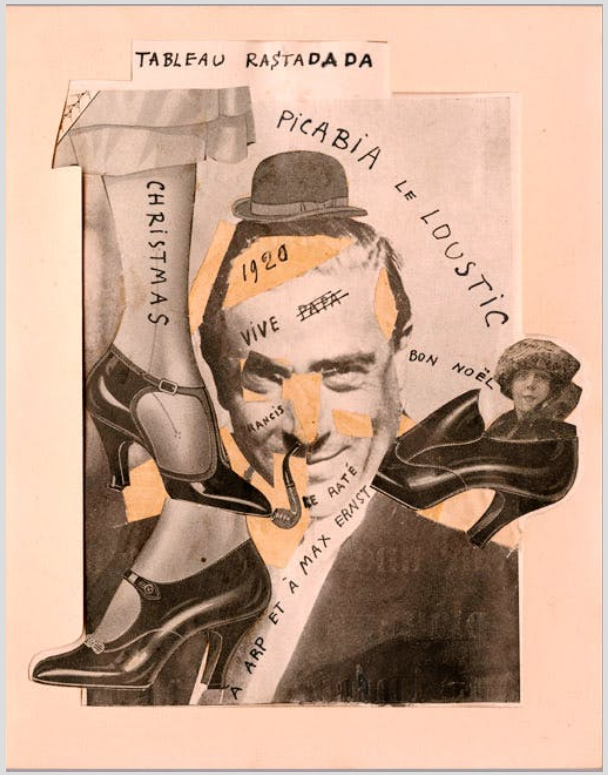


Fig 36. *Tableau Rastadada,* Francis Picabia, 1920

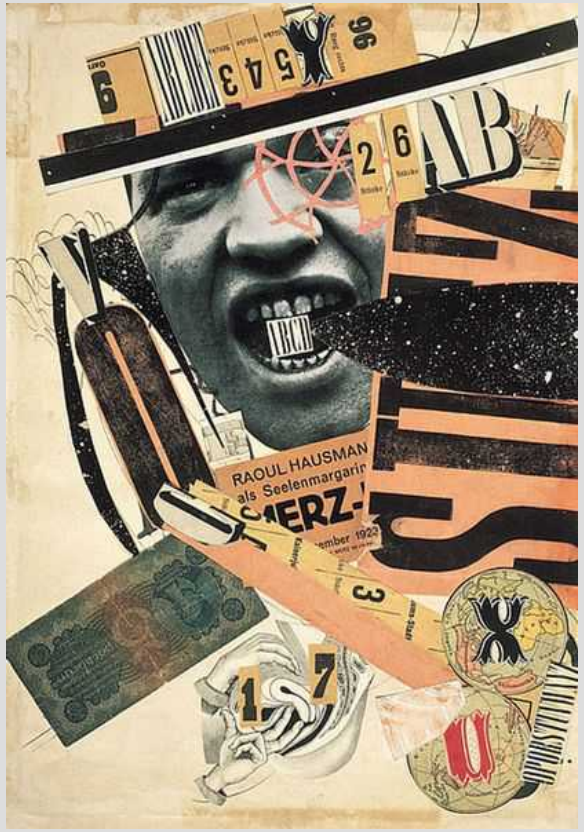


Fig 37. *ABCD,* Raoul Hausmann, 1920



Fig 38. *Incision With The Dada Kitchen Knife Through Germany's Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch,* Hannah Hoch, 1920

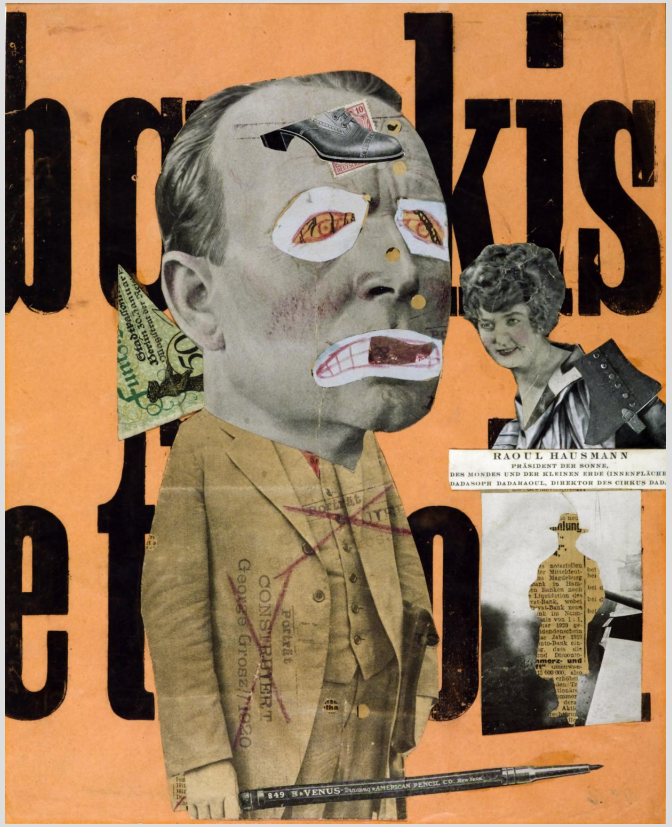


Fig 39. *Der Kunstkritiker,* Raoul Kunstkritiker, 1919-20

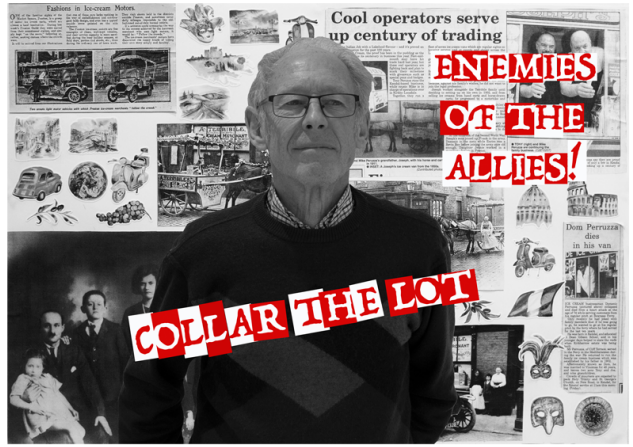












I created a collage using old photographs and newspaper clippings relevant to my own family's heritage, I also added stickers that represented Italy. I then layered an image of a member of my family on top of the collage and debated whether I wanted the whole image to be in black and white or if I wanted the background to be in colour. Inspired by the dada movement I added text on top of the image using the phrase “Enemies of the allies!” and a quote from Winston Churchill “Collar the lot”. This is in reference to some of the political and public opinion towards Italians in Britain during the second world war. I then decided to add coloured boxes behind the letters to make them appear as if they had been cut out from a magazine or newspaper.

Poppies and the War

During the first world war around 8.5million soldiers died. The fighting took place across the landscape of Western Europe, destroying the natural habits of fields and forests. However, during the spring of 1915 poppies began to grow in the barren areas of northern France and Flanders in Belgium. Thanks to a poem written by John McCrae the poppy would become a powerful symbol of remembrance. In the poem he channels the voices of fallen soldiers buried amongst the flowers (Pruitt, 2020).



Fig 40. *In Flanders Fields*

In Flanders Fields
John McCrae – 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

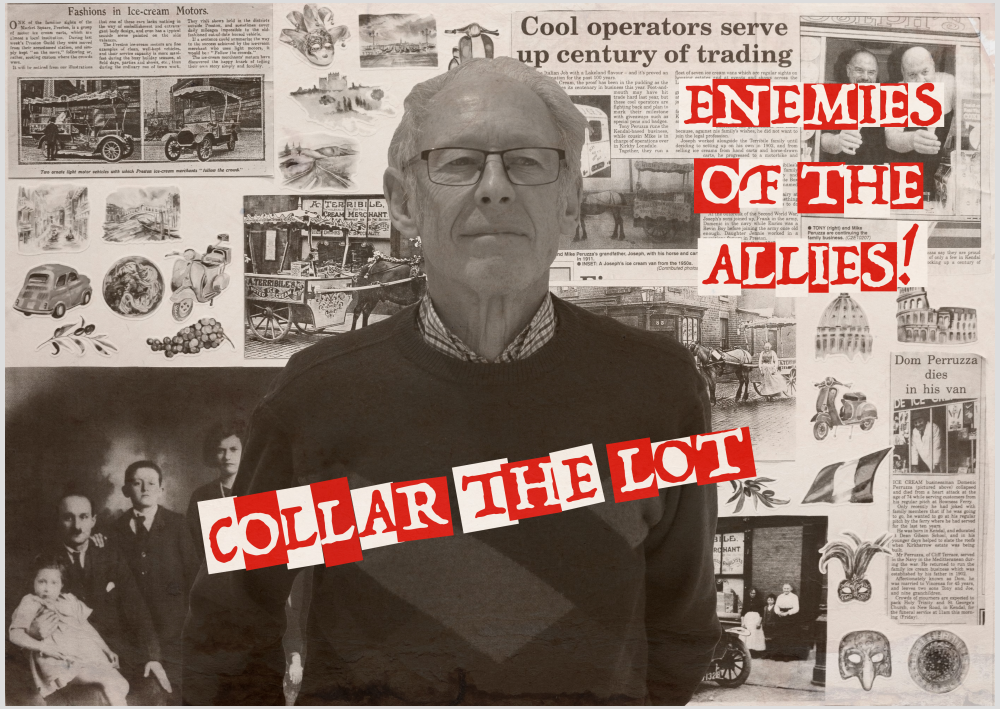
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



To begin with I photographed a poppy against a wall, this is to represent the remembrance of fallen soldiers from the war. No matter what side of the war the soldiers were fighting for the majority were just normal men who lost their lives doing what they thought was right by their country. I then photographed a set of hands holding ice-cream cones, this is to represent my Italian family heritage. I layered the images together to try and represent unity between the two nations, despite political conflicts. There were many people with Italian heritage living in Britain at the time, who were treated unfairly despite not supporting Germany's fascist views. I experimented again with whether I wanted the whole image to be black and white or whether I wanted certain parts to be in colour.

Final Images







Summary

The final images I have chosen are in response to the Paper Menagerie text. The five keywords I decided on in relation to the text were: heritage, prejudice, shame, familiarity and magic. I feel like my work covers each of these themes. I researched my own personal family heritage and discovered that like in the Paper Menagerie text there was a period in time during the second world war that my family also experienced prejudice due to their ethnic background. Despite this period of unrest, the family stayed true to their roots and found comfort in the familiarity of their ice-cream business much like with the origami in the text that I am responding to. I drew influences from the work of Walker Evans and Margaret Bourke-White as they documented the hardships faced by people in the 1930s in quite a serious tone. My first image especially focuses mostly on the subject and like the work of Walker Evans is constructed to convey a deeper message. The Union Jack flag is there to symbolise the patriotic attitude in Britain at the time whilst the Italian man can be seen staring at an ice-cream cone, clinging to his heritage during an uncertain time. For my second image I created a collage inspired by the dada movement. The phrase “Collar the lot” a quote from Winston Churchill in regard to people of different ethnic backgrounds. Like with the dada movement my image is not in support of this but rather to draw attention to it and oppose it. My third image uses a poppy to represent the fallen soldiers but I also overlayed an image of ice-cream cones as despite my family’s Italian origins they fought for Britain during the war. I also made all of my images appear slightly worn and faded as if they were old photographs. I feel as though my images work well together as a set for what I was trying to illustrate with them.

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