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Integrating experiences:

Body and mind moving between contexts

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INTRODUCTION

We propose a model of the relation between mind and society, and specifically the way in which individuals develop and gain agency through society. We theorise and demonstrate a two-way interaction: bodies moving through society accumulate differentiated experiences, which become integrated at the level of mind, enabling psychological movement between experiences, which in turn mediates how people move through society. For this, we build on our previous theoretical and empirical work.

THE PROPOSED THEORY

We start with three basic assumptions. First, and most basically, humans are embodied (Clark, 1998). The skin is an important boundary (Farr, 1997) which both connects and separates people from their material and symbolic environment. Human experience the social world first and foremost through their own bodies. Bounded bodies perceive and feel – they are the location of emotional experience (James, 1890). It is also in bounded bodies that humans move between contexts.

Second, human experience is semiotic (Lotman, 2000; Peirce, 1878; Valsiner, 2007), and the semiotic structures which construct human experience are, in part, cultural. It is in semiotic mediation that embodied human experience, becomes societal, as discourses, social representations, and institutions create and regulate experience.

Third, human experience is temporal (Bergson, 1938; James, 1890; Valsiner, 2002b), that is, human's bodies and minds live in irreversible time, which makes experience, or mental life, a constant flow. This temporality invites us to be attentive to change, whether at the ontogenetic level (that is, the development of the person), sociogenesis (the transformation of society) and microgenesis, (the here-and-now experiences though which these transformation are produced, Duveen, 1997; Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). These three assumptions have led us to question the relation between bodies moving in irreversible time through society, minds moving in irreversible time through experiences, and how together these interact to contribute to human development.

We propose a model with three basic components: society, mind, and movement. Specifically, there are 'contexts' which are the societal component, including places, activities and other people. There are

‘experiences’ which are the psychological component, including immediate experiences, distal experiences, and integrative experiences. And finally, movement leads to integration of experiences.

SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Central to our model is the concept of context. It refers to the social worlds of people, as structured by society. Contexts have stability in time and space. They are made of material components, natural and urban environments, and artefacts. They also include relatively stable configurations of social relationships and meaning. Hence, contexts are generally slowly changing, a process called sociogenesis, with the exception of major societal ruptures (e.g., a war). For a given person, a context is one relatively stable environment, usually over a longer period of life; it is a pattern of social life (Schuetz, 1944, 1945b; Zittoun & Gillespie, in press). The societal context refers primarily to the places, activities, people and representations which are outside the individual.

a) Geographical places

A societal context usually comprises several specific geographic places, such as a house, a street, a school, a workplace, etc. These places contain various objects, things and artefacts. Such places afford and constrain activities (Gibson, 1986). For example, a beach affords swimming in the summer, but, when frozen over in the winter it inhibits swimming. A theater affords sitting and watching a stage, but it can become a shelter for refugees.

b) Activities

Places become inhabited by people though activities, which make places meaningful. People are in a place by virtue of their body being in the place, and that same body is the medium of interacting with the place (Farr, 1997). The human body is the medium of activity, and it is transformed, or sculpted, by the activities it engages in (Bourdieu, 2000).

Human activity is usually social activity and as such it can be conceptualized as ‘social acts’ (Gillespie, 2005), ‘activity systems’ (Engeström, 1999), or Ego-Alter-Object relations (Marková, 2003). What is key is that activities not only occur in places, but that they bring together two or more people, with partially shared goals, in joint projects. Such social activity is the microgenetic engine of meaning making (Duveen, 1997). Such joint activity requires intersubjectivity (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010a), that is partially shared frames or definitions of the situation, within which participants can act and coordinate activity in relation to each other (Goffman, 1974). The meaning making that occurs through social activity creates both representations and structures of recognition.

c) Representations

Groups and communities engaging in projects develop relatively stable shared social representations (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999), enabling them to master their activities, coordinate with one another and communicate (Moscovici, 2000). Representations tend to be anchored in contexts, and vary

according to places, communities and practices. This means that people moving between contexts, communities and practices can become socialized into different and even conflicting social representations (Wagner, Duveen, Themel, & Verma, 1999).

d) Social recognition
Participating in social activity means that one's actions are of consequence for others, and those others will judge that activity, either positively or negatively. Moreover, because people's fates within a social activity are entwined, these judgments are themselves consequential for the actor. Accordingly, people are concerned with what co-participants in a social act think of about them. This is the dynamics of social recognition, manifest, for example, in the relation between a team member and the views of the team.

A structure of recognition refers to the ways in which a situated community, and sometimes an institutional structure, provides social recognition. It combines both what the community values (and does not value) with the mechanisms through which that valuation is fed back to the person concerned (e.g., comments, celebrations, certifications, awards etc.) to produce feelings of positive or negative social recognition.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES

The psychological level in our model is bounded by the individual, and refers to the individual's experience or perspective. Experiences can be directly related to the immediate context, or might entail memories, meanings and feelings from a distal context intruding into the immediate context. Thus the individual's experience, we propose, can be analytically separated into proximal and distal experiences.

Proximal experiences refer to people's situated experience of being engaged in one activity, in one frame, in a given place. These can be seen as "province of meaning," with certain ways of thinking, acting relating to others, intentions, and temporality (Schuetz, 1945a). Proximal experiences are part of the flow of consciousness, but what is central is that they are being shaped by the immediate context or activity. These can be layered experiences, including activities, and their embodied, emotional and aesthetic counterparts. It is a matter of a person's subjective experience whether she is in "one" or "another" experience, and the move between one and another can be characterized by a "shock experience" in a very mild sense, "the shock of falling asleep as the leap in the world of dreams; the inner transformation we endure if the curtain in the theatre rises as the transition into the world of the stage-play" (Schuetz 1945a, p. 553, quoted in Zittoun & Gillespie, in press).

Distal experiences refer to all the aspects of human experience which are not determined by the immediate context or activity, but rather which intrude into the proximal experience. Non-human animals have been described as "trapped in the perceptual field" (Kohler, 1924), having experiences which are completely determined by the immediate situation (i.e., proximal experiences). Humans, however, seem able to psychologically break out from their

immediate activities. Hence, in a given context, place and frame, the person's mind can also wander through other experiences (or provinces of meaning), that is, engage in distal experiences; at this moment, the core of the person's attention is not the here-and-now. In that sense, distal experiences are imagination (Vygotski, 2011), because imagination is mediated, and it allows exploring the past, the future and alternative possibilities. We distinguish five types of distal experiences.

a) Past distal experiences
Distal experiences include remembering a former proximal experience. The previous proximal experience, within an activity, migrates via remembering into a new context, and is brought alive within the new context in the act of remembering. Remembering is a dynamic, mediated and creative process (Bartlett, 1995; Wagoner, in press; Wertsch, 2011), mediated by many cultural processes (Wagoner & Gillespie, in press). A memorial, for example, is designed to bring distal experiences into the present (Murakami & Middleton, 2006; Murakami, 2012).

b) Future distal experiences
Distal experiences can also be imaginings of future places, activities and experiences, such as possible courses of actions in a situation of bifurcation (Sato & Valsiner, 2010). Any activity which is goal-directed comprises future distal experiences; also, many daydreams are oriented towards the future.

c) Alternative experiences
Distal experiences also include alternative presents, for instance about what would have happened if one would be somewhere else, or might happen in another place, or in a counterfactual reality (Byrne, 2005). These distal experiences include 'what if' experiences (Abbey & Valsiner, 2004; Fuhrer & Josephs, 1998; Valsiner, 2003).

d) The voices of others
The human mind is also populated by the voices of others, usually friends and family, but also voices from the mass media (Hermans & Salgado, 2010). This happens when, for example, someone imagines what another person might think about their actions, or when they take others' person's perspective upon their actions (Gillespie, 2006, 2012). In that moment of awareness, at the level of psychological experience, the person is having an experience disconnected from their immediate activity, and thus, a distal experience.

d) Cultural experiences
Finally, distal experiences also include fiction and the arts, such as entering in the world of a movie; here, these are the result of semiotic distancing and guidance (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2014; Zittoun, 2012b, 2013a). Moreover such cultural experiences can give a point of experience outside of immediate activity, enabling distancing from proximal here-and-now experience.

INTEGRATING EXPERIENCES

Our proposition is that humans move through society, encountering a diversity of proximal experiences, and that they bring to these experiences a range of distal experiences. And thus, somewhat independently of the body, the mind moves between distal experiences, which interact with the immediate proximal experiences. This combination of proximal and distal experiences constitutes the dialogicality of human mind (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Marková, 2003, 2006; Zittoun & Grossen, 2012; Zittoun, 2014a). Not only is experience in a given immediate experience mediated by signs, it is not completely determined by the perceptual field. Humans bring distal experiences, knowledge and ideas from other contexts, into the immediate context. How can these dynamics of linking experience be described, and what do they allow?

We propose that human movement, that is bodies and minds moving between societally structured experiences, can explain both the differentiation and integration of experiences (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2013; Martin & Gillespie, 2010). The basic idea is that humans move within society and culture, they move from one context to another and that each context socializes them into a different set of experiences. Over the course of such movement through society, individuals accumulate experiences belonging to different contexts, that is, they have internalized experiences from across the society. Moving between contexts not only enables differentiating experiences, but also integrating these experiences, such that experiences from other times and places (distal experiences) can enter into immediate experiences, for example, creating an association, a reverie, or self-reflection. Moreover, distal experiences can be transformed through proximal experience, and also, this might lead to a more general transformation of values and beliefs.

Moving into very new places, or changing contexts, or having one's context changed, creates experiences of rupture and a progressive adjustment to the newness of the situation. This includes typically what has been called socialization (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990), the internalization of new values and meanings (Valsiner, 2007), with all their consequence in terms of possibilities to act, sense-making and identity (Zittoun & Perret-Clermont, 2009; Zittoun, 2012a). How people move through places, and learn to deal with new places while leaving previous places behind, has been largely studied by social psychology and cultural historical approaches (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Although bodies are always bound into one place at a time, minds are free to move between experiences of places and contexts. The domains of experience within which the mind can travel are not isomorphic with the places within which the body is or has been located; nevertheless, these domains of experience are likely to be constrained by embodied positioning within society. Human imagination is also free from temporal constraints (one can think about the future, then recent past, then immediate future, then futures imagined in the past which never came true). Moreover, while the

body can only be in one place and time, the mind can, by moving between experiences from other places and times, bring together distal places and times into the immediate place and time (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2013; Valsiner, 1998).

Integrating proximal and distal experiences can take three main forms: (1) lateral integration, (2) vertical integration, and (3) intersubjective integration.

a) Lateral integration
Lateral integration refers to all the dynamics which bring two spheres of experiences closer together, and it has three main forms: simple associations, uses of resources, or temporal guidance.

First, lateral integration associates different experiences based on patterns observed by Aristotle, Mill, Wundt and James (1890), namely, similarity (such as likening an experience to a film scene or associating one's boss with one's parent), opposites (such as 'big-small' or 'up-down') and contiguity (such as 'food-eat' or 'sea-swim'). Associations can also be based on emotional qualities, semantic aspects, or relational aspects (similar configuration of relation, things, problems, etc.) (Bruner, 1990; Ricoeur, 2003; Tisseron, 2013; Zittoun, 2004).

A distal experience might be a memory of a previous event, a future imagination of a specific event, or an utterance by someone else reporting a specific event. In each such case there is a distillation of a specific event into, usually a narrative structure, which moves beyond its original context into new contexts. These moves can be more or less conscious or logical, and more or less intentional and emotionally laden (Freud, 2001; Zittoun, 2011). For instance, when a person finds some resemblance between a teacher and a parent, he or she might bring into the situation emotions and expectations addressed to the parent, and now project them on to the teacher, beyond his or her will, which gives the situation to a specific emotional quality. This has been classically called *transference* (Devereux, 1967; Freud, 1978).

Another lateral integration is the more intentional use of knowledge from one situation to another one. In learning sciences, this has been addressed in terms of *knowledge transfer* and has been widely debated (e.g., Beach, 1999; Perkins & Salomon, 1994; Säljö, 2003; Seel, 2012). From a more pragmatic stance, we propose to consider that, in some conditions, people *use* various bits of meaning and experience obtained in one context in new contexts, as resources to achieve their aims (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010b; Zittoun & Brinkmann, 2012). The notion of *semiotic resource* thus designates people's use of social knowledge and social representations, from one sphere of experience, into another one.

A particular case is that of uses of symbolic resources, which are cultural elements that have a strong fictional component (Zittoun, Duveen, Gillespie, Ivinson, & Psaltis, 2003; Zittoun, 2007). Typically, when people establish a link between a distal past cultural experience and the present, they use it as a

symbolic resource, as when the memory of a poem illuminates the beauty of a landscape.

A third type of lateral integration is that that comes from the dialogic dynamics between experiences referring to different moments in time. On the one side, examining the present in the light of the past, or the future expected in the past, might lead to diverse type of reflexive evaluation of the present, or to transform memories of the past (Zittoun, 2008). On the other side, linking distal future experiences to the present can guide and promote new actions and ideas. For instance, imagining becoming a teacher might lead a young woman to choose reading certain books. This latter form of integration play a key role in development, and it has been called "feed-forward" dynamics (Valsiner, 2007) or more generally *prolepsis* (Cole, 1996, 2007).

b) Vertical integration: Abstraction and generalisation
A second way of integrating experiences comes from the use of resources, or the creation of semiotic means, which encompass a large number of spheres of experience. This can be done through distancing and/or overgeneralization. We can distinguish two dynamics.

First, some generalized experiences refer to moods and feelings which do not pertain to any specific event or narrative, but become more general emotional coloration or moods with transpire through diverse experiences (Valsiner, 1998, 2005, 2007). For instance, people living in a country at war might develop a general feeling of anxiety which colors all aspects of daily life as well as dream life (Beradt, 2004). With Valsiner, we call them *overgeneralized feelings*.

Second, people can learn general guiding principles and ideas from experiences and life situations, which have been called "personal life philosophies" (Valsiner, 2007; Zittoun et al., 2013). These can be some general beliefs which then guide action through many different experiences, or take more narrative forms when they use semiotic mediations, such as for instance when the saying "after the rain comes the sun" becomes charged with life experience (or common sense in a noble sense, Marková, 2013).

c) Intersubjective integration
Associations between immediate and distal experiences can also be intersubjective (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010a; Gillespie, 2010b), in the sense of associating the different experiences of participants, or rather roles, within a social act. This would occur when, for example, in the immediate experience of buying something one has a distal experience associated with selling, or, when in the immediate experience of winning one has a distal experience of losing, maybe manifesting in sympathy for those who lost. The vicarious joy that people experience from giving a gift, in so far as it comes from emotionally participating in receiving the gift, is also a form of intersubjective integration (Martin & Gillespie, 2010). This integration crosses the self-other boundary, and thus there is emergence of meaning (Glăveanu & Gillespie, in press), as self becomes aware of a new aspect of the situation. This integration is termed 'intersubjective' because it is an integration of

perspectives within a social act, where the subjectivities of the participants within the social act interpolate one another.

Intersubjective integration relates directly to what Mead (1934) called significant symbols, and thus it is also a basis for mental functions (Gillespie, 2006, 2007). Specifically, intersubjective integration is the basis of two psychological movements (Gillespie, 2006): first, it enables people to 'step out' of immediate experience, to see themselves from the standpoint of another within the social act, and thus reflect upon and regulate their own activity from the standpoint of others. Second, it enables people to 'step into' the immediate experience of others, to participate, at an experiential level, in their activities and the consequences of their activities. This psychological movement of stepping into, or participating in, the experiences of others is central to our enjoyment of stories, films, and it is also the basis of empathy and sympathy.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

As people move bodily through places, they also move with their mind through distal experiences. Trajectories in the social world and in mind are not isomorphic, each can take contrasting routes and move at different speeds. Hence, migrants can actually live in one country and be, at the level of mind and experience, still live in another country (Gillespie, Kadianiki, & O'Sullivan-Lago, 2012; Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Through their diversity of experiences, and within each sphere, people's experience becomes more differentiated and specific. But also, because of their movement in and through experiences, these become partly integrated, enabling the movement of mind between these experiences (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2013; Werner & Kaplan, 1963). This raises two guiding questions.

First, how does physical and psychological movement, as described, lead to ontogenesis, that is, human development? We have proposed that these movements, which allow lateral integration, generalization and self-reflection, allow for the enrichment of experience, as well as the transformation of memories as well as the definition of futures. More specific questions include: How do distal experiences interact with immediate experiences? What consequences does this interaction have both for the psychological life of the person and for their life choices within a given context?

Second, what tensions arise between immediate and distal experiences, and how are these dealt with? Because of the nature of human condition in the world and in time, integration is always only local and partial. Different contexts pull people in different directions, and people struggle to integrate the disparate meanings. Thus, people's experience is fragmented, and how people behave at work, at home, in their wilder dreams or in formal ceremonies is (usually) quite distinct. We do not mean to imply that human development "should" tend towards more integration, as some normative developmental models suggest (Erikson, 1959). Rather, we view the heterogeneity of the self as an adaptive solution to the heterogeneity of the social world (Aveling & Gillespie, 2008). Consequently, because of the

inherent diversity and richness of human experience, diverse spheres of experiences might be in tension. Thus, we are interested in what happens when, in a given proximal experiences, people draw on incompatible distal experiences. What tensions can occur, and how can these be dealt with, if not resolved?

METHODOLOGY

The model we have presented and the data we will present arise out of more than ten years of collaborative work, which has included an ongoing analysis of a single case study that is in the public domain. We chose this data set initially because we wanted rich detailed data from a single individual over several years. Studying a single individual over the course of years has been shown to be a powerful methodology for unpacking the way in which contexts and people interact (Gillespie, 2005; Martin, 2013; Zittoun & De Saint-Laurent, In press). We also chose the data so that is publicly available so that it could form the basis for collaboration, triangulation and critique (Gillespie & Zittoun, in press; Gillespie, 2005, 2010a; Zittoun & Gillespie, 2012).

The data is a diary (or rather several diaries comprising about 250 thousand words) collected as part of the Mass Observation Archive (Sheridan, 2000). Mass-Observation was established in Britain in 1937. People were invited to keep daily diaries about their lives and their communities and to respond to regular surveys so as to contribute to a 'people's anthropology,' aiming at documenting the experience of everyday life (Bloome, Sheridan, & Street, 1993). Several hundred ordinary people across Britain volunteered, and Mass-Observation has archived these diaries and survey responses. The diaries are kept in the library at the University of Sussex and they are available for free to interested researchers. We focused our work on the analysis on the case of diarist 5324, who we have called "June." An enthusiastic contributor, she documented her experience of the war almost daily from 1939, when she was aged 18, until its end in 1945. We chose diarist 5324 because it is a very comprehensive diary, and because her sister also submitted a diary, thus enabling us to have a point of triangulation (Flick, 1992).

Our reason for insisting on a rich and publicly available data set is because of a belief that our current mode of science privileges data collection over data analysis, and thus that we have accumulated 'data mountains' which have been insufficiently analyzed. Moreover, data has tended to become something privately held by researchers to the detriment of science. A founding principle of science is that data is shared (Ziman, 1991), so that scientists can argue over the same data set. Unfortunately, in much social science and psychology, researchers argue against one another, each using their own datasets.

Multiple scientists working on the same data can prevent the fragmentation of theory and lead towards theoretical integration and the emergence of new theory (Cornish, Gillespie, & Zittoun, 2013; Cornish, Zittoun, & Gillespie, 2007; Gillespie, Zittoun, & Cornish, 2006; Zittoun, Baucal, Cornish, & Gillespie,

2007; Zittoun et al., 2003; Zittoun, Gillespie, & Cornish, 2008). With that purpose, this chapter brings together the lines of theoretical advancements developed by us, both through our past joint work (also together with Flora Cornish, Charis Psaltis, Emma-Louise Aveling), and independently, or through other collaborations.

DATA CODING

For this particular chapter, we choose three sequences of the diary which we made public and that correspond to different moments of the war. We treat June's writing as externalization of her flow of consciousness, and we analyze it using our knowledge of the social and historical context (Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010a; Zittoun & Gillespie, 2012). The analysis was done independently by us, and evolved as we developed the present theoretical frame (Valsiner, 2014b).

Strictly speaking, a diary allows a person to report experience occurred beyond the actual location of the writing act; in that sense, any reported fact is a distal experience. However, for the purpose of this analysis, we considered reported places in which activities were described as proximal experiences. We treated as distal experiences those that were external to the described activity. We ended up coding places, activities, distal experiences, the voices of others (the basis of social recognition), as well as signs of self-reflexivity and explicit integration.

The sequences selected in this chapter are those that illustrate best the dynamics we wish to highlight, and the ones that are required to understand the transformation of June. The presentation follows chronology. We present distal experiences in *italic*, and reflexive experiences in **bold**.

INTRODUCING THE ANALYSIS

In order to explore the interacting dynamics of bodies and minds moving in society we follow the trajectory of June through three contexts over six years. First, at the beginning of the war, June is 18 years old, and she lives with her elder sister and mother in Norfolk. Norfolk is on the East coast of England, and near the sea, that is, on the first line of German air raids. The family runs a garage which sells petrol and other goods. Second, as the war progresses, June leaves home. Then, between 1941 and 1943, June works on a number of farms as a gardener. Third, in 1944 and 1945, due to a health condition, June ends the war living in a hostel and working in a shop.

In order to understand June's transformation, we focus on two important aspects of her experience as young woman in a country at war: first, her relation to the war and its demands on people as citizens; second, her relation to men. Both aspects are deeply related to identity, meaning and actions, both are at the meeting of the demands and constraints of the societal environment, and more personal needs and desires.

The following analysis is organized in three sections, corresponding to the three contexts. Each section starts with a brief presentation of the context, followed by commented data related to war and womanhood, then concludes with a synthetic analysis highlighting movements, tensions raised, and how these are solved.

CONTEXT 1: JUNE'S FAMILY HOME 1939-1941

BACKGROUND

June introduces herself in the first diary in the following way: "(Miss) Judith Hall, The Garage, Snettisham, Norfolk, Garage assistant, 18 yrs." She lives at home with her sister and mother and works in the family garage. Initially she focuses her reports on observations which she thinks will be useful to Mass Observation (such comments she overhears about the war and whether or not people are carrying around their gas-masks), but over time she gradually documents the details of her everyday activities and relationships.

Table 1: Overview of June's home context

Places	**Activities**	**People**
Family home	Cooking, sewing, cleaning, reading, preparing for war, enduring aerial bombardment	Mother, sister
Street	Chatting	Neighbours, friends
Garage	Selling petrol, then bikes	Mechanic, customers, tradesmen
Beach house	Swimming, gardening, tennis, hiking	Sister, mother, friends
Town	Shopping, borrowing books, going to tea house, walking, cinema	Sister, friends, boys
School/college	Going to educational classes	Teacher, sister

Table 2: Overview of distal experiences intruding into the home context

Distal Experiences	
Past experiences	Experiences of previous generations "War to end of wars" Having been introduced to young man
Quotes	Friends, Family, Teachers, German soldiers, "We" England, France, Bevin's call
Symbolic resources	Government leaflets, films, books, radio shows
Future possibilities	Impending war, likely invasion, German victory

	Being bombed and/or gassed Friends dying Being killed, losing a limb Becoming “armed forces” OR “teacher” OR “gardener” Becoming a “decent woman” OR “becoming that kind of girl” OR Becoming a ‘spinster’
Generalised mood	Foreboding, impending doom

Table 1 provides an overview of June’s home context, it is organised in terms of places, with different people being part of different activities in different places – each cultivating different immediate experiences. Hence in her home context June experiences a range of routine activities in familiar places – home, the beach house, the street, and the shop. There she meets significant others, her family, friends, neighbours, and teachers, who constitute a well-established community.

Table 2 provides an overview of June’s distal experiences. These are not organised in terms of places because distal experiences are defined by migrating between places, they are intrusions into a situated activity from the outside.

JUNE’S INITIAL RELATION TO THE WAR

The war begins, for June, with preparations, such as blacking out sources of light (so that bombers could not locate cities and villages), preparing a bomb shelter, and managing provisions. Powerful distal experiences include the imagination of friends dying. The war goes badly at first, with the German’s occupying Paris, and June’s generalized anxiety is evident, for example, in descriptions of her house cracking and crumbling due to her neighbours constructing a bomb shelter.

Once the initial adjustments have been made, life settles back into a routine. Consider her reflections made on New Year’s Eve at the end of 1939:

> Tues Dec 31st. Who is sorry to see the last of this grim & anxious year? We have certainly lived history this year. How we [some overwriting] have wondered & puzzled what the news in the next week would bring. *I’ll admit I thought the war was practically done, with us the vanquished when France went under. For a little while I even felt glad that the war was going to be over sooner than we hoped*. […] **How glad I am now that as the last hours of the old year are fading that nothing of the sort happened &** I really feel that we have turned the corner & can really win but we must not be impatient. We have got used to being at war now, & the inconveniences of the petty annoyances such as the blackout & rations have become a habit. We don’t stir at night when we hear the guns & Nastie.

June uses the pronoun “we” regularly, firmly placing her own motivation within that of her community, namely, the country engaged in war effort. The main

distal experience is her own previous feeling that England would lose the war (indicated with italics). The use of "I" in the distal experience marginalises it, making it a lonely experience. These distal thoughts about being vanquished are resisted firmly in the present (reflexive resistance indicated with bold), with the repeated use of "we" indicating patriotism.

As June continues her new year's reflection, she becomes more personal, and reflects upon the changes which have occurred in her own life:

> I would not have believed that a day would come when the petrol pumps would lay empty, B [June's sister] & I would actually have summer *Sundays off from work & most marvellous of all a weeks holiday together in August.* **The latter was full of compensation for the war's dullness. No not really, I will disown that statement.**

This excerpt reveals an ironic theme that recurs throughout the war: although June firmly believes that the war is abominable, but that aspect of the war is distant and the fact is that for her it has positive consequences. She recalls her recent past experience of closing of the petrol pumps and enjoying the summer, which compensates "the war's dullness." By "dullness" June is referring to the lack of business, both a problem for her community, and the general lack of eventfulness that the war has led to – as all the action is distal. June's enjoyable summer experience comes into conflict with her unquestionable belief that the war is bad. As she cannot put her own interests ahead of the horrors of war, she rebukes her former statement, and writes, "No not really, I will disown that statement."

June's relation to the war changed fundamentally in 1941. On the 16th of March 1941, the labour Minister Ernest Bevin made a radio broadcast in which he called for women aged 20 and 21 to enter the workforce, to sustain the military and industrial machine, and thus to free a man to enter the army. June, at the time aged 20, knew that she would be classified at best in a "non-essential trade" or at worst "unoccupied," which would mean that she would be forced into war-work.

June's immediate response is accepting, and turns toward thinking about which of the war related services would suit her most:

> Sun March 16th. B & I went for a long walk & discussed Bevins [sic] broadcast. I appear to be in the first age group of woman conscripts to register on April 19th. *I am much against the thought of work in a factory as the dirt & noise* ***would send me silly****. Land work* ***I dismiss as too hard*** *(not to mention dull & demoralising) The womens [sic] forces appear to be as* ***tempting as anything*** *as nursing* ***would make me sick****, as the work is so hard, messy & embarrising* [sic].

Bevin's broadcast creates an explosion of distal futures for June. She imagines herself working in a factory, on the land producing food, as a nurse and in the "womens forces." The women's forces, which are June's immediate preference, refer to the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), the Women's

Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) and the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). These choices are both dangerous and exciting. Working in a factory or on the land was seen to be safer. Women enlisted in the women's services could be sent oversees to work with front line forces, and if posted at home were most likely to be within a military establishment that would be a high priority for German bombers. Hence June's decision becomes a play of evaluating various distal future experiences, fed with available representations of women's roles.

June's community is part of her meaning-making process. She frequently dialogues, in her diary, with the voices of her mother, her sister, and friends of the family. These voices provide a very stable and powerful structure of recognition which offers her little social recognition for being "brave & patriotic," indeed, if anything, they offer her recognition for being clever in wrangling out of Bevin's call. Consider, for example, June's engagement with the voice of her mother:

> Sun March 16th. This evening Mother went clean off the deep end over the business & we had the biggest row ever. I am not surprised by the new order as the press has said it would come & I thought the 20's would be first, but *Mother has persisted that women were different from men & could not be conscripted. She seems to dread me going although in a way* **I do not mind. The war is pretty dull here. I should not join the services if it had not been for this because of the stigma of man-chasing attatched [sic] to it if one volunteered, & because usually the sort of girl that goes in is what I consider rather brainless**, *& also Mother would not have let me if I had wanted to. (I never did*. **It did not occur to me.)**

This excerpt ostensibly reports a "row" between June and her mother. Specifically, June's mother has a more traditional conception of womanhood, namely, that women should not be conscripted, or maybe rather that decent women should not be conscripted. On her side, June, who has grown up without a father and working in a garage selling petrol and cigarettes (traditionally male activities), has a more progressive view of women. Also, June finds her life at home "pretty dull" and is keen for some excitement.

However, the boundary between June's perspective and her mother's is not clear cut. Although she opposes the perspective of her mother, June does so in a very hesitating way. For example, she says "in a way" I do not mind, and conveys a double uncertainty in the expression "but somehow I don't think I want to." Also, when she writes, "the sort of girl that goes in is what I consider rather brainless," June seems to adopt the representation which she attributes to her mother and her immediate community. Hence, it is not only her mother who looks down upon the women's forces, but June herself (as revealed by the use of "I").

Also, June's sister, aunt and several people in the village all encourage June to avoid getting involved in dangerous war work. June's sister introduces a distal future experience, saying that "*she does not mind getting killed, but she*

objects to coming home with a leg or arm off" and June reflexively responds: "**I had not thought of that!**"

June's mother, sister and community encourage her to seek exemption by taking up an essential trade, so as to be protected from conscription. This path of action gains saliency after June discusses it with a schoolmaster who she seemed quite smitten by:

> Friday March 21st.The soundest advice I have been able to get hold off yet. […] We discussed my capabilities & *he thought teaching was about the easiest & with short hours & not likely to be diverted to other war work like many things for girls of 20. He was the most sympathetic person I have come across yet over the business as he also is avoiding militarism for himself. (His motto is every man for himself & let the other fellow win the war)* **This seems to be me [sic] an excellent idea. Teaching, I mean.** *He condemmed [sic] the womens [sic] services down to the ground & was most against me going in with "that type of girl." […] He really seems very worried about me & is determined to think of some wangle over the business.* **This rather amuses me as we have been listening to his beautiful pro-war lectures for 6 months & now it comes to the point of helping to win it he is going to let someone else do that.**

The schoolmaster voice intrudes into Junes thinking, encouraging her to become a teacher. The reasons he gives are that it is an easy job, with short hours and a job which is sure to provide exemption from war work. The motivation for avoiding the women's services again goes beyond issues of safety, and also becomes a moral issue. Here again we see an implied contrast between the representation of "that type of girl" and "decent" women. "That type of girl" engages in "man chasing" and is "brainless." Given that this contrast comes through not only in June's own words, but also in her reported words for her mother and the schoolmaster, we can assume that it corresponds to a powerful social representation.

The above excerpt is interesting because it shows June in a complex dialogical relation between the immediate demands and recognition of her community and her distal imaginings about an exciting future in the women's services. On the one hand the voice of the schoolmaster is persuasive, yet she holds her distance from his instrumentalism. She reports his cynical motto – "every man for himself & and let the other fellow win the war" and then writes "This seems to be me an excellent idea." The sentence contains a grammatical error, indicating some possible ambivalence, or the coexistence of conflicting meanings in June's mind (Abbey & Valsiner, 2004). However, both readings ("this seems to be me" and "this seems to be an excellent idea") invite the interpretation that she agrees with the schoolmaster's motto. The added correction "Teaching I mean" is meant to clarify that it is teaching and not leaving the fighting to others that is an excellent idea. June is worried that her reader will think that she is unpatriotic and that she agrees with the motto. She wants to avoid this interpretation, and so she makes her correction, which implicitly implies that she does not agree with the motto. Her criticism of the

schoolmaster continues in the fact that she recognises the contradiction between the schoolmasters "beautiful pro-war lectures" and his own selfishness. Yet, despite these attempts to distance herself from this motto, it is, as we shall see, the motto that June chooses to live by. Indeed, when describing the schoolmaster, she slips that he is "also" avoiding militarism, thus revealing her changed relation to the war effort.

After her discussion with the schoolmaster, June writes in search of a teaching job, while acknowledging to her diary she could not imagine herself doing so. However, her attitude toward the distal future experience of teaching is ambivalent, writing: "**I suppose it could be done if they will have me**." June's cynicism extends to other occupations. Further motivated by the desire to get an exemption, she also writes to the Women's Gardening Organisation:

> Sunday March 23rd I Wrote & offered myself as a garden student to Womens [sic] Gardening Organisation *How I adored gardening & wanted a gardening career.* I had some experience but thought after a course would qualify better for a job. **As a matter of fact I hate gardening & had never done a stroke before the war**

June's initial enthusiasm for the women's services has evaporated. She is now willing to do something she hates simply in order to avoid Bevin's call. Instead of gaining pride through contributing to the war effort, she now seems to get pride in finding new ways to gain exemption. Presumably, June's mother, sister, friends and the handsome schoolmaster, would all offer June some form of positive social recognition for these efforts. However, June recognises that she is being as contradictory as the schoolmaster, writing: "**Good job everyone is not like us**." This is, in effect, an admission that she has decided to live by the motto of the schoolmaster.

BEING A YOUNG WOMAN

The question of June's relation to war is connected to her role as woman, or specifically how she can conceive herself as woman in this context of war. As seen above, her community seems to promote the representation that there is "that sort of girl," an adventurous and brainless woman that June should avoid becoming. In contrast, thus, June and her mother, teacher, sister and community promote another social representation of woman, much more "decent," which appears in the following sequences. When a boy invites her for a walk, the decision is mediated by a variety of voices:

> [Tuesday 2nd April 1940] *One invited me to go for a walk with him this evening,* **but I refused because (a) I don't go for walks with anyone unless I knew then well & (b) I thought he was married & too old. (over 35)**

June has to decide whether a possible distal experience, going for a walk with a man, will happen. She calls upon different semiotic resources: on the one hand, probably an echo of her mother's voice, the principle according which one does not go for walks with someone she does not know; on the other, a

more direct distance upon her personal and proximal experience of not liking him. These two distal experiences point toward only one solution: the future of the walk is rejected. Doing so, June becomes a “decent woman” according to her community’s norms.

Other norms participating to the representation of the “decent woman” appear along the diary: women work hard, take care of their business, clean, and cook. Directly relevant for June, they marry young, are aware of age and social differences, go out with men they already know, and don’t drink alcohol. Reversely, at the horizon – as a distal, imaginary figure – floats the shadow of “that sort of girl” who, adventurous, goes out with men out of marriage and drinks alcohol. On the other side, the “decent woman” is bounded by the shadow of “the spinster,” a distal experience mentioned through a discussion with a neighbour (“a spinster of 30”), or as possible future for her sister Betty.

Here as well, the meaning of being a woman depends on the structure of recognition within June’s community. Being a young woman at the beginning of the war seems, for June, bounded by values and representation promoted by the close members of her community. These images, which eventually will become semiotic resources, shape distal imagination of herself in the future, and strongly promote becoming a “decent woman.”

This image projected in the future has consequences in June’s present choices. The community constructs a definition of the situation whereby June pursuing an exciting and patriotic future would imply falling off the path of decency. While June is tempted by the distal experiences of contributing to the war effort by joining the women’s services, she has internalised her community’s definition of womanhood. Given the scornful attitude that her immediate community have toward the “men-chasing” women that join the women’s forces, and their insistence that she seeks exemption, June does not have the dialogical resources to be able to say that she would like to volunteer, for to do so would be tantamount to confessing that is attracted by a route that opens up the possibility of becoming “that type of girl.”

ANALYSIS OF THE HOME CONTEXT

The war and Bevin’s call disrupted the routine of the family context. As people’s lives are called to change, June has to imagine possible futures for herself, treading a path between two powerful semantic fields. On the one hand there is the national war effort which June is asked to contribute, it is the patriotic option, and it offers (as a distal experience) a degree of excitement for June on a personal level. On the other hand there is the representation circulating in June’s community that the kind of women who go for military related services are “brainless” and “man chasing” – with June and her community clearly encouraging June to be a “decent” woman. These tensions trigger a series of dynamics.

First, June gives an important weight to her community’s social recognition; in that sense, their judgement, as proximal experience, has the power to mute her shy imagination of herself as joining the women’s service, or more simply,

to prevent a full distal experience to develop. Hence a contradiction between competing spheres can simply *constrain imagination*. However, it does not mean that the wanting for the forbidden route disappears.

Another contradiction occurs between June's understanding of the drama that war is and her immediate benefit of it, namely, more free time for leisure. We might say that June's pleasure and wanting more excitement are not socially recognized. However, we might also make the hypothesis that these create a tension which reveals itself indirectly. Hence, the correction she does when writing about the teacher's motto – let every man does as he pleases – could be seen as revealing her own prevented desires. Also, June's cynical presentation of her lies when applying to become a teacher and gardener can be seen as a form of distancing from a situation she has not chosen, turning her aggressiveness against herself rather than against those of her community which did not let her choose a more satisfying route. In that sense, *lapsus* and *irony* (as well as humour) appear as semiotic strategy for disguising socially refused desires or imagination of self – or expressing them in a harmless way (Freud, 1963).

Another dynamic can be observed in the tension between June's immediate and distal experiences. During war, June is exposed to state propaganda, through the ARP documentation, radio broadcasts, and posters. At the beginning of the war, June creates interesting dialogical tensions between these, which allow her to keep some distance from these. Hence, she remains critical of the utility of the ARP documents. Elsewhere we have shown how June also opposes competing British and German radio broadcasts, knowing that all are biased (Zittoun, Cornish, Gillespie, & Aveling, 2008); in such cases, dialogical tensions between distal experiences create the springboard for *distancing and reflexivity*.

June demonstrates less distancing and reflexivity in relation to the voices of her family and friends about seeking exemption from war work; they are a powerful chorus. In the face of these saturated representations June cannot find a standpoint for resistance, and soon, she herself *ventriloquates* their voice (Valsiner, 2002a). Hence, in terms of semiotic dynamics, contradictory elements in the context, though places, might become itself a trigger for distancing; semiotic saturation, in contrast, diffuses and might actually lead to change without awareness and beyond one's will – influence in the most common sense (but see Marková, 2011).

CONTEXT 2: A GARDENER IN GLOUCESTER 1941-43

BACKGROUND

June's request to become a teacher amounts to nothing, but she is invited, by the Women's Gardening Organisation, to do a one month training course. June is uncertain whether gardening is an essential trade, but it at least moves her out of the category "presently unoccupied" and thus gives her a chance at exemption from war. Accordingly, June takes the opportunity and

starts training to become a gardener. A year later, having moved job four times, June is in charge of a greenhouse growing tomatoes.

Leaving home and becoming a gardener constitutes a significant change of context and social position for June (see Table 3). In this new context life is mainly organized around land work. Still, it is differentiated in different places where various activities take place: working in the fields with other young women, visiting the next village and discussing with villagers, going for walks with young men, spending some time in the lodging with Ms M and the girls, going to the library to borrow books, and still reading and writing her diary and seeing her sister. Thus June leaves her immediate community (mother, sister, and friends) and finds a new immediate community (employers, work-mates, boyfriends), and changes her position within: she moves from being the younger sister at home to being independent and earning a salary.

Table 3: Overview of June's context as gardener

Places	**Activities**	**People**
Lodging	Cleaning, reading, enduring aerial bombardment	Other girls, Mr M & Mrs M
Fields	Digging, gardening, harvesting, etc.	Other girls
Public places	Dancing, flirting	Other girls, men, soldiers
Country side	Going for walks, biking	Men, villagers
Town	Shopping, borrowing books, going to tea house, walking	Sister, men, soldiers

Table 4: Overview of distal experiences intruding into the gardening context

Distal Experiences	
Past experiences	Home (community, pre-war) Being 16, being 18 Previous meetings with men
Quotes	Teacher, mother
Symbolic resources	Poetry, fiction, "digging for victory" propaganda, gardening books
Future possibilities	Future meetings with men Not being young anymore A future of not-decent-anymore
Generalised mood	Excitement Poetic contemplation Pride Love/passion

There are also continuities between June's new context and her previous family context. Memories of the family context regularly intrude into June's thoughts (see Table 4). And, sometimes, when June has a free day her sister comes to visit, and they engage in familiar activities such as going for a walk, window shopping, and drinking tea in the village. Also, there is continuity in the shortage of goods and the regular aerial bombardment. However, the meaning of the aerial bombardment changes, moving from something exceptional and anxiety-provoking to something much more routine.

The general mood of this context is one of excitement and discovery of a new community, new activities as a gardener and the satisfaction they can bring, and new opportunities to meet young men.

BECOMING A 'LAND GIRL'

Before training to be a gardener, June had little experience of gardening: she had helped taking care of the family garden at their Beach house, picking apples, making jam, and taking care of the lawn. In early March 1941, she described it as difficult and tiring. When considering land work after Bevin's broadcast, she also described it as "too hard" and "dull and demoralising." However, soon after beginning work, we find that she has quite a different relation to gardening:

> Monday 21st April Gardening all day. **I love it. I would not have beleived [sic] it.** *At home it just was not any fun & so full & it seemed dirtier. […] After the 6 mths I shall be trained & be an undergardener, if I still like it & will probably then have a new post. It rests a great deal on where I am landed then & in what company I am.* **I am glad I did not go teaching. This is much nicer, so far**. I have been here a week. The war has brought me here. **Some good things come out of the evilest.**

This excerpt contains a dialogue between June's previous distal attitudes towards gardening and her present experience. She says that she loves gardening and that she "would not have believed it," presumably referring to her previous comment that she hated gardening. Her statement that "I am glad I did not go teaching" is a dialogical response to her previous decision to become a teacher. This repositioning of gardening as a favourable activity could be interpreted as a form of identity protection. There is probably an attempt to make the most of where she is and what she is doing. But, as we will see, there is a deep conversion to being a gardener. For example, at the beginning of each diary book, June writes her name, age, address, and occupation. Up till now her self-proclaimed occupation was "garage assistant," but in July 1941 she writes "gardening apprentice."

June's movement into the social position of gardener does not simply affect her identity, it also shapes her embodied habitus. For example, she says: "I am getting an anti-weed complex & can't hardly walk by one without pulling it out." Similarly, up to this point, June never comments very much on the nature or gardens, but now new comments appear. For example, when commenting

on a boring bus journey she adds “but enjoyed scenery esp. as bulb fields are now a blaze of colour.” Also, she talks about her gardening activities with an increasingly differentiated vocabulary, for example, referring to “weeding and tying up,” “digging up tulips,” and “inspecting ploughing.” Moreover, her leisure time also becomes oriented towards agriculture, and June begins to read botany books in her free time. She says that she finds “it quite interesting when I am alone cutting up flowers & thinking about plant families, root systems & all sorts of things.” Also, we’ve shown elsewhere that her reading of fiction and poems infuse her perception of nature, which she apprehend in a more poetic and aesthetic way (Zittoun, Cornish, et al., 2008). Thus June is using books as symbolic resources both in a practical way, in order to further her becoming a gardener, and in a more imaginary way, to transform the quality of her experience.

June becomes proud of being a gardener. Bella, June’s elder sister, obviously occupies an important place within June’s structure of recognition. Thus when Bella visits June for a weekend, June writes in her diary: “then took B [sister] to look at ‘my’ garden. Showed her with great pride.”

Figure 1: British ‘Dig for victory’ propaganda poster

Eventually June gets social recognition for contributing to the war effort from her broader community. As she moves through her various jobs, she becomes increasingly involved in horticulture and growing various vegetables. Such activity was very much in line with the war effort. The government released many posters that exerted the British people to turn their gardens into vegetable gardens. The motivation behind such activity was to reduce the

need for importing food (which was being blockaded by German U-boats) and to free up boats and sailors for military operations. A series of posters appeared across the country encouraging people to "dig for victory." Because digging up one's lawn and turning it into a vegetable garden constitutes a very visible sacrifice, "digging for victory" became an overt sign of patriotism during the war (see Figure 1). This source of recognition is also evident in June's diary entry when she writes:

> Mon June 30th.We have set cauliflowers in the beds outside the dining room window & beetroot & carrots in the borders leaving to rockery where tulips have been. *Our "digging for victory" display.*

Although June is at times critical of the British propaganda (as indicated by her slightly sarcastic phrase "our 'digging for victory' display"), she has also absorbed it, and interprets her own actions through the distal imagery of the propaganda. Indeed she confesses that: "I feel I am responsible for more than a few peoples [sic] onion ration this winter." Such feelings are reinforced by her perception of the admiration that others have for her:

> Wed Oct 29th.**I must say it is pretty great being a land girl here**. *Everyone treats us as heroines especially the soldiers. Nothing but admiration is forthcoming from them & the villagers. esp during this cold weather. Many of the soldiers say they feel ashamed as they sit by & watch us work for we do far more than they. They are going for their breakfast as we go to work at 7. At dances T & I are immensely popular & I am sure it is because of our work as words of admiration about it come from all our partners.* **(It certainly is not our looks as I now weigh 10 stone & T does too.)**

The recognition that she gets from the soldiers and the villagers comes not simply from being hard working, but because that hard work is perceived within the context of the community at war. The hard work is understood not as selfish, but as self-sacrifice for the community. Sometimes, however, this immediate experience of pride and social recognition is tainted by the distal experience of having gone into gardening to avoid more dangerous work.

> Fri Nov 21st. Lunch at British Restaurant. *Lunch there is always amusing especially as us 3 "Land girls" get so much credit & undeserved praise. […] Today they gave us all an extra apple jack because we were land girls & doing such marvellous work. "I think your [sic] wonderful, espec. this weather. [no end quotation marks] Similar admiration is cooed from all quarters.* **We don't know whether to be embarised [sic] or feel smug. We all feel frauds anyway as we none of us would be doing it if it was not a case of conscription being in the air!**

The people in the restaurant provide social recognition, but, it clashes with the memory, from the previous context, of trying to avoid war work. June's thoughts about 'letting the other fellow win the war,' following Bevin broadcast, intrude to undermine, and hollow out, her immediate experience of pride and

social recognition. This excerpt is particularly interesting because it shows the contexts in which June has participated getting entangled, the contradictions between the contexts, which are in society, has become a contradiction within June's own thinking.

BECOMING WHAT TYPE OF GIRL?

As time passes, gardening itself becomes a routine, and her experiences outside of gardening become most salient, and especially her life as a young woman. Over a few months, June will engage in new experiences which will challenge the representation of the "decent woman."

June has new romantic encounters with men of a type she had not had in her home context. She starts to meet a wide range of boys after work and engages in light courting, yet not without hesitation, and under the gaze of her new community. Hence, there is A with whom she likes to talk and exchange cakes, and a milkman that invites June for a walk, and which she reluctantly accepts:

> Fri June 13th. Digging up tulips all day nearly. Evening the milkman stopped me & asked again to meet me at 7 & go for a walk. I thought it looked like rain & as he is so persistant [sic] I consented. I went at 7.15 & we walked about 2 miles across his fields & inspected his crops & ploughing. *We talked about farming, the weather, quarrying local stone, egg rationing, clothes rationing, my work, the village & me going home tomorrow. Not very interesting conversation & I did not much enjoy the walk.* **Why is it people I do not particularly fancy are always far more keen on me & persistant [sic] with their courting than people I have a pash [passion] for?** *This milkman cum farmer seems very smitten.* **I took good care he walked one side of the field & I the other & I insist it will remain so!** Not that he would be fast enough to catch a train*! The worst of it is all the village is talking about it.* It is such an event as the young man has never done any courting before & everyone is interested. **It must be the war!** *The village girls are not good enough I understand!*

June finds the conversation with the milkman disappointing and more generally she complains that men she fancies are not interested in her – a daring sentence immediately followed by June's comment on the fact that she kept honourable distance from the man. In her insistence "that it will remain so" June seems to call upon the values and rules promoted by her home community.

In the present situation, however, the community evaluating her actions with the young man are the people from the local village, who seem to wait like an impatient audience whether the young man will succeed with her. Interestingly, thus, June evaluates her action through the perspective of her distal home community (trying to remain a decent woman) and through the new proximal experience of the "villager's" perspective which encourages her flirting.

Although she resists that milkman, these competing voices seem to open a new ground: as June reports, “it must be the war” that pushes people more intensively towards each other. “It must be the war” might be reported speech as well as a generalized representation emerging as people have liminal encounters across the country, far from their home communities. This general representation, of a time of exception, will become an important semiotic resource for June as she has an increasing number of romantic encounters, especially her new “crush”:

> **Now an awful thing or is it?** On my way cycling back from S I picked up with a solder who rode with me to E. **He seemed so nice,** a French Canadian, & I made a date to meet him tonight. I did. We went for a cycle ride. We did not ride all the time but sat by roadside & talked. **Gee, he is nice!** *I am meeting him again tomorrow* (June 16th)

June expresses both simple activities (meeting a boy, going for a cycle ride, sitting and talking) but also her enthusiasm and high emotional involvement. The dialogical tension between different representations of womanhood is evident in the reflexive statement: “now an awful thing or is it?” Both the relationship and the tension continue, and the next day she engages in an intense dialogue to justify her pleasure in dating this young man:

> Tues June 17th. Working all day. Last 2 days a heat wave & too hot to move. Trying to keep in shady part of garden. I am sunburnt tonight. **I am also almost in love! Or is it in love with love?** *Ye Gods, what fools men do make of themselves!* [large ‘s’ in red pencil over text] I went out with my French Canadian soldier again tonight. He is sweet. **What it is to be young & foolish! It certainly is good for morale in wartime to be made love to! I am not quite sure if I am happy about it or not. It is pleasant. It is fun**. He is nice & a gentle-man**. I would not go out with him if I did not feel safe & trust him. He is lonely & so am I. We are both from home & friends. How silly life is!** *I am meeting him Thursday. I am not quite sure whether I promised to go back to Canada with him or not!! I will be his friend anyway.* **I blame the war for this!**

This private dialogue reverberates with many voices. As above, June’s emotional involvement is signalled by interjections such as “Ye Gods, what fools men of make of themselves” or “how silly life is” – impersonal sayings, which now express mainly June’s confusion or impression that she is in a sort of temporary madness. In effect, the target of this inner dialogue is her experience of being in love – expressed as such, and also in her valuation of her immediate experiences of being with the young man – “he is sweet,” “it is pleasant,” “it is fun.” It is this temporary madness that June questions, as well as the authenticity of her attachment (“or is it in love with love”?).

Two competing representations are called upon. On the one side, June seems to argue with the inner alters from her distal, past home community. Explaining that the man is “gentleman,” “safe,” being both from same

background “home & friends,” June seems to argue with her mother; she uses semiotic resources given by the representation according to which decent women meet decent boys, so as not feel acting like “that kind of girl” who simply enjoys activities of flirting and dating. On the other side, June is using a new series of arguments: “it is certainly good for morale in wartime to be made love to” and she can “blame the war for this”: she seems to use as semiotic resources a representation promoted by her new life context according to which the war has set a “time of exception,” during which new rules hold. Hence, the latter, new community recognizes and accepts these flirting activities. The ideas that dating is part of the “war effort” and due to the “time of exception” become semiotic resources that June uses to bracket out distal judgemental voices about “that type of girl”, and open up and legitimate new explorations of men.

But if June rejects the home representations as inadequate to her experience and the state of exception, that she is neither “that type of girl” nor the “decent woman,” then she also loses her guidance structure. Without such guidance she is on her own, having to make new meanings. For example, the next day, the young man does not turn up, and June is angry to a proportion probably corresponding to her excitement. It immediately leads her to identify what can be learned:

> **I have vowed & declared I will not make dates with soldiers etc I don’t know.** [large ‘s’ in red pencil over text] This was the first time I think I have done. I have never liked any other enough whom I have met casually […]. *I might have known from past experience a man that pretends he has falled violently in love is a damn liar*. After all I am not 16 now. I should have known. I did know in fact. When I was under 18 I used to believe them. They all go the same way**. I declare I won’t give them a chance again, but get to know them first.** The trouble is I liked him so much. **Never again!** (June 19th).

June recalls it is the first time she found herself in such a situation; she reproaches herself for not having “known from the past” – not related the present to her distal past experience “when [she] was under 18,” or to that of (perhaps?) other women as expressed in “a man that pretends… is a damn liar.” June seems also to recognize that these warning distal experiences were not strong enough to balance the immediacy of her intense liking of the young man. Finally, June takes some distance from this dialogue between past and present, and “declares,” as a commitment toward herself, that she “will know first” men before she makes dates with soldiers. This is a generalized statement, based on personal experience, and that should become a generalized semiotic resource to guide future experiences, in future contexts, preventing future disappointments.

June’s move away from the two past opposing figures of the “decent woman” and “that type of girl” requires her to learn from her experiences, and to test the validity of the learning itself. With the use of the semiotic mediator of the “state of war,” she can do this more freely, and thus the situation opens up new fields of exploration, as here the next dance:

> Sat June 28th the dance there. I thoroughly enjoyed it. My airmen of last night was there & persisted in making a date for Sun night. I did not have to dance with him half the time as all his pals asked me to annoy him & he had to catch 10.15 train. After he had gone I had a good change round & in last dance made another date for Tues night with another airman from a different aerodrome. We were cycling home & 2 boys caught us up & cycled with us. We had danced with them during the evening. They also were trying to make a date. **I thought by this time in any case I was going to get in a hell of a mess so left them without any promises**. *I shall keep the 2 dates as they seem both nice fellows providing my soldier doesn't turn up on either of these nights!* **I don't know what is becoming of me.** *I wouldn't have dreampt [sic] of doing this sort of thing at home. I wouldn't have been allowed to for one thing.* **I don't know if the land is demoralising me. I sometimes think so! Or else the war.** *I know I should not have done it before the war.* **Oh well I shan't be young for ever & my looks won't last, so now or never.**

This entry reports an exciting dance during which June was intensively courted and after which she fixes two dates with two men. She realizes she did not apply the rule just declared the week before; and that she would not have acted like this in her distal family, or home, context. Home is located in time, as "before the war"; again, June seems now to firmly define the present according to the state of war. Yet this questions what she will become: her activities cannot be considered anymore as these of "that type of girl" (as they would have been from the perspective of her family and home community).

June then brings in a new element: "Oh well I shan't be young for ever & my looks won't last, so now or never." This statement might have a double origin: on the one hand, it is probably a generalization of her recent experiences of success with men – she starts to be aware of her looks and power; on the other hand, "being not young for ever" sounds also like a cultural trope or saying. Here, the statement becomes a superordinate, generalized semiotic mediator, that short-cuts the whole past set of tension, and fully assumes the state of things: there is a war, and it is also now that June can experience her youth as a young woman.

ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGE OF CONTEXT

With June's change of context and daily activities, the meaning of comparable experiences has changed: gardening was a dull and quite insignificant activity at home, but, in her new context it has become the centre of her daily activity and its main justification. June has also become a skilled gardener: she learns a whole differentiated technical vocabulary and she even develops new aesthetic and imaginary experiences (Vygotski, 2011; Vygotsky, 1931, 1975) and emotionally invests in her gardening. Socially acknowledged, it then becomes part of her identity, and thus a transition to becoming a "gardener" has taken place (Zittoun, 2006, 2014b).

With the change of communities, June's structures of recognition are transformed. At home, she lived and acted by the norms of her community who offered recognition for avoiding war work, and thus avoiding being "that type of girl." When she moves out into the world, her main community becomes people who are involved in the war effort to various degrees (farmers, horticulturalists, employers and soldiers). This new community offers her a different form of recognition: they admire her to the extent that she contributes to the war effort. They admire her "digging for victory" in the cold weather and her body made strong by this labour. This eclipse of June's home community by a new community within June's self, constitutes a major transformation, and it reinvigorates June's old motivation to be "brave & patriotic." The new community, with land girls, villagers and soldiers, also tolerates and even encourages June's new courting experiences.

June's movement between contexts creates new tensions and solutions. First, with the change of structure of recognition, June's relationship to the war effort is transformed. There is a conflict between her past attempts to escape the war effort, her actual involvement, and the values and representations of her new community; this conflict between her past and present values generates guilt, which eventually leads June to a type of "false consciousness" (Sartre, 1964), or at least, brings her to keep some distance to the representation of the heroic land girl she feels others see in her. It is perhaps this distance we can still see in June's use of irony when describing her participation to the "digging for victory" work. In that sense, *humour and irony* appear as one semiotic resource for distancing from guilt in certain type of dissonance between present and distal experiences (Freud, 1963).

Second, this transformation questions the past representations that were guiding June's path – these of the positively valued decent women, and that of the socially stigmatized "that type of girl" and the spinster – which June had internalized. In the new community, flirting is not considered as negative. To be able to engage in these activities that would be conflicting with past values and representation, June uses another social representation, that of "war is a state of exception," as *semiotic resource*. This resource allows *circumventing* these past reproaches, or more directly, open a "playful zone" where things otherwise forbidden are now possible – almost in a carnavalesque way (Bakhtin, 1984). Hence, June allows herself to fall in love and enjoys all of its madness. Through her experiences, she eventually creates and uses a new, *overarching* semiotic resource – that that she will only be young once.

CONTEXT 3: THE END OF THE WAR 1944-1945

BACKGROUND

In 1942 and 1943, June skills are increasingly recognised, and accordingly she is relocated a few times. June becomes a head gardener, which brings her enhanced social recognition, and thus increased pride in her horticultural skills. In 1943 however the hardship of her job brings June to a series of illnesses and hospital visits. Chronic appendicitis is eventually diagnosed and operated on. From 1944 she is forbidden to work in the fields, and

accordingly, she becomes receptionist and shop-keeper at a hostel, in which are lodged land-workers and passing troops.

This third context resembles the previous one as it is a place for war workers (Table 5). Places include, as previously, the hostel, which now becomes central, as well as the local village. Yet activities have changed: June is selling at a counter. To some extent, the activity resembles her pre-war work; June never mentions having to learn a new trade, and it is as if she was simply using knowledge and skills from a past experience of running the garage. Also, leisure activities take more time and space, especially, watching movies and plays, and preparing shows. Finally, June has stabilized her love life, now having a regular partner called 'D.'

There is continuity in distal experiences such as thoughts about her home and mother; however there is some change in June's future distal experience. After long years of war work, the end of the war is approaching, and June has to make important new life decisions about her future which weight increasingly in her thoughts (Table 6).

Table 5: Overview of June's context working in the hostel

Places	**Activities**	**People**
Lodging	Cleaning, reading	Other girls, sister
Hostel	Receptionist, selling, talking, dancing, preparing show, listening the news	Other girls, few man Boss
Public places	Dancing, watching movies	Other girls, men
Country side	Going for walks	D
Durham	Being home	D

Table 6: Overview of distal experiences intruding into the hostel context

Distal Experiences	
Past experiences	Home, gardening
Quotes	Mother
Symbolic resources	Films, Show, Fiction
Future possibilities	Thinking about soldiers suffering on the front Thinking about life after the war Marrying D OR going home OR becoming a nurse
Generalised mood	Uncertainty Depression, irritation

This period is characterized by the imminent end of the war, a topic frequently discussed in the hostel. On June 6th the whole hostel follows the news of the D-Day invasion in Normandy:

> The general reaction was excitment [sic] because it would hasten the end of the war *& thought for all the brave men that were to be killed & wounded every minute to bring it about*. **Everything in our remote spot went on as usual all day & we all said there was a feeling of unreality about it when it was so near & nothing here had altered.** (June 6th, 1944)

With the end of the war, the reality of its destruction is also more palpable for the whole community, with distal experiences of wounded soldiers, the "the suffering & strife so near," and with the news about the flying V2 bombs. However, these distal experiences contrast with the proximal "quiet" life at the hostel, where people keep doing their usual work. In addition, they also go to the movies, or a variety show, every other night. It seems that plenty of distractions are offered by the government to help people imagine alternative realities – rather than the distal experiences of the death and the wounded, communicated by radiobroadcasts and rumour. This might explain the common feeling of "unreality" mentioned by June.

The immanent end of the war also causes uncertainty. The war gave women like June considerable independence. The end of the war, over which June and her colleagues have no control, will radically transform their lives. What happens after five years of exception, collectively understood as 'state of war'? People want to move on with their lives, but are unsure what will happen. The end of the war is drawn out. June, describing life at the hostel, writes that everyone seems in a state of high irritation, quarrelling and gossiping, thinking about leaving yet trapped in the hostel. In addition, during this period, June also starts to report the illnesses and deaths of colleagues and friends. June develops more sombre life philosophies. She declares having "far less faith in the goodness of human nature," and she questions "Are we better not born? There is so much sadness in life."

Hence, the third life context we analyse is coloured by June's feeling of irritation, unreality and slight depression. It could also be seen as a liminal state, between what has been lost and what will come (Peirce, 1877; Winnicott, 2001); and it is out of this context that June will have to define her future path.

A WOMAN AT THE END OF THE WAR

As a shop assistant and receptionist in her workers' hostel, June retains some of the expertise of the land girls. She is still skilled, autonomous, reflective, and politically aware. She is not shy, she engages in a theatre show and public singing and dancing. Slowly there emerges a new model of herself as an independent woman, where her work in the hostel "has more attraction for [her] than [her] home," and that integrates in a new way her experience of war and of men.

After her realization that she was "only young once" in the specific conditions of war, June seems much more decided and affirmative in her explorations of

men. Hence, in February 1943 she describes her meetings with a man and a date in town with a young man doing garden work. As “MO Observer,” she describes factually his living conditions and a discussion she engaged with him on pacifism. She then comments that she disagreed with the man, and insightfully, that her interest is “less in his pacifism than in his sex.” June is thus more open about her interest in men: it is not anymore compared to distal pre-war conditions, and it is not followed by any self-doubt or criticism.

However, if war was a state of exception during which it was acceptable to become a woman experimenting and dating, this state of exception will soon disappear. Will June be able to become the “decent woman” she once thought she would become? Specifically, will she marry D to start a family? Or is she condemned to become “that kind of woman”? or, will she become a new type of woman?

First linking her present to distal experiences, from her home context, June excludes the possibility of returning to her initial situation:

> **I have grown away from & have no real desire to go back to Norfolk for good when the time comes.** *I used to think there would never be any where else like it*, **but now I don’t feel the same** (10.02.44)

In this excerpt, June evaluates her home context and her previous attachment to it. But “now,” that is from the present place and current proximal experience, and in the light of the future (“when time comes”), the home context is not attractive anymore. June’s body left home in 1941, and now, three years later, her mind, that is her attachment, has left home. June then explores a distal future defined in contrast to the present:

> It is surprising how often one of the staff exclaims “This place gets me down” & has a fit of talking of nothing but getting another job. […] *I sometimes feel that I want to get away to somewhere where life is more peaceful & domestic with someone I love. These weekends with D make me dislike the restlessness most.* **Would life with one person mean absolute contentness [sic] if that person was one who loved you truly & you could love & be happy with?** (April 1st 1944)

After having described a general unsettled mood, that June partly attributes to the all-female staff, June proposes a distal experience, a future contrasting with the present, where life would be more “peaceful and domestic with someone [she] loves.” This possible future seems very close to her past life, living with her mother and sister, and it might be some quality of the past which are contrasted to the present and projected in the future, as a form of nostalgia. If she were guided by the past, she should marry D.

However, the last sentence in the excerpt, expressed as an interrogation, casts some doubt: is it enough to live with one’s “true love”? Most of the difficulties June will then meet are developments along this line: shall life after war resemble the ideal of her youth, peace with a decent man, or is there

another possible life for her? The perspective of the future brings June to an intense dialogue, which moves her, in about three weeks, from doubt to the certainty that she does not want to marry D.

> Sat May 26th. B [sister] has gone home this weekend to take some of her things. *Mother has written today begging her to come home as soon as possible*. **This last month I have not known what to do to decide my future. I am constantly changing my mind**. *Some days I want to marry D as soon as he can afford it, the next I think he is not the right one for me*. *Then comes the uncertainty of if I reject him shall I ever replace him by anyone as true.* **Then I think single life is all I want, the next day I feel crazy for love & sex.** *Sometimes I decide to leave here & go to Devon to him as he wishes, then I want to stay here. Then I want to go home. Home with its many attractions will be another two hundred miles from D and it will annoy D immensley [sic] if I go. I like my present job & will have a difficulty in getting one with so many benefits. When B goes it will be less attractive here and I shall be lonely. I think then I shall not mind leaving, but feel I could do with two months rest before going to another job. This will annoy […] D who thinks I can go to him straight away from here*. Lately my nerves have been very bad and if they do not improve after B goes I intend to see the doctor. The slightest thing makes me jump lately. I feel a bundle of nerves.

In this sequence, different experiences and possibilities, present and distal, collide: the past home with the mother's call; the possible future in Devon offered by D, offering the promise of a decent life; and a third open and uncertain future, that of choosing her job, staying single for some time and resting, and taking care of her needs. Note also how this conflict between colliding distal experiences results in actual physical pain and irritation, but that might be calling for a change.

Over the subsequent months June defines a new possible future. She writes with satisfaction of a confident challenge to her boss, who eventually has to acknowledge his mistake publically, turning June into the one who is in the position of authority. This newly obtained recognition led her boss to give her more responsibilities, and thus, she describes being:

> sent into town with a factory car to do shopping, etc, for the firm [...] I quite fancied myself as the factory cars have M.T.C. drivers & though I have been several times with the higher staff in my off-duty time, I have not been officially for the firm (18.07.44)

This newly experienced independence and authority as woman worker is collectively acknowledged: by men, whether as a land girl (in the media, at fairs and markets) or as a hostel worker ("I'd no idea the men so respected us and thought so much of our character"), as well as by the women with whom she works, which themselves become more autonomous, politically involved and aware of their skills. A new proximal structure of recognition poses June as independent and capable person, able to take responsibilities and

direction. The distal home community has little power in recognizing who June is becoming.

All these attributes, taken together, constitute a new representation of independent womanhood, which has little precedent before the war. The representation of the *independent woman*, positively connoted, combines self-confidence, and is given authority and responsibility. It is not aligned with a specific profession. Rather it designates personal qualities, such as independence of action and thinking, personal authority, and equality of treatment with men.

Thus June begins to move out of her ambivalence with a new determination. As her uncertainty about her future is intense, June uses various resources to try to solve it; then, as the job situation evolves (a new manager comes), she feels lonely, then progressively detached, opened to an undefined distal future "Something will happen sooner or later to make me decide" (May 30th), eventually leading her to "stop worrying about D or anybody else" (May 31st), until she actually spends the weekend with D:

> Sat June 9th. The morning spent on D's land appreciating his efforts to make a fortune on the land..
>
> Sun June 10th. […] **I am rather unsure if I want to marry D at all now. I am not in love with him any longer.** *Is a loveless marriage hell? He is still as keen as ever on me.* That's why I feel so mean and cannot tell him.

During this weekend she makes two experiences: first, that D loves his land and has a future there; and second, that, in the light of this distal experience, she does not love D and the future he offers. In the next days she does not mention this anymore (just daily events), until she bluntly writes one week later: "I feel I want to go home. I have quite decided not to go to D after I leave here" (Sunday 17th June).

ANALYSIS OF JUNE GUIDING HERSELF INTO THE FUTURE

Although June has changed activity in the third context, her confidence and feeling of expertise is not lost. On the contrary, they carry over into this new context and fuse with her past experience of working in the family garage, to give her confident authority at the reception. In that sense, the feeling of expertise, or the sense of self-worth, seems to have generalized to become context-transcending.

June also develops her personal life philosophy, general statements or guiding principles, which are also meant to be context-transcending. These principles, such as "having less faith in human nature" and not trusting men, are meant to be crystallisations of proximal experiences which will feed-forward into the future, acting as distal experiences to guide her actions.

June has to define her future, and she does this drawing on past distal experiences. Her imagination moves between three possible futures: going back home, as her mother urges her, living with her fiancé, as he wishes, or defining a life of her own. Although these options are mutually exclusive, June does not find herself trapped between conflicting representations and voices, as she was in her initial home context. Instead, June's seems able to contemplate diverse distal experiences, especially the perspective of D, and, while considering them seriously, to define a *new alternative*, based on her personal wishes – whether these are socially acknowledged or not, and accepting the unpredictability of the future.

RETURNING TO THE QUESTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Our aim has been to theorise people moving through contexts, and how this translates into psychological movements of mind. Postulating that movement between contexts leads, at the level of mind, to the coexistence of immediate and distal experiences, we raised two main questions: how does movement become part of human development, and how do the tensions raised by diverse internalisation coexist and become integrated?

To answer these questions we presented an in-depth analysis of the diaries of June, a young woman, during World War II. In June's home context she was socialised into stigmatising "that kind of girl" that joins the women's services and the idea that "decent" women, like her, should avoid war work and the associated "men-chasing." She also has a disparaging view of land work as hard and "dirty." However, the circumstances of the war led her to work on the land, and be socialised into new ways of thinking about men, womanhood, and war work. Specifically, she begins working on the land and dating men.

Moving between contexts ties June up in dialogical knots; meanings and valuations within one community come into conflict with meanings in another community. The source of many tensions is that June herself is 'context transcending' in the sense that she has a memory of previous contexts, she has social relationships which persist between contexts, and as such, she is a vehicle through which the contradictions in society clash.

This clash of contexts, within June's experience, leads to tensions and circumventing strategies (Abbey, 2004, 2012). For example, June uses social representations of womanhood or "the state of war" to isolate the tensions, to create oppositions (Gillespie, 2008), preventing experiences in one context from upsetting meanings belonging to another context. She also uses symbolic resources, such as books and films, to manage these tensions. And, on a more personal level, we saw how humour and irony can be used to solve conflicting voices.

These tensions can also lead to in-depth transformations due to lateral, vertical and intersubjective integration. First, basic moods seemed to infuse whole contexts moving laterally across situations, and slowly evolving like background clouds. Here, these overgeneralized feelings moved from naïve

excitement full of contradiction, to progressive pride, to more irritation of uncertainty leading to change.

Second, within specific contexts there is classical differentiation and integration of experience, leading to abstraction and vertical integration. For example June's expertise in gardening, which is socially acknowledged, becomes abstracted as confidence, and this confidence carries over into working at the hostel. Also, in her final doubts about what to do after the war, June stops using past distal experience coming from home, and instead draws upon her own more recent experience, and her own generalised life philosophies, to be able to accept the unpredictable outcomes of her choice.

Third, intersubjective integration is also evident. In her home context she applied representations of being a land girl or "man-chasing" to others, the former is "dirty" and the latter is for "brainless" girls. But, June's physical relocation, her movement into a new context, puts her on the other side of these representations: she becomes a land girl, she enjoys relationships with several men, in short, she becomes the other (Gillespie, 2006). Becoming the other entails intersubjective integration, an expansion of meaning, because June ends up on both sides of the representations: She has used them as an outsider and experienced them as an insider.

This 'layering up' of experiences, and the associated tensions, is central to June's psychological development. June moves outside of her home community and becomes more reflexive about it, more able to have agency in relation to it. Overlapping socialisation into different contexts opens up a space of possible meanings, or overlapping meanings, within which June can begin to make choices. Thus, understanding this development cannot be done without understanding her moving between contexts. Indeed, without such movement, without the overlapping socialisation which it entailed, it is unlikely June would have been the same person at the end of the war.

THE LOGICS OF CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCE

Our analysis has been structured by a distinction between contexts, which exist in space and society, and experiences, which exist in mind. While we have tried to emphasise the links between society and mind, mediated via movement, we also recognise fundamental differences. Specifically, movements of mind have a different logic to the movement of bodies in space.

First, the actual movement of the body between places can be mapped in linear chronological time, but, *experiences follow a different temporality*. On the one hand, some proximal experiences are bounded by places, some are not, depending on affordances. Once June is away from the coast, the experience of swimming disappears; going to the library occurs in three contexts which all afford it. On the other hand, distal experiences are not attached to place, but, they are not completely free to move about, they can be constrained by internalized structures of recognition, by the weight of social representations in a context, and by emotional dynamics (Zittoun, 2013b).

Second, *experiences have trajectories* in a person's life: their relative importance and weight change. Some distal experiences fade out, such as June's home community in the third part of the war, after having been central in the mid-part. While other distal experiences, such as future imaginings about life after the war, about being married or an independent woman, become increasingly central as the war draws to a close.

Third, *spheres of experiences can expand*: June develops expertise and recognition in gardening, and develops pride and authorship. This then expands into other spheres of experiences: expertise and confidence are acknowledged by the broader community, and then start participating to distal experiences, on a more imaginary plane, and imbue June's whole *Weltanschaung*.

At a more global level, comparing our tables reveals the changing relative importance of immediate and distal experiences over time. At the beginning of the war, June's immediate social experiences are dominant, and she soon maintains a dialogue with distal future experiences. In the middle, we can observe an intense and equal balance of past and future distal experience. At the end, June mobilizes almost no past distal experiences, and mainly develops personal and alternative futures. This ebb-and-flow of immediate and distal experiences follows both social changes (the beginning of the war, the state of exception, and the end of the war), and June's own trajectory, as she moves in space through England. Finally, it also follows June's more psychological trajectory as she becomes a young woman, from being very attached to her home community that she is about to leave, to establishing a new balance, to becoming the author of a new life-path.

By separating the movements of the body and mind, we have been able to explore how the temporal and spatial laws of bodies and societies differ from those of the mind. The former have been the objects of physics, and are still the one adopted by social and psychological sciences that study humans from an observer's perspective. The latter perspective reveals the laws of time and space of imagination from the perspective of actors. Imagination, it seems, is almost infinitely free to move through time and space, and to occupy multiple spaces and times alternatively (Zittoun et al., 2013). Depending on their origin and affective weight, imaginings can move much slower or quicker than objective time, so that mind becomes layered with multiple, not necessarily compatible, experiences. However, our exploration also reveals some limits of imagination. Imagination can also be bounded by its anchorage in actual contexts where, for instance, only certain futures are imagined for young women (Crapanzano, 2004). However, the dialogical imagination (Marková, 2013) allows for the boundaries to be expanded and these horizons pushed forward.

CONCLUSION

Our goal has been to propose an integrative model of the person in society. We wanted to overcome the limits of: 1) sociological approaches, which examine only social facts and macro dynamics, 2) interactional approaches which, like conversation analysis, examine only interactions within a narrowly defined context, and 3) psychological approaches, which focus on cognitive and emotional processes independently of the context.

Our approach has been to build upon dialogical and sociocultural approaches, to take a temporal view based on the human body as both moving through society and as the locus of experience. Analytically distinguishing proximal and distal experiences allowed us to analyse the diverse dynamics and negotiation that take place as people move through complex worlds, and how experiences from distal contexts interact with immediate experiences, becoming more or less integrated.

Niels Bohr argued that each method of experimenting with, for example atoms, needed to be understood on its own terms. Different forms of measurement might suggest, for example, that an atom is a wave or a particle. Bohr argued that even though such accounts were logically incompatible, they had to be seen as complementary (Valsiner, 2014a). We want to conclude by suggesting that our foregoing analysis reveals two types of complementarity.

First, at an empirical level, adopting a longitudinal perspective, we suggest that June in each of the three contexts above is, in a sense, a different person. In the home context she is a “decent” girl but later she becomes “that type of girl.” In the home context she applies for land work to avoid more dangerous and patriotic work, but in later contexts she is happy to take credit for her patriotic planting of onions. June is different in each context, and to ask which of these is ‘true’ is to miss the point that they are complimentary in Niels Bohr’s sense. But, psychology also goes beyond the complementarity found in quantum mechanics. Humans have memory, and thus humans experience their own contradictions. While an atom is not troubled by being a wave in one experiment (or context) and a particle in another, humans are troubled by being different in different contexts. These are the tensions which June experiences, and which propel her own development.

Second, at a theoretical level, we have been examining societal contexts on the one hand and psychological experiences on the other. Invoking these two theoretical frames may well open us to accusations of logical or epistemological inconsistency. But, we begin our research not so much from first principles, but from what is empirically evident. We are willing to build an analysis without foundations (Stenner, 2009), that is, to bring into the analysis theoretical frames first and foremost because they are useful or insightful. Thus by examining the movement of June’s body in society as well as the movements of her mind, we see a complementarity between, on the one side, society, bodies and the resistance of materiality, and on the other side, semiotic dynamics and the fluidity of imagination. Research has traditionally

examined one, or the other, social constraints or semiotic imagination. Our aim has been to try and hold together these incompatible, yet complementary, aspects of our social and psychological being.

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