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Painful memories as mnemonic resources: Grand Canyon Dories and the protection of place

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**PAINFUL MEMORIES AS MNEMONIC RESOURCES:
GRAND CANYON DORIES AND THE PROTECTION OF PLACE**

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PAINFUL MEMORIES AS MNEMONIC RESOURCES: GRAND CANYON DORIES AND THE PROTECTION OF PLACE

ABSTRACT

Organizations commonly regard memories of pain and destruction as being unwanted. In this paper, we consider the largely undertheorized potential that painful pasts can have for building a mnemonic community. We draw primarily on oral history interviews to explore how Martin Litton and Grand Canyon Dories use sensory, discursive, and material-discursive modalities to convert painful memories into mnemonic resources through the performance of three practices: sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating. Their aim was to protect the Grand Canyon for future generations. We advance research on organizational uses of the past by theorizing how painful memories can be converted into mnemonic resources. Specifically, we underscore the untapped potential of organizations repackaging history-at-large to curate experiences of the past using combinations of semiotic modalities and remembering practices. We call this multimodal remembering. We also contribute to research on place by illustrating how destroyed natural wonders that no longer exist in their geological corporeal form can be transposed across time and space and become reembodyed in new phantasmatic forms.

KEYWORDS

Uses of the past, painful memories, multimodality, place, multimodal remembering, environment, custodianship, Grand Canyon

In this paper, we contribute to research on “uses of the past” (Wadhvani et al., 2018) by exploring how organizations can repurpose and remember painful pasts as valuable mnemonic resources. To do so, we explore the work of Martin Litton, an environmental activist who founded Grand Canyon Dorries (GCD) in the early 1970s, a company that outfits the slowest and most intimate trips on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Dorries are small, charmingly elegant and rigid wooden boats. Litton took issue with the destruction of natural wonders and the erasure of their memories, which he worked to keep alive through each uniquely named dory. Patrons ride in the dories for multiple weeks without interruption and are reminded time and time again of other natural wonders that have been destroyed and environmental fights that had been lost as they experience the grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Their experiences are rites of passage, an initiation into a mnemonic community created to protect the canyon across generations. Litton believed that if people experienced the canyon, they would fall in love with it and fight to save it in the future.

A social constructionist approach to the past has taken hold in organization studies, advancing our understanding of organizational remembering and forgetting and calling attention to strategic uses of the past (Clark and Rowlinson, 2004; Foster et al., 2011; Hatch and Schultz, 2017). Therein, numerous researchers have explored how organizations choose to repurpose parts of the past to serve present goals and understandings (Basque and Langley, 2018; Cutcher et al., 2019; Suddaby et al., 2020). On the one hand, studies focused on remembering tend to emphasize how organizations “rediscover, repurpose, and reuse” good remnants from the past to build organizational identity and authenticity (Kroezen and Heugens, 2019: 976; also see Ravasi et al., 2019). On the other hand, research on strategic forgetting tends to focus on discarding unwanted parts of the past; firms mindfully omit contradictory information to leave behind “who

we were not” (Anteby and Molnár, 2012: 516) and organizations distance themselves from “dark” and “turbulent” pasts, instead reclaiming their more desirable historical roots (Raffaelli, 2019: 590; also see Booth et al., 2007). Altogether, the uses of the past literature highlights the discretion that organizations carry relative to what they choose to remember and forget.

We argue that researchers have largely embraced an overly simplified view of organizational remembering. What is functional, convenient, and legitimate is remembered and what is painful or shameful is often forgotten or kept hidden (Coraiola and Derry, 2020; Mena et al., 2016). Instead of asking how organizations remember the good and forget the bad, our curiosities lie in how organizations might enlist contested, painful, or tainted parts of the past to achieve their strategic goals. Only a scattering of studies have considered the generative power of bygone pain and destruction (e.g., Cruz, 2014). While some researchers have called attention to how organizations deal with “historical harm-doing” (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016: 701), especially when challenged by society (Janssen, 2013; Van Lent and Smith, 2020), we suggest that darker parts of the past might also provide value and be converted into mnemonic resources, as Do and colleagues (2019: 1308) put it, “beyond the grave.” We imagine that by repurposing darker parts of the past, organizations might be able to generate historical representations that audiences can connect with on a deeper level due to their heightened emotional content and evocative nature. After all, darkness, pain, and destruction have been shown to be both highly memorable and profoundly powerful (Casey, 2009; Freud, 2003).

In this paper, we consider the possibility that aspects of a painful past need not always be forgotten. On the contrary, they might constitute valuable mnemonic resources for an organization. By mnemonic resources, we mean the aspects of collective memory used to generate cohesion between an organization and its stakeholders (Foster et al., 2011), which are

activated through remembering practices (e.g., storytelling, rituals) and symbols of the past (e.g., statues, relics, historical records) (Olick, 2008). We explore the following research question: *How can organizations reinvent a dark past for good?* More specifically, we ask: *How do organizations repurpose past destruction of natural wonders for environmental preservation in the future?* We wonder how painful pasts can be built into the present experiences of a place to remind people of what was lost in the past and create momentum for future protection. We explore our research questions within the context of GCD and its founder, Martin Litton. We adopt an interpretivist approach and draw on oral history interviews with Litton and other dory guides to examine how GCD has repurposed past destruction of natural wonders with the goal of protecting the Grand Canyon and preventing similar acts of environmental destruction from happening in the future.

We provide three contributions to the uses of the past literature. First, we theorize how organizations can strategically repurpose painful memories as valuable mnemonic resources. Therein, we expand the types of historical resources repurposed by organizations to include exogenous events and stories from the collective memory commons (Illia and Zamparini, 2016), also known as “history-at-large” (Zundel et al., 2016). Second, we unpack how painful pasts are repurposed through three interrelated practices—sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating. The fusion of these practices is illustrated in our model of converting painful memories into mnemonic resources through combinations of semiotic modalities (sensory, discursive, and material-discursive). Third, we illustrate how sites of memory (Nora, 1996) may be used to reincarnate destroyed natural wonders. In particular, we examine how previously destroyed natural wonders were transposed over time and space through new material-discursive forms (Barad, 2003). Their reincarnation adds to research at the intersection of organizational uses of

the past and sustainability (Bansal and DesJardine, 2014; Philips et al., 2019), specifically, how memories of destroyed natural wonders can become embedded in the unified knowledge of a mnemonic community (i.e., a community of people tied together by a shared past and also intent on not forgetting the past, Bellah et al., 1985; Zerubavel, 2003). Memories of painful pasts, thus, emerge as powerful resources which can be mobilized by organizations as momentum for environmental activism and the future protection of natural wonders.

ORGANIZATIONAL USES OF PAINFUL PASTS

The burgeoning uses of the past literature is chock-full of studies exploring how organizations reinterpret history for present uses (Suddaby and Foster, 2017; Wadhvani et al., 2018). Examples range from organizations looking backwards to romanticize their founders (Foroughi, 2020; Foster et al., 2011), using the past to craft their identities (Anteby and Molnar, 2012; Sasaki et al., 2020), and rediscovering and renewing material objects to build authenticity (Hatch and Schultz, 2017). Typically, the historical remnants that organizations choose to repurpose are the good ones (see Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016 for an exception). For example, a collection of articles depicts how organizations typically look inward to repurpose narratives of the past by treating them as managerial tools that can be used for different strategic purposes; producing distinctiveness, managing change, and generating competitive advantage (Schultz and Hernes, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2010). Such inward reflection has been dubbed “self-representation” (Oertel and Thommes, 2018). For example, the Carlsberg Group used its own historical artifacts inscribed with the Latin phrase *Semper Ardens* to historicize and build authenticity (Hatch and Schultz, 2017). Likewise, Cadbury strategically paired its personal family history with Quaker values and beliefs to legitimize a particular organizational culture (Rowlinson and Hassard, 1993).

Reinterpretations of darker remnants of the past—pain, trauma, destruction, horror, and so forth, have received far less attention. Only a small collection of articles has begun to examine how organizations choose to engage with darker parts of the past (Booth et al., 2007; Feldman, 2001). For example, writing within the historic corporate social responsibility approach, Schrempf-Stirling and colleagues (2016) discuss how present-day German firms atone for their own crimes committed in the 1940s, while Van Lent and Smith (2020) examine how Hudson’s Bay Company takes responsibility for their century-old exploitation of Indigenous workers. When looking beyond the field of organization studies and towards the social sciences, we observe additional references to darker historical remnants and their abilities to profoundly impact remembering. Philosophers and psychologists argue that trauma can haunt people through “hallucinatory reenactments,” commonly experienced in dreams, which can become “too much remembering” of a painful past for the person to bear (Casey, 2009: xiii; Freud, 2003). Historians express how nations erect sites of mourning to cope with and commemorate destructive pasts (Trigg, 2012; Winter, 1995) or attempt to erase reminders of past horror from their national histories, instead constructing elaborate myths that emphasize positivity, restoration, and national unity (Anderson, 2006; Rousso, 1991). One example of nations erecting commemorative sites includes responses to the Holocaust, specifically the memorials, museums, and monuments created to commemorate the victims and help people to never forget the pain of what happened (Young, 1994).

The presence of broader social events in the collective memory of a nation also has important implications for ways that organizations might use painful pasts. Our curiosities about the untapped potential that broader social events hold accentuates the narrowed scope of prior inquiries into painful pasts, which detail organizations making sense of their own past injustices

(Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Van Lent and Smith, 2020), while ignoring exogenous events divorced from any particular organization's prior actions. We imagine that exogenous events can also be valuable mnemonic resources, expanding what remnants organizations can repurpose by drawing on "history-at-large" (Zundel et al., 2016). Moreover, we find exogenous events to be especially intriguing given that painful parts of the past bring endless examples of destructive, horrific, or tainted historical events into play for organizations to strengthen their narratives. Therein, painful memories are not necessarily credited to the organization, but instead, the organization might craft narratives around the event to buttress its efforts. For example, an organization aiming to develop awareness of environmental destruction can cultivate feelings of "ecological grief" (Cunsolo and Ellis, 2018), but without being personally responsible for past environmental destruction. Thus, we imagine that repurposing painful events that occurred separate from the organization might be especially fruitful given the malleability of the past combined with deferring blame to strategic opponents or environmental enemies.

We also observe promising work advancing organizational uses of the past away from "history as told" and towards "history as experienced" (Lubinski, 2018), which recognizes entanglements between practices of remembering and combinations of semiotic modalities (Blagoev et al, 2018; Hatch and Schultz, 2017; Hernes and Schultz, 2020). Recent research depicts contexts where painful events provoke actors to consider the removal of material objects from particular places as a means to divorce from darker parts of the past (Do et al., 2019). For example, a member of the South Bend Chamber of Commerce argued that the demise of the Studebaker automobile can only be lifted from the city by "removing the buildings"; the extinction of material reminders would eliminate "symbol[s] of bygone glory" (p. 14). Elsewhere, we observe universities removing material objects (e.g., statues of confederate

soldiers) as one way to distance themselves from past racism and segregation (Hahn, 2018; Morgan, 2018). Instead of strategically eliminating particular material objects by plucking them away, we wonder how organizations might intentionally bring material reminders into play as a means to render painful parts of the past as focal points of interaction and remembering. More specifically, we find the embodiment of painful parts of the past in symbols, narratives, and artifacts to be especially interesting when repurposing the past into present experiences. We also wonder how synergies between multiple modalities might further bring painful pasts back to life, for instance, experiences where patrons might touch and feel material objects while listening to evocative stories that give the past a sense of re-embodiment and realism. A better understanding of the way different modalities are mobilized in relation to the uses of the past is thus needed.

When it comes to collective memory as experienced, place and a sense of place emerge as especially important constructs for understanding the social construction of the past (Dacin et al., 2010; Do et al., 2019; Guthey et al., 2014). In fact, the literature on memory has long recognized the intermingling role of places, senses, and emotions in assisting remembering (Yates, 1966). Heritage studies, for example, define place as a “collage of intersecting and overlapping meanings” where people share experiences and “meanings are contested and negotiated” (Smith, 2006: 79). By emphasizing the socio-materiality of place, organizations can build new ways for people to experience painful pasts, broadening the communicative channels in which organizations can package acts of remembering. Thus, experiencing darker parts of the past can encompass much more than interfacing with words by stimulating all the human senses (Zilber, 2017). We argue that situatedness in place itself becomes an integral component of remembering past destruction.

For our purposes, we view remembering as a process of reconstructing the past through a variety of semiotic modalities (Boxenbaum et al., 2018; Höllerer et al, 2019). This helps us move beyond semantic aspects of remembering (i.e., meanings that can be read and attributed to the past), and instead props up semiotic dimensions of remembering (i.e., the ways in which the past is incorporated and manifested in present actions and experiences). Our assumption is that different combinations of modalities (sensory, discursive, and material-discursive) provide different affordances for remembering and are thus essential to organizational uses of the past. To date, however, the literature offers little insight into the interplay between holistic, situated experiences and remembering. We turn to the case of GCD to explore how organizations can make use of and mobilize particularly painful remnants to produce a memorable experience that bridges the past, present, and future.

METHOD

Empirical Context: Grand Canyon Dories

The Grand Canyon is located in Arizona, United States and is 277 miles long and more than one mile deep. It was officially designated as part of the U.S. National Parks System in 1919 and as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. UNESCO describes the canyon as “the most spectacular gorge in the world.” Despite its recognized beauty and geological significance, the Grand Canyon has been the subject of dam proposals and economic development initiatives, some of which would be successful. It was against the construction of dams, in particular, that Litton and GCD rose.

GCD was created as a mnemonic project, with the aim of building a community focused on environmental activism in the Grand Canyon. This followed a pivotal environmental battle over an adjacent canyon (Glen Canyon) which Litton and his colleagues lost. They believed that

the reason they lost the battle over Glen Canyon was because very few people were aware of its beauty. To avoid the similar devastation to the Grand Canyon, they saw a “need to take people to see [the canyon] because if we don’t show them, the places won’t exist in the future.” A core value of GCD was an unwillingness to compromise when it came to protecting natural wonders.

“People always tell me not to be extreme. Be reasonable! they say. But I never felt it did any good to be reasonable about anything in conservation, because what you give away will never come back—ever. When it comes to saving wilderness, we can’t be extreme enough. To compromise is to lose.” (Vitello, 2014, quoting Marin Litton).

Remembering past environmental destruction, while simultaneously experiencing the Grand Canyon, was fundamental to the operations of GCD. Litton believed that destroyed natural wonders should not be forgotten, so the future would never again reproduce the past. Litton stated in an interview “Well, you know, it's been said that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. You can't repeat what we've done here, because once it's done, it's done.”

Contextually speaking, his mnemonic project was aided by the ancient characteristics of the Grand Canyon, helping him to embed a geological way of thinking into the mnemonic community that pushed back on the narrowness and short-termism of human expansion (see Bjornerud, 2018). Described in the following quote, the canyon’s rich past and exposed rock naturally invites people to contemplate time, making it a fitting context for Litton to build GCD into a mnemonic community. Membership in mnemonic communities of remembrance entails a belief in a collective shared fate and a strong sense of belonging (Coraiola et al., 2018).

“The Grand Canyon is America’s open aired cathedral that holds beauty in the palm of its hand. No other landscape opens up deep time like the pages of a book and invites you to contemplate the implications of all of that time. Here you have this giant hole in the ground and when you enter into it, and when you float through it, on the back of this legendary river that flows through its heart and is responsible for having carved and created the thing in the first place, you are entering a hidden and secret world who’s walls that are framed by rock that is so unimaginably ancient that it’s almost impossible for the human mind to grasp. And this happens if you spend enough time in the canyon, particularly if you are a boatman.” (Fedarko, 2016, quoted from *Martin’s Boat*).

Litton believed that dories were the best way to experience the canyon. He recognized the connection between dories, history and resilience; "...the dory is an ancient design. We didn't originate it. It goes back to antiquity. There's a kind of a magic about the shape of the boat in terms of its stability and its ability to recover from extreme situations.¹" Dories would later be described by many as the "signature boat" of the canyon.

To operate the dories and take the people down the river, Litton recruited a group of dedicated guides. He commented, "I've always felt that we had a special conscience in our whole organization. Somehow it attracted the people who cared the most about the river, who were really deeply concerned with its future." Litton's guides became important members of the mnemonic community. They were also key in the professionalization of river guides, which included founding their association, Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG). Their connection with the whitewater is described as "their narcotic"; they believed "that they were more intimately connected to the water and the rocks than any of the generations of river runners who had preceded them" (Fedarko, 2013: 155). The earliest and most accomplished guides became known as "the silverbacks," a reference to their reverence within the mnemonic community. Today, it takes most guides upwards of 20 years rowing baggage boats to graduate to rowing dories. The guides traverse the dangerous canyon with a variety of people, ranging from adventure seekers to scientists studying the canyon.

Data Sources

Oral History Interviews

Our main data source included 60 oral history interviews, totaling 1,826 single-spaced transcribed pages of data. Most of the oral histories were created as part of the Colorado River

¹ Unless specified, all quotes were extracted from the oral histories.

Runners Oral History Project and housed in the special collections at Northern Arizona University, with a handful of additional interviews housed at the University of California, Berkeley. Oral history interviews can generate insightful and vivid stories by having participants share their memories as they reconstruct the past (Atkinson, 1998; Musson, 2004). They provide access to the interpretations and meanings that people (in our case, the guides) attribute to their experiences (Järvinen, 2004). They are considered to be especially generative for detailing how events and experiences can “lead to some form of personal or social transformation” (Bornat, 1994: 220), such as becoming an active member in a mnemonic community. Collections of oral history interviews are commonly generated over time, which can detail the evolution of a community’s collective consciousness (Jones, 1983), versus more traditional interview approaches that generate data within a more condensed time frame.

The GCRG Association began conducting oral history interviews in 1990 under the fear that the guides’ memories were at risk of being lost due to the aging and passing of some of the earliest guides². The oral histories provide rich stories about the guides’ lives, perspectives, and work in the Grand Canyon. Interviews called participants to reconstruct their lives in the canyon, including accounts of how events unfolded. Interviews were unstructured and several lasted for many hours, underscoring how longer interviews can generate rich story-based descriptions (Crawford et al., 2020). The mission of the Colorado River Runners Oral History Project provided direction for the content of the discussion, what Van Maanen (1979: 520) referred to as “figuratively put[ting] brackets” on the points of discussion, a focus that is common when using oral histories (Atkinson, 1998). The majority of participants were dory guides, however, participants also included past executives of prominent environmental associations (e.g., Sierra

² Oral history interviews are archived at https://www.gcr.org/oral_history.php.

Club) and scientists working in the canyon. The oral histories provide us with the memories of each informant as shared during their interview and were used to advance our own firsthand knowledge of the mnemonic community's presence in the canyon, developed through several personal trips to the Grand Canyon and following Litton's work and many of the guides for multiple years prior to commencing this project.

Secondary Sources

We also collected a number of secondary sources, including 118 issues of *Boatman's Quarterly Review*³, which is published by GCRG from 1988-2019. Additionally, we reviewed 18 books and a large number of videos available online. Each book specifically discussed Litton and GCD. Many of the books included sections authored by Litton himself. Similarly, the videos included content on Litton and GCD and were particularly helpful for visualizing how the dories, canyon, and people come together to produce the experience. Secondary sources served three purposes: (1) They helped us familiarize ourselves with the dories and the work of the guides, (2) they reinforced themes emerging in the oral histories as we worked iteratively back-and-forth between the oral histories and secondary sources, and (3) they enabled us to triangulate our findings.

Secondary sources also helped to minimize the apparent 'collected' memory aspect of our data. Olick (1999) distinguishes between collected memories as the aggregate of individual experiences as usually captured through surveys and collective memories as a more structural and systemic phenomenon largely independent of individual remembering. Even though our unit of observation are the individual memories of the dory guides and other actors involved with GCD, our unit of analysis is the collective dimension of remembering. We used all of the data to

³ BQR issues are archived at <https://www.gcr.org/bqr.php>.

understand the practices of remembering developed by the dory guides to cultivate an experience of place and get people on board with GCD' environmentalist activism.

Data Analysis

We adopted an interpretive approach (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006) to analyze our data through a multi-stage process that moved iteratively back-and-forth between the various data sources and emergent theory. This process of iterating between data and theory characterizes our abductive approach to data analysis (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013), which is helpful when collecting and analyzing data simultaneously with the intention of developing theory while staying close to the data (Elias et al., 2018). Our analysis included three cycles of iteration between theory and data. In the following we describe how we were motivated by the story of Martin Litton and GCD to learn more about their activities to protect the environment, how our understanding of the story has directed us to look at their practices used for remembering, and how we understand their curation of experience related to painful pasts and the mobilization of semiotic modalities to elicit remembering.

We began analyzing the data as we collected it. We started with the books and videos to acquire an overview about the work of Litton and GCD. These materials were important to give us an understanding of Litton's perspective on environmental activism, his creation of GCD, and how GCD worked as a bridge between the past that Litton believed should not be forgotten and a future that should not repeat past destruction. We began by viewing each video and reading each book multiple times, from which we began to note three topics: (1) descriptions of the dories and the guides, (2) Litton's unique conservation perspective, and (3) references to the past, present, and future. A series of topics emerged from this first stage, including references to remembering past destruction of natural wonders, battles fought to protect the Grand Canyon, and the creation

of a community of dedicated guides with the dual goal of introducing people to the hidden beauties of the canyon and sharing with them the regretful memories of the battles they had lost. We exchanged our first impressions of the data and looked for some related literature that could help us make sense of the case. After reviewing the literature on rhetorical history and organizational memory, we decided to look at practices of remembering (Rowlinson et al, 2010), including different memory forms (Schultz and Hernes, 2013).

We continued with an initial reading of the oral history interviews, paying particular attention to descriptions of remembering work and semiotic modalities. Building from Schultz and Hernes (2013), we coded references to the past, present, and future as well as descriptions of textual, material, and oral memory forms. Particularly relevant from the data were references to the dories and the naming practices associated with destroyed natural wonders. By piecing together complete narratives about five dories (Table 2) we began to see the importance of material and symbolic aspects within the processes of remembering. This caused us to emphasize connections between our codes for temporal references and remembering as a practice that takes place through different semiotic modalities.

We then turned to the literature on multimodality (e.g. Boxenbaum et al., 2018; Höllerer et al, 2019; Kress, 2009) to help us identify some of the dominant modalities involved in the practices of remembering developed by GCD. These sources moved beyond static notions of memory embedded in artefacts and discourse to collective acts of remembering enacted through visual, material, sensory, and discursive semiotic modalities. By viewing the work of GCD as collective, where memories can be retrieved and reinterpreted in the present, we began to theorize how combinations of semiotic modalities elicited distinct practices of remembering. When we isolated specific combinations of semiotic modalities in our data, we realized that they

played different roles in the way people remember and evoke the past. Casey's (2009) phenomenology of memory provided us the missing piece to theorize our empirical findings. Casey moves away from a mentalist approach to memory and emphasizes remembering as a bodily and performative practice. By distinguishing the role played by distinct semiotic modalities (e.g. sensory, discursive, and material-discursive)⁴ in three emergent practices (sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating), we were able to analyze the importance of multimodal remembering (i.e., the combination of multiple modalities to elicit an experience of the past) for GCD's mobilization of the past to advocate for the future. We further theorize how the painful memories of places that have been previously destroyed can be converted into mnemonic resources and used to generate new pathways for the future through multimodal remembering.

With our enhanced understanding of the relationship between emergent practices and semiotic modalities, we went back to the data to complete our abductive analysis. We reviewed the data with a focus on understanding how GCD has mobilized the past to protect the Grand Canyon as a place. This included not only the physical place, but also the experience of destroyed places embedded in the experience. Building on our analysis, we developed a model to explain how GCD converted painful and destructive pasts into mnemonic resources supporting their future goals of protecting natural wonders (Figure 4). To reinforce the trustworthiness of our findings, we theoretically sampled issues of *Boatman's Quarterly Review*. Using targeted queries and rereading, we triangulated our findings as additional support for our model.

⁴ We reserve "modes" for Casey's (2009) three *modes of remembering* (i.e., reminding, reminiscing, and recognizing) and "modalities" for *semiotic modalities* (i.e., sensory, discursive, and material-discursive), i.e. the means used for re-presenting the past.

FINDINGS

We now describe three interrelated practices—sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating—to depict how Litton and GCD mobilized the past to create an experience of place and motivate people to participate in a desired future for the Grand Canyon. Each practice is grounded in different modes of remembering and semiotic modalities. Although the practices and modalities are deeply enmeshed and reinforce one another empirically, we present them separately for analytical clarity and to help us theorize how past destruction can be repurposed for environmental preservation (Table 1). Our findings culminate with our model depicting how these practices coalesce and reinforce one another to convert painful memories into valuable mnemonic resources.

----- Insert Table 1 about here -----

Sensitizing through Actualizing and Enlarging Memories

The first practice was sensitizing. Litton articulated early on that if people are going to fight to protect the Grand Canyon, they need to learn to care for it. He believed that because people were not sensitized to other previously destroyed natural wonders (e.g., Glen Canyon, which has been noted as Litton’s greatest loss) they failed to understand what was being lost with the construction of the dams; people fight to protect only the places they care deeply about. Amy Kober, dories blog contributor, commented, “You have to love a place before you are going to care about it and do something for it... You have to fall in love with a place if you are going to fight for it.” For our purposes, sensitizing is about becoming acquainted with an environmental cause, for instance, protecting a natural wonder. It is more than a cognitive practice in which technical details and arguments are presented to educate people about specific causes. Sensitizing emphasizes awareness through all the human senses; recognizing an important

environmental cause tends to be more powerful and memorable when it evokes aesthetic aspects and deep emotional connections. The richer and more intense the emotional experience, the more vividly a cause tends to be remembered (Talarico et al., 2004). Sensitizing thus helps people to recognize and identify with the gravity of particular environmental causes to the extent that it prevents people from forgetting them.

For Litton and GCD, sensitizing was performed two ways. First, together with other environmental activists (e.g., David Brower, a prominent environmentalist) and organizations (e.g., Sierra Club), Litton brought the Grand Canyon to the people. Together, they published numerous magazine and newspaper articles and books with vivid pictures and evocative descriptions (e.g. *The Hidden Canyon*) to build awareness of the canyon's wonder. Brower (1964: 7) characterized their intent in bringing the canyon to a broader audience.

In a sense, *Time and the River Flowing* is a continuation of *The Place No One Knew*. Each book tells about the same extraordinary river and its greatest canyons, both fully deserving national-park protection, even though there was not yet vision enough to provide it. Each book draws heavily upon perceptive interpretation by many of America's best writers of what these canyons mean to the world —what Glen Canyon could have meant and what Grand Canyon can always mean. Both books tell of the massive inflexibility and compulsive engineering that lost one canyon forever and seem determined to lose the other. Both books make the plea that this generation do better for all other generations than to let the Bureau of Reclamation carry out its present plans to destroy what is most important in Grand Canyon.

The second way that sensitizing was performed was by bringing people to the canyon so they could experience its grandeur for themselves. Litton brought many people to the bottom of the Grand Canyon to run its rapids and begin to recognize why they should care for and preserve it. Not only were these trips designed to provide an enlightening experience of the canyon, but they were also skillfully used as an instrument to sensitize people to past environmental destruction by highlighting the loss of natural wonders. Brad Dimock, a dory guide, discussed Litton's nuanced approach, sensitizing people by pairing the beauty of the canyon with past destruction.

"While all other rowing trips were taking out [of the river, i.e., ending] at Diamond Creek, Martin insisted on rowing, or later motoring, across the depressing desolation of upper Lake Mead, so that clients could comprehend what happens when we dam a living river" (GCRG-Summer 2014-2015, V28N1: 34).

This division in the dory trip provides a stark and haunting superimposition by contrasting present experiences of the living river with past environmental destruction. Litton's approach highlights one unique aspect of exogenous painful memories; organizations can draw strong contrasts to differentiate between past destruction and present experience. The visual and sensory aspects of seeing and feeling desolation become even more powerful when paired with stories that explain the contrast. By layering painful memories with natural wonders successfully protected, the guides highlighted the mnemonic community's unwillingness to compromise with the Bureau of Reclamation.

On the afternoon of the third day, we pull over at a beach where Bronco [dory guide] points to several large bore holes that, back in the fifties, were dynamited into the cliffs lining both sides of the river. This is where the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation once proposed anchoring the Marble Canyon Dam [...] The spot we're standing on would have been submerged beneath a 300-foot-deep lake [...] the sight of the holes appears to send Litton wandering off into a more sobering mental landscape: the wilderness of his own regrets. "In so many ways, the American West really was a paradise, but look at it now," he tells the clients, who've gathered around him. 'All you see are places that have been ruined because of greed. Ugliness. We had a paradise, and we lost it.'
<https://www.outsideonline.com/1927766/aint-it-just-grand>

Sensitizing is a powerful practice because of its ability to elicit recognition as a mode of remembering (Casey, 2009). Recognizing is rooted in perception and we assert that the body is the main medium through which remembering-as-recognizing operates. Recognizing takes place in the present and serves as an anchor for action and attention. It brings the remembered (destroyed natural wonders) and the perceived (place in the present) into reciprocal fusion. On the one hand, it brings the past as an intrinsic part of the present. On the other, it contributes to the very constitution of the present.

Our findings also indicate that sensitizing is a less impactful practice when some sensory aspects are removed. For dory guides who have experienced the canyon's wild and natural past, removing certain sensory aspects generated unease as they struggled to recognize the canyon and deep emotions it typically produced. One guide spoke about the effects that Glen Canyon Dam, which is situated upstream, has had on the Grand Canyon. The following quote captures the haunting effects of removing the sounds of the river from the experience, where the stillness disturbs the guide and leads to insomnia. This unsettling silence is most significant far downstream where the guides and participants spend their last night camping.

The whole [Grand Canyon] is messed up. I mean, you know, Glen Canyon Dam 'did it' to the Grand Canyon... There's something about it. I think it's the quiet, that gets to me the most. You get down there, and get through Bridge Canyon Rapid, get on down to about [Mile] 242 where we camp that last night, or beyond there, and you camp and you can hear a pin drop in the canyon. It's like they've sort of just snuffed out the life of the canyon. Everything is just sort of in a coma, it's not really dead, but it's not even breathing on its own and it needs the river to be back, and it needs to be making that river sound. That river sound, that's what it takes. It's hard to even sleep down there. You know, you go to sleep on the rig, and I'm up all night, it's too quiet, something's missing (Kenton Grua, dory guide).

We find that sensitizing evokes a dual process of recognizing. The first is actualizing people's memories about the canyon by juxtaposing what they knew about the canyon before visiting it with their experience of traversing its river. The second is enlarging their memories by providing a curated experience of the canyon that highlights important aspects they recognize as relevant from their experience. Their experience is memorable because it embodies their ideas of place through concrete materialization and also emplaces their corporeal and sensory bodies in the canyon, opening up possibilities for recognition.

Most of the passengers considered the trip a once-in-a-lifetime experience [...] being in the bottom of the Grand Canyon for two and a half weeks, traveling along the Colorado River in a dory, created a new world for all of us [...] Seeing the canyon from the vantage of the river as it slices its way along the bottom adds new dimensions of beauty to the images we all carry around in our heads [...] We soon were deeply involved, both physically and emotionally, in the adventure (Oertel-Kirschner, 1981,

<https://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/15/travel/down-the-colorado-seeing-the-canyon-from-a-dory.html>).

Participants describe the experience as “something they’d never forget.” By superimposing a destructive past onto the present, sensitizing encourages people to care for the place and builds a sense of custodianship for the Grand Canyon. Both the guides and participants became “the custodians of this treasure’s well-being, and the guardians of its great future.” They described a deep desire to “protect it at all costs,” especially for future generations.

Retelling Through Multigenerational Reminiscing and the Narration of Stories

The second practice performed by Litton and GCD included retelling, which attaches meaning to the experience and connects it to the collective memory of the mnemonic community. Retelling includes a dialogical process that involves describing past experiences and worldviews in ways that make the sensible world intelligible and meaningful. Retelling is intrinsically attached to sensitizing to the extent that it assumes reflexivity over past experiences and the development of legitimizing arguments. Different from sensitizing, however, retelling works by comparing and contrasting instead of superimposing the past and the present.

Additionally, it brings with it normative and moral components that provide meaning and value to the experience of the canyon.

Every time we push away from Lees Ferry, we unplug from modern life for days or weeks. We connect with people and place, free from modern distraction. There is time to listen, tell stories, make music, to connect with natural spaces and to have real conversations about things that matter: Grand Canyon, and the threats it faces. We have a unique chance to inspire passionate activism by planting seeds of inspiration through our actions and words (Lora Colten - GCRG-Summer 2014-2015 (V28N1: 25).

The first way that retelling takes place is by reminiscing about the past. Reminiscing is a distinct mode of remembering to the extent that it takes “place primarily in the interpersonal domain of concrete language” (Casey, 2009: 105). Retelling through multigenerational reminiscing is both a social and linguistic act in which the past is relived wistfully and used to construct a mnemonic

community of stewards geared towards an environmental cause. It creates a cleavage between present time and past time, allowing the community to reconstruct painful events from the past and their meanings. Thus, retelling through reminiscing has a double function, first, preserving the experiences of previous generations in the collective memory of the group and, second, helping to socialize new stewards into the mnemonic community. This was accomplished through training programs bringing multiple generations of guides together. Dory guides described how reminiscing links them together as part of “fraternity of people,” which we describe as a mnemonic community. Multigenerational exchanges about the past between older and newer guides helped build what Lippman and Aldrich (2016) describe as “generational units,” connecting newcomers with a past that they are otherwise unable to participate in. Retelling transmits the collective memory of the group from one generation to another (Mannheim, 1952). Multigenerational reminiscing provided the backdrop against which the experience of new recruits is contrasted and becomes meaningful, as is the case on the annual Guides Training Seminar (GTS), where old and new guides met to retell the past.

Every person on the GTS brings something new and exciting to each day’s river miles and ultimately each of us experiences the canyon in our own way. Though we come to the river as individuals we transform into a cohesive whole and for a brief moment we share the same ideals, joys and toils. Though our experience is new and unique we remember we are not the first to travel this way and indeed will not be the last to share moments with the canyon. In the end we go to the canyon, to rivers and to wilderness because nature gently puts us in our place and reminds us all of our smallness. We can only hope that what we do is worthwhile, that the ideas we exchange will endure, and that our knowledge and stewardship will continue to enhance and protect the Canyon and the river experience we so love (Adam White & Ori Meadows, 2006, GCRG-Summer 2006, v19, n2).

There are a lot of people here that have a lot more river running experience than I do on the Colorado River system. Bob Rigg is here. Lois Jotter. And it’s real interesting to feel part of this fraternity of people that have seen the Colorado River at a very early historical time. It’s a real pleasure to be on a trip with them and to just hear some of their anecdotal stories. Telling about specifics, things that they recall from the time that they were running the river (George Wendt, 1994, oral history).

Reminiscing was also accomplished through the oral history program, created to ensure that the collective memory of the mnemonic community was preserved to future generations through recordings of the original dory guides. Litton commented that the oral history program was “the only thing of its kind that’ll ever happen in history, where the ‘oldtimers’ as they’re called, those available, could get together and not only reminisce, but put on record their memories of what was here.” Lew Steiger, dory guide and oral history interviewer added that the oral histories help “keep these stories alive.”

The second way that retelling took place is by narrating evocative stories of past destruction while being physically present in the base of the Grand Canyon. Throughout the experience, guides are “drawing time lines in the sand, telling stories/creating analogies, inventing geologic neumonics, pointing and waving.” Figure 1 includes a photograph of one guide retelling stories by reading excerpts from *The Emerald Mile*. Participants listened to the stories with the towering backdrop of the canyon and felt the power of the Colorado River. Each guide carries with them a portfolio of stories used during the trips, although, retelling select stories takes priority.

----- Insert Figure 1 about here -----

Brad Dimock, a dory guide who worked closely with Litton for many years, said that “one of the really powerful talks that a lot of us do in Grand Canyon is at the Marble Canyon Dam site”. This particular location is where the Marble Canyon Dam was to be built before it was blocked by Litton and his colleagues. Marble Canyon marks the beginning of the Grand Canyon, sort of a subsection of the Grand Canyon in its entirety. The following quote captures part of the talk as it is delivered at the proposed dam site.

Well, here we are in the heart of Marble Canyon. It was in the fifties that it was initially anticipated by the Bureau of Reclamation that they would build a dam here. And they did a bunch of excavations in this area to test the rock and make sure it was going to be strong

enough to withstand the forces that would be created by putting a concrete plug across the Grand Canyon here.' Well, Martin Litton stood up and said, 'No!' and got everybody on board with fighting this dam. And thank god we don't have a dam here today." (Andre Potochnik, dory guide)

Using stories to distinguish between past destruction and other natural wonders that have been saved enabled the guides to contrast a painful past with present experiences, underscoring the value of bringing darkness into retelling.

Our findings indicate that retelling through the narration of stories allows participants to become acquainted with a past that becomes theirs as they partake in the memories of the community. Stories allowed participants to relive the past and reconstruct it in ways that speak to the characteristics of the audience and the context in which retelling takes place. Discourse represents the core semiotic modality for retelling, infusing people, places, and objects with meaning, as exemplified in the following quote that contrasts the past and present and pre- and post-damming of Glen Canyon.

The difference between the present reservoir, with its silent sterile shores and debris-choked side canyons, and the original Glen Canyon, is the difference between death and life. Glen Canyon was alive. Lake Powell is a graveyard [...] For those who may think I exaggerate the contrast between the former river canyon and the present man-made impoundment, I suggest a trip on Lake Powell followed immediately by another boat trip on the river below the dam. Take a boat from Lee's Ferry up the river to within sight of the dam, then shut off the motor and allow yourself the rare delight of a quiet, effortless drifting down the stream. In that twelve-mile stretch of living green, singing birds, flowing water and untarnished canyon walls—sights and sounds a million years older and infinitely lovelier than the roar of motorboats—you will rediscover a small and imperfect sampling of the kind of experience that was taken away from everybody when the oligarchs and politicians condemned our river for purposes of their own (Abbey, 1971: 98)

Retelling stories that contrast past destruction with environmental conservation triumphs bridges feelings of fear, rage, and hope with the pleasure of present experiences. Exemplified in Abbey's words, retelling by narrating stories helped build a tension, emphasizing a nostalgic and heroic version of the past to reinforce the future environmental activism.

At the nightly campfires on Colorado River trips through the Grand Canyon, stories make their way into legends, passed down from veteran boaters or guides, or read from books

kept in the ‘library box’ on one boat [...] Some of the names in those stories are those of people who died in the canyon, some are the brave folks who first explored it, and one is the river guide who thought he could pilot a wooden boat down the Colorado faster than anyone ever had – and did, in 1983 [when the Emerald Mile broke the record as the fastest boat to run the Grand Canyon; a story told and retold uncountable times, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPcxcxcNsI>] (Leonard, 2014, <https://www.adventure-journal.com/2014/12/historical-badass-grand-canyon-river-guide-kenton-grua/>)

When it comes to the stories themselves, storytelling brings in a fictional component that patches over gaps in memory and embellishes a tale (Casey, 2009). It privileges the emotional and aesthetic instead of technical and functional arguments for the preservation of the canyon. The dory guides’ memories and the evocative stories they retell became the channel in which communal knowledge was disseminated. The more stories are retold the more they contribute to the construction of shared sense of the past that is at the same time malleable and adaptable, depending on the audience.

Reincarnating Past Destruction and Inscribing Experience

The third practice performed by Litton and GCD—reincarnating—relied on material-discursive symbols to remind participants of painful pasts and urge their participation in protecting natural wonders in the future. Reincarnating differs from sensitizing and retelling to the extent that it connects the past with future action through material-discursive reminders. Reminders are “point[s] of connection between past and future,” a *Janus Bifrons* which is apprehended in a present moment situated *between* the past of engagement and the future of enactment, reminding someone “to do or think something that he or she might otherwise forget to do or think” (Casey, 2009: 93). For Litton and GCD, reminding people of natural wonders that had previously been destroyed or altered beyond recognition was essential for preserving the Grand Canyon for future generations. Litton believed that once “it’s gone, it’s hurt, it’s injured. You gain nothing back, ever.”

... there were so many places of wonder and beauty, natural places on the Earth... that were being lost, are still being lost. And I felt we need to remind ourselves of what we're throwing away in this world, what we've given up, what we've allowed to be destroyed (Martin Litton, GCD founder and conservationist).

Reminding is based on material-discursive signs; landmarks set for the future (Casey, 2009).

This included the use of dories (material) christened with names of destroyed places (discursive) and turned into symbols used to reincarnate past destruction and prior experiences. Although virtually any symbol can be used as a reminder, the distinctiveness attached to certain symbols shapes why some are profoundly impactful, while others are not. Reincarnating destructive pasts positions each symbol as an aide-memoire "directing us to take some action or as documentary evidence" (Casey, 2009: 110). We distinguish two ways Litton and GCD reincarnated the past through new material-discursive forms, the first urging future action and the second documenting participants' past experiences.

First, reincarnating the past included reviving past destruction. Litton created a tradition of naming the dories after previously destroyed natural wonders. The boats and their haunting names were used as powerful material-discursive reminders of wild places previously destroyed, fusing the materiality of the dories with the ideational element of lost or injured places and giving new life to destroyed places. Those places now live on only through memory and their re-embodiment in the dories. Table 2 details five dory names and destroyed natural wonders. Figure 2 includes images of dories and their names. George Wendt, dory guide and outfitter, articulated that each dory name became a "message to all of us that some of these other wild places can disappear if man isn't vigilant to limit the ravages of progress." Dimock, another guide, described the dories and their names as both as "a memorial and a reminder that we continue to lose irreplaceable wonders through mankind's careless acts of greed" (GCRG-Summer 2014-2015 (V28N1): 34).

----- Insert Table 2 about here -----

...the names for the boats began to memorialize the Earth's natural wonders, big and small, that have been lost, destroyed in one way or another, or badly injured by human activity... there are a lot of wonderful places that will never be wonderful again... (Martin Litton, GCD founder and conservationist, oral history).

Martin [Litton] started the tradition of naming the boats of wild places lost or compromised and it just makes you think about what could have been or what should have been (Mark Johnson, dory guide, quotes in Martin's Boat, 2016).

...each new boat was christened in memory of a natural wonder that, in the eyes of the boss, had been heedlessly ruined by man. 'To remind us of places we've destroyed without any necessity,' Martin would bark, 'so that maybe we'll think twice before we do it again.' (Fedarko, 2015: 153)

The dories, however, were more than passive archives; eulogies that memorialized destruction through their names. Instead, they became material-discursive embodiments of destroyed natural wonders, symbolically reincarnating those wonders through acts of remembering. The dory names converted the absence of destroyed wonders into new presences in the canyon and their socio-materiality became a core part of the Grand Canyon experience. Geographically distant and previously destroyed natural wonders (Table 2) were transposed over time and space vis-à-vis collective remembering and reincarnated in the dories through a naming ceremony. For example, a majestic grove of towering redwoods in Northern California clear cut in the 1960s and the wild Tuolumne River, flooded in the 1920s following the construction of the O'Shaughnessy Dam, were reincarnated as dories in the present, christened *Emerald Mile* and *Hetch Hetchy* and rebirthed to carry people through the Grand Canyon. Symbolically, Litton's mnemonic community traversed the beautiful and ancient canyon while riding in the guts of destroyed natural wonders. The following quote describes how the dories were intended to function as key elements of the mnemonic community's activism.

...the dories are elements of *our* protest... For the next eighteen days [during a float through the canyon], three of the seven dories - the Tapestry Wall, the Moqui Steps, and the Music Temple - will keep reminding Abbey of the hateful dam that motivated The

Monkey Wrench Gang after burying these wonders of Glen Canyon under the water of "Lake" Powell (Litton, 1977: 14).

Abbey refers to Edward Abbey, an American author who, inspired by the dories, would later write *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), a seminal novel exploring environmental destruction in the southwestern United States.

----- Insert Figure 2 about here -----

The second way reincarnating was performed was by inscribing experiences. This involved constructing material mementos aimed at reminding people of their experience and commemorating important people and events related to the safeguard of the canyon's future. Throughout the canyon, a variety of physical reminders such as "inscriptions, plaques, memorials, and other memorabilia" commemorate important people and events "along the Colorado River corridor of Glen and Grand Canyons" (GCRG-Winter 1996/1997 (V10N1)). This includes an entire museum dedicated to "wrecked dories" that had been destroyed through collisions with the canyon's walls. This material wreckage was displayed to remind people of an olden era they were otherwise not part of. Participants also create their own material reminders to bring their experience back to life long after it had ended. Beyond large numbers of pictures, recorded videos, and collected rocks that can be later used to remind them of their experience, some guides made fire beads with participants for them to take home, described in the following quote and illustrated in Figure 3.

Some guides like to fire beads made from river mud while on a canyon trip. They glob a bit of mud into a bag, bring it to camp, show the folks a few design tricks, let them have a couple of days to make their own beads using knives, forks, & sticks, then the guide fires them up in a coffee can on the coals... Afterwards, folks string them up for necklaces or ankle or wrist bracelets with twine the guide's brought. Nice memory from the Canyon, huh? <http://river-god.com/Grand-Canyon-Stories-Videos/january-2015-first-grand.html>

----- Insert Figure 3 about here -----

We have seen how sensitizing provides a new experience of the canyon, thickening individual memory and helping people to care for the canyon, while retelling discursively attaches meaning to that experience and connects it to the collective memory of the mnemonic community.

Reincarnating completes the picture by reminding people both of past environmental destruction and of their own experience, urging them to participate in the future protection of the canyon.

Reincarnating helped Litton and GCD fulfill its goal of using the dories to remind people of the injuries that have been caused to the Earth, creating an army of deeply motivated citizen activists willing to protect the Grand Canyon in the future. We now turn to the fusion of each practice—sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating—through our model of converting painful memories into mnemonic resources. Our model captures the conjoined nature of the three practices as they reinforce one another throughout the dory experience.

Process Model of Converting Painful Memories into Mnemonic Resources

Our model depicts how memories of painful and destructive pasts are converted into valuable mnemonic resources (Figure 4). Taken together, the three practices are in constant intersection, overlapping and reinforcing one another throughout the curated experience; divisions where one practice or particular modality stops and others start are opaque and largely indecipherable. Our model illustrates how organizations can rely on combinations of semiotic modalities (sensory, discursive, and material-discursive), as a form of multimodal remembering, to generate impactful acts of collective remembering. We find that organizational uses of the past fuse combinations of semiotic modalities with interpretations of the past, present, and future to produce a particular experience for a mnemonic community. Because remembering through multimodality elevates the importance of interactions, it is inherently social in nature as the past is not simply told, but instead experienced through performance.

As the three practices merge together, they serve as critical anchors for converting memories of darker parts of the past into brighter and useful mnemonic resources in the present and future. This included superimposing painful pasts onto present experiences using sensory modalities (sensitizing), comparing and contrasting the past with the present through multigenerational reminiscing and the narration of stories (retelling), and urging future environmental activism through the rebirth of destroyed natural wonders in new material-discursive forms (reincarnating). Synergies amongst the practices helped Litton and GCD work to protect the canyon's future, while also maintaining the memories of destroyed natural wonders and enabling those memories to live on as the fabric of the mnemonic community.

Although multimodal remembering might be applied to both painful and pleasant pasts and exogenous and endogenous histories, we underscore a handful of aspects explaining why our model is particularly helpful for theorizing the ways in which painful memories are converted into mnemonic resources. First, sensitizing practices and the sensory modality, in particular, lends itself to tapping into the potential of negative affective tones. Sensitizing generates involvement as it superimposes distant events in time and space with the reality of individual knowledge and experience. Therein, strong negative emotions buttress the differentiation between painful exogenous pasts and the beauty influencing present experiences, reinforcing the powerful nature of dark, painful, and destructive memories. Indeed, sadness, anger, and even a desire for vengeance strengthen how memories are actualized and enlarged because of what participants now recognize as being absent due to earlier destruction. Second, our findings highlight the importance of contrasting past destruction with present experiences. This comes to the forefront by retelling evocative stories, leveraging the discursive power of narration. Retelling provides a platform to connect actors and events in meaningful ways. They preserve

the memory of past heroes and their battles and they broaden the community by infusing a sense of participation and responsibility in new members. Notably, the stories retold in our study featured painful pasts to help illustrate what might be lost in the future should the mnemonic community fail to protect what natural wonders still exist. It is this discursive contrast between the painful loss of a beautiful past and the wonder of a present experience that will never be complete that motivates engagement for the future. Without previously destroyed natural wonders to discursively elevate, stories that contrast painful pasts with present experiences would be an impossibility. And third, the reincarnating practice gives rebirth to past destruction through novel material-discursive forms. Although those wonders cease to exist in their original corporeal form, their rebirth in new material-discursive modalities symbolically repaired what was lost. We see efforts to revive past destruction as being unique to repurposing painful pasts because positive pasts do not need to be reincarnated; their continuity endures in some original form. Altogether, our research shows how sensitizing, retelling, and reincarnating are used to convert painful memories into useful mnemonic resources by fastening painful external events, distant in time and space, with the here-and-now of individual realities and re-presenting the past as a foundation for future collective action.

----- Insert Figure 4 about here -----

In our model, small cyclical arrows bridging the three practices capture the combined nature of the different practices. For instance, retelling by narrating stories of destroyed natural wonders combined with reincarnating those same natural wonders in the material-discursive form of the stories and their names, while also sensitizing members of the mnemonic community as the guide's voices echoed off the canyon's ancient walls. Such comingling of practices characterizes multimodal remembering as participants attributed meaning in the present with

different representations of past destruction that built an urgency to protect the canyon in the future. Even after their trip through the canyon concluded, members of the mnemonic community were later reminded, time and time again, of their experience and call to activism through the material mementoes they took with them (e.g., fire bead necklaces). Unlike prior research on organizational uses of the past, which points to “textual, material, and oral memory forms” as being generative in the evocation of the past for present purposes (Schultz & Hernes, 2013: 10), our model emphasizes the performativity of the past as the combining and recombining of practices and semiotic modalities with one another produce collective memory as experienced. The large backgrounded arrows signal how practices, modalities, modes, and acts of remembering work in concert with one another. These synergies are strengthened when organizations focus on painful parts of the past due to their inherently evocative and memorable nature (Casey, 2009; Freud, 2003).

Our model also advances our understanding of the past as experienced by elevating the significance of affect and sensory encounters, what Creed and colleagues (2020) dubbed “aesthetic sensibilities.” When it comes to experiencing the past, we argue that multimodal remembering is just as much something that is felt as it is understood. Activating particular human senses through curated experiences of past pain and destruction includes invoking sadness and anger for what has been lost, recognizing love for what participants are called to protect in the future, and outlining a clear call to action by empathizing with Litton’s rage. What is more, collective aspects of remembering within a mnemonic community overlays togetherness onto strong negative affect, where the past as experienced builds social connectedness. Thus, our model contributes to research on the curation of collective memory experiences by emphasizing how organizations can use darker parts of the past to help members of a mnemonic community

reconceive themselves as part of an ancient and communal heritage, bridging human senses and action with the vastness of unfolding time (Bjornerud, 2018). Litton believed that people need to understand the painful past and the wildness of natural wonders to take part in the protection of their future. The continuing existence of the Grand Canyon and the enlarged community of activists upholding its protection is a testimony to the success of their strategy.

DISCUSSION

We wanted to understand how organizations make use of particularly painful parts of the past to serve present goals. In particular, we examined the work of Martin Litton and GCD, including how they repurposed past destruction of environmental wonders to protect the Grand Canyon moving forward. Despite an explosion in articles exploring organizational uses of the past, few studies have considered how painful memories can be converted into valuable mnemonic resources. Instead, a theme of organizational forgetting has emerged, which emphasizes how organizations “suppress a painful past and start anew” (Cruz, 2014), consider destroying material reminders (Do et al., 2019), and pick and choose remnants that they want to repurpose for present goals (Anteby and Molnár, 2012). Only a scattering of studies has also considered repurposing painful parts of the past, but with an inward focus on the organization’s own history (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Van Lent and Smith, 2020). By theorizing memories of pain and destruction as valuable mnemonic resources, we instead highlight the generative potential that darker parts of the past can have for organizations, especially when past destruction belongs to someone else. In contrast to moving past the closure of a plant (Bell, 2012) or demise of an organization (Do et al., 2018), our findings emphasize how organizations can be created as an embodiment of painful memories, both as a means to preserve the past and to protect environmental wonders in the future. Stemming from our findings, we continue by discussing a

number of insights below, both relative to the generative potential of painful memories and how darker parts of the past contribute to theory on sense of place.

The Generative Potential of Painful Memories

In contrast to examples of organizational strategies for leaving behind unwanted memories (Basque and Langley, 2018; Mena et al., 2016), we contribute to the uses of the past literature by illustrating how organizations can remember painful parts of the past for present and future needs. This insight provides a clear alternative to the theme of forgetting, one where organizations need not leave behind painful and destructive events, but instead can actively build a vibrant mnemonic community around them. Our emphasis on the conversion of painful memories into mnemonic resources advances the literature in two distinct ways.

First, we illustrate that organizations can be created as mnemonic projects with the goal of perpetuating memories of destruction. Additionally, when organizations choose to repurpose painful and destructive parts of the past, they can do so by looking outward as an expansion of their historical reach. Instead of organizations repurposing what was once theirs, as is the case when they look inward towards their own painful historical remnants (Schrempf-Stirling et al., 2016; Van Lent and Smith, 2020), we show how organizations can also repurpose what was never theirs. Thus, our findings contrast the handful of prior studies examining how organizations might repurpose painful parts of the past by instead looking outward, beyond the bounds of an organization's own personal past and towards the collective memory commons (Illia and Zamparini, 2016) and history-at-large (Zundel et al., 2016). Our emphasis on productive uses of exogenous events expands the possibilities of what bygone events and memories can be repurposed, adding to discussions of giving rebirth to past demise (Walsh and Bartunek, 2011). We illustrate how GCD repurposed numerous events of environmental

destruction that they were not engaged with nor personally responsible for. To accomplish this, GCD retold stories about each destructive event and rendered each destroyed natural wonder a namesake for a particular dory as a way to repurpose exogenous memories and bring them into the mnemonic community.

Additionally, our findings illustrate how organizations might repurpose darker parts for the common good. Prior studies depict organizations repurposing history-at-large to gain a competitive edge, for example, reminding stakeholders about an organization's resistance to darker parts of the past, while emphasizing how their competitors complied with past injustices, all with the intention of gaining a strategic advantage (Brunninge and Fridriksson, 2017). Our research evidences how organizations' engagement with the past may be driven by less exploitative purposes. GCDs did not repurpose painful pasts to gain advantages within a competitive marketplace. Instead, they used history-at-large to build community and protect a still existing natural wonder. By highlighting this nuance relative to use, we show that organizational remembering matters for more than competitive purposes. When it comes to repurposing painful pasts, we argue that organizations can be founded around external painful events and use history-at-large to emphasize their mission and noble principles, including conservation, environmental protection, and the custodianship of nature. This calls for further research to investigate possible differences between mission driven and profit driven businesses relative to their engagement with the past.

We see efforts to repurpose exogenous historical events as being especially significant for particular types of organizations. Most obviously, activist organizations, including those with strong socially responsible missions, whose focus on building mnemonic communities lends especially well to drawing on painful parts of history-at-large. We also see efforts to repurpose

painful exogenous memories as being fruitful for organizations without a past (i.e., start-ups or entrepreneurial ventures), for example, emergent organizations that spotlight widespread issues of inequality (Coslor et al., 2020) or others that rely on “generational units” to build collective memory (Lippman and Aldrich, 2016). Relatedly, organizations with severely tainted pasts might be looking to “pivot” – referring to radical transformations away from what they once were (Hampel et al., 2020). For organizations to accomplish such goals, we point to the potential value of remembering bad remnants from the outside world, which can become deployed as productive resources of the organization’s mnemonic traces. Organizations can leverage useful parts of darker pasts and leave other parts behind without running the risk of being blamed for misremembering (Booth et al., 2007; Coraiola & Derry, 2020) since they are not intrinsically associated with history-at-large. For example, repurposing painful exogenous events expands the types of historical reinterpretations that can be used to shape an organization’s identity and culture. We saw this with GCD, where Litton exercised great discretion in choosing which destroyed natural wonders might resonate the most with the mnemonic community. Plucking select parts of darker pasts, of course, needs to be done in a manner that draws clear links between painful memories and the mission of the organization. By contrast, inauthentic approaches, which might obscure why particular painful memories are chosen, could be to the detriment of organizational uses of the past.

Second, we advance research on experiencing the past (Lubinski, 2018) by emphasizing the interplay between practices and modalities that enabled participants to feel, see, and touch elements of a destructive past. Akin to Bjornerud’s (2018: 176) description of “intergenerational commons,” the experiences curated through the conversion of painful memories produced a unified sense of community, one where participants embark on a shared mnemonic journey. By

blending semiotic modalities with the human imagination in acts of remembering, participants visualized travelling back in time to visit natural wonders before their destruction, witnessing their demise through the construction of dams intended to tame each wonder's wildness, swimming down great depths into sterile artificial reservoirs to see what sunken wonders have become, standing on the floors of ancient forests now clear cut, and so forth, all before they return to the present, exhausted and having transcended time and place. They re-arrive with new perspective, one that is much more appreciative of "timefulness" and glimpses into possible futures that call for their environmental activism. In participants' minds, the destroyed natural wonders that they have now witnessed are reincarnated through the dories and accompany them in their present experience. Drawing inspiration from Bjornerud (2018: 177), we posit that converting painful memories through multimodal remembering is one way "to transport [people] to other worlds, to transcend time" by blending semiotic modalities and stories with the past, present, and future. Curating experiences that convert painful memories is one way to address the short-termism that both dominates much of corporate sustainability culture (Bansal and DesJardine, 2014; Kim et al., 2019) and embodies a timelessness that Litton vehemently detested.

Our insights regarding experiencing reinterpretations of painful pasts also highlights the collective nature of acts of remembering. Thus, our work adds to Casey's (2009) conception of remembering by illustrating practices used by organizations to repurpose painful pasts into collective memories. Our contribution is in direct response to prior critiques of Casey's work for focusing on individual memories, but without accounting for the collective (see Donohoe, 2014). Similar to Casey (2009), our study emphasizes how painful memories can be profoundly powerful. However, in contrast to Casey, whose scope is limited to individual memories, our

study highlights the moving nature of painful memories from a shared, experiential perspective. More specifically, Casey explains how an individual might attribute suffering to their childhood home, for example, but it remains implicit how painful memories ascribed to particular places might become shared. Our findings address this shortcoming by painting a picture regarding the deployment of painful memories and how those memories help to both build and sustain a mnemonic community. Naming practices linked to destroyed natural wonders, writing and retelling stories that reproduce images of both olden beauty and brutal ruin, and sharing painful memories through community initiation, all elevate the power of darkness, pain, and destruction to a collective level. Together, the practices performed and experiences produced by Litton and GCD exemplify how organizations might activate painful pasts as productive mnemonic resources. Accordingly, we posit that painful memories on a collective level are less a question about individual experience and more about the synergies that become possible when numerous members of a mnemonic community interact through remembering processes. Indeed, painful memories, as part of shared experiences, can be transmuted into good as reinterpretations become positive and are used in support of future actions.

Painful Pasts and Place

We also offer a few points of discussion regarding how our work contributes to organizational research on place, particularly the intersection of painful pasts and sense of place. First, we contribute to a growing, albeit small, group of researchers exploring the nexus of painful and traumatic pasts and place in organization studies (Dacin and Dacin, 2008; Do et al., 2019; Martí and Fernández, 2013). In particular, we distinguish between two types of place, corporeal places and phantasmatic places. Corporeal places live on in their natural geological form, *embodied in material-discursive objects* and serve as contexts to organize; the Grand

Canyon represented a corporeal home for Litton's mnemonic community. Contrastingly, phantasmatic places have been destroyed or permanently altered, but are given rebirth in a spiritual sense, *re-embodied into material-discursive objects* through collective memories of pain, destruction, and trauma that shape the lore of a mnemonic community. Taken together and illustrated in our findings, both types can play starring and synergistic roles in the experience and sense of place (also see Casey, 1996; Smith, 2006; Tuan, 1977).

We also emphasize the potential value of remembering pain, trauma, destruction, horror, and so forth when it comes to theorizing place. Unlike some studies (e.g., Do et al., 2019; Hahn, 2018; Morgan, 2018), which emphasize the removal of material reminders associated with memories of pain, suffering, and trauma, we find that one way organizations can build a sense of place is by fighting against the erasure of their memories to keep former destruction alive. The recreated intimacy with previously destroyed places gives rise to the desire to care for other places in the future. Thus, we see multimodal remembering as an important addition to the repertoire of dwelling practices that constitute and characterize sense of place and place attachment (Ingold, 1993). That is, multimodal remembering not only offers important insight into how destroyed places are remembered and immortalized through rebirth, re-embodiment, and reincarnation in spectral form, but also underscores what curated experiences of painful pasts and a sense of place can achieve.

Second, we contribute to a burgeoning interest in custodianship by adding place to the practices and traditions that the extant literature has explored (Dacin et al., 2019; Lok and De Rond, 2013; Wright et al., 2020). The custodianship and curation of place and experience of place serves to build both a sense of place and place attachment. Indeed, the guides described themselves as "custodians of this treasure's wellbeing... guardians of its great future." Similar to

other studies on custodianship (Crawford and Dacin, 2020), we underscore the critical lines of defense that custodians play in environmentally-focused contexts. However, unlike those studies, which treat place as existing in the present, we highlight the uniqueness of protecting previously destroyed places that live on only through collective memories and their reembodyed, phantasmatic forms. What is distinct about our story is that destroyed natural wonders, as places with painful pasts, can still live on through custodial work. Thus, we posit that places that have become obscured or destroyed can still be worthwhile endeavors for custodians if those performing the custodial work can imagine novel ways to repackage and leverage their former beauty. The “near and far” of place is, therefore, not simply a spatial distinction (Gieryn, 2000: 464), but also one that transcends distant time.

Third, our work adds important insight to research exploring the nexus of place and environmental sustainability (Guthey et al, 2014). Indeed, place is prominent in understanding the responsibility of organizations to maintain the natural landscapes they shape and inhabit (Guthey et al., 2014; Shrivastava, 1994). As such, organizations, such as GCD, can be regarded as place builders that actively work to craft a sense of place (Thomas and Cross, 2007) and build a deep engagement between constituents and place that translates into higher levels of future care (Elmes et al., 2012). We see this insight as being especially useful for organizations and the natural environment researchers; destroyed natural wonders become something more than reasons for mourning, perhaps setting the stage for future research to explore additional ways in which organizations might give places rebirth in ghostly forms or how spectral phenomena can buttress the work of environmental activists. We imagine that giving rebirth to places of past destruction and trauma might inform organizational strategies and approaches to framing in

response to climate change and other environmental challenges (Hoffman and Jennings, 2015; Nyberg et al., 2020).

Of note, we focused on memories of environmental destruction. However, the Grand Canyon, as a particular place, has also been home to indigenous peoples for many centuries, including the Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, and Navajo Tribes, all of which have their own painful memories as their survival has been challenged time and time again. We narrowed our context to the work of GCD and the natural wonders Litton emphasized. Future research may want to take up the important task of exploring the impact of place, place making, and the destruction of place in the lives of Indigenous peoples.

Closing Thought

Martin Litton died in 2014 at the age of 97. A dory was baptized with the name *Marble Canyon* as a fitting tribute to Litton and his environmental activism. Litton believed that placing people in dories and remembering the past helped to connect those people to the “soul” and “spiritualism” of the canyon. On the maiden voyage of *Marble Canyon*, Dale Duffy, the builder and guide rowing the dory, commented, “[Martin Litton] is here with me now, I can feel it.” The guides remember Litton as “one of the last great warriors.” The mnemonic community continues to be inspired by memories of Litton.

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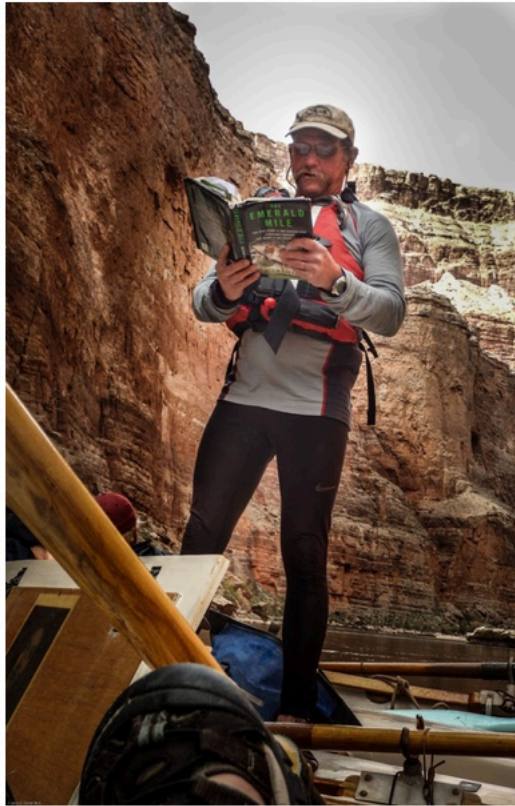
TABLE 1

Practices, Semiotic Modalities, and Examples			
	Sensitizing	Retelling	Reincarnating
Description	Superimposes the past onto present experiences and contributes to the very construction of the present.	Compares and contrasts memories of the past with present experiences.	Bridges the past with present experiences, while also urging future environmental activism.
Dominant Modalities	Sensory	Discursive	Material-Discursive
Examples From Our Findings	(1) Taking the canyon to people by authoring articles and books in with prominent environmentalists and activist organizations and (2) bringing people to the canyon to experience its grandeur and learn to care for and want to protect natural wonders.	(1) Multigenerational reminiscing for "old timers" to recall the past and also socialize newcomers to a past that was never theirs' and (2) narrating the same evocative stories at historically significant locations in the canyon and over meals and campfires.	(1) Reincarnating destroyed natural wonders in new material (dory boats) and discursive (dory names) forms and (2) memorializing people's experiences in the canyon through fire beads, reminding them to continue their environmental activism in the future.

TABLE 2

Descriptions of Destructive Histories and Named Dories			
Place	Pre-Destruction Description	Post-Destruction Description	Dory Name
Northern California	The location included a large stretch of old growth redwoods in Northern California, referred to as the tallest virgin trees in the world.	The redwoods were cut down by a logging company in an effort to disqualify the grove from inclusion in a national park.	Emerald Mile
Yosemite National Park, California	The Hetch Hetchy Valley was considered to be a place of natural beauty, rivalling the grandeur of Yosemite Valley.	O'Shaughnessy Dam was finished in 1923 on the Tuolumne River, resulting in the flooding of the entire Hetch Hetchy Valley.	Hetch Hetchy
San Luis Obispo County, California	Avila Beach is situated near multiple fault lines. It is the site of the largest arrest total during the United States anti-nuclear movement and a site discussed in Charles Perrow's seminal book, <i>Normal accidents: Living with high risk technologies</i> .	Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, commissioned in 1985, was built in close proximity to the Hosgrui Fault and is considered the most controversial nuclear power plant in United States history. The power plant was strongly opposed by Litton.	Diablo Canyon
Alabama, Georgia, and the Florida Panhandle	Indigenous tribes settled along the Chattahoochee River as early as 1000 BC. The river has served a number of historical cultural roles, including the division of indigenous tribal communities and a location of European-American settlement.	Several damming and channeling projects have altered the Chattahoochee River landscape to improve navigation for commercial barges and created the Walter F. George Lake, a reservoir that required the evacuation and flooding of a number of communities and historic sites of settlement.	Chattahoochee
Glen Canyon, Arizona	Glen Canyon was a geological marvel carved by the Colorado River and its various tributaries. The historic canyon has been referred to as exceeding the beauty of all of canyons in the United States.	Glen Canyon Dam was finished in 1966, resulting in the flooding of Glen Canyon and the creation of Lake Powell, representing the second largest man-made reservoir in the United States.	Hidden Passage

FIGURE 1
Retelling Through the Narration of Stories



Source: <http://river-god.com/Grand-Canyon-Stories-Videos/january-2015-first-grand.html>

FIGURE 2
Images of Dorries and Litton Rowing in the Grand Canyon

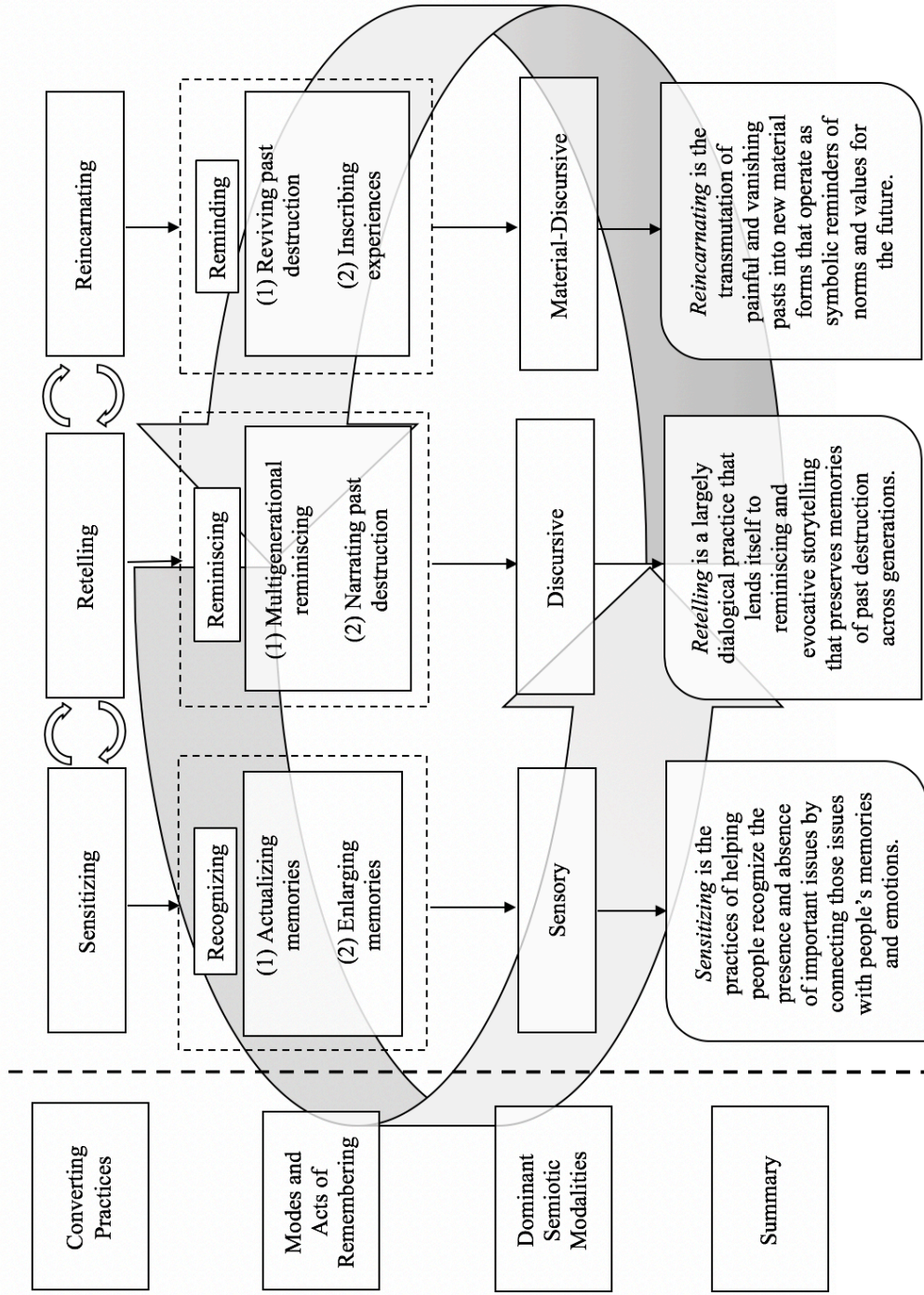


FIGURE 3
Fire Beads



Source: <http://river-god.com/Grand-Canyon-Stories-Videos/january-2015-first-grand.html>

Figure 4. A Model of Converting Painful Memories into Mnemonic Resources



Biographical Notes

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