The Collective Memory Reader

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
2011

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

www.oup.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The collective memory reader / edited by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-19-533741-9; ISBN 978-0-19-533742-6 (pbk.)
1. Collective memory.
I. Olick, Jeffrey K., 1964– II. Vinitzky-Seroussi, Vered 1960–.
III. Levy, Daniel, 1962–
HM1033.C62 2011
302.01—dc22 2010014503

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

Introduction

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Memory, even conceived in its social dimensions, is hardly a new topic. "Zakhor!" (Remember!), commanded the Hebrew bible repeatedly, as for instance in Deuteronomy 32:7, when Moses instructed the assembly of Israel to "Remember the days of old / Consider the years of the many generations." Priests and politicians before and since have intuitively understood the cultic powers of the past to underwrite solidarity and motivate action. And poets, autobiographers, and philosophers alike have for millennia been parsing memory's complexities, pondering its mysteries, and extolling its import.

In the past thirty or so years, however, we seem to have entered a new phase in the contemplation of memory. Many commentators now refer to a "memory boom" that began sometime in the late 1970s and that has only begun to wind down since the turn of the millennium (though many see it as continuing undiminished).[1] The story goes something like this: following the decline of postwar modernist narratives of progressive improvement through an ever-expanding welfare state, nation-states turned to the past as a basis for shoring up their legitimacy. The decline of utopian visions supposedly redirected our gaze to collective pasts, which served as a repository of inspiration for repressed identities and unfulfilled claims. Without unifying collective aspirations, identity politics proliferated. And most often, these identities nursed a wound and harbored a grudge. The memory boom thus unleashed a culture of trauma and regret, and states are allegedly now judged on how well they atone for their past

1. While the present preoccupation with memory has its origins in the Western European context and associated debates about modernity, it has since permeated political-cultural debates in other context as well. See, for instance, Schwartz and Kim (2010); Stern (2010, 2006); Lee and Yang (2007); Makdisi and Silverstein (2006); Smith (2006); Judt (2005); Jelin (2003); Roudometof (2002); Wertsch (2002); Fujitani, White, and Yoneyama (2001); Fabian (1999); Roniger and Sznajder (1999); Verdery (1999); Duara (1997); Trouillot (1997); Tumarkin (1997); Mudimbe and Jewsiewicki (1993). This list is by no means exhaustive, or even extensive.

misdeeds rather than on how well they meet their fiscal obligations and inspire future projects. In the commercial sphere, these transformations in political legitimation were supposedly matched by a commodification of nostalgia, a popularization of history, and an interest in "memory," both individual and collective. Both of the latter—individual memory and collective memory—are seen to be at risk, the former by neurological decay and sensory overload, the latter by dying generations and official denial.

On the analytical side, the memory boom has supposedly also given rise to varieties of inquiry, including science, scholarship, memoir writing, curatorial work, oral history projects, and the like. While baby-boomers worry about the living death of Alzheimer's disease, neuroscientists search for its biological basis (Eichenbaum 2002; Pillemer 1998; Schachter 1997). While trauma victims seek to overcome their ongoing suffering from post-traumatic stress, psychologists develop frameworks for treatment (Leys 2000; Herman 1997; Caruth 1995). While past oppression has seemingly become the coin of identity, cultural theorists inquire into the origins of the politics of victimhood (Fassin and Rechtman 2009; Olick 2007; Bell 2006; Kaplan 2005; Edkins 2003; Antze and Lambek 1996). And while societies confront the legacies of their misdeeds, social and political scientists analyze the conditions for successful transition and salutary commemoration (Elster 2004; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002; Teitel 2002; Minow 1999; McAdams 1997). All of these, and more, are constituents of what has come to be referred to as the new "memory studies," which has acquired its own journals, been elaborated in countless edited volumes, established research centers, received grants, and been the subject of university courses.[2]

At the same time, a powerful line of critique has argued that "memory studies" is merely part of a broader "memory industry" that has arisen in response to the "memory boom" and that as the boom inevitably goes bust, the industry it has generated will also disappear, or at least suffer a downturn (Rosenfeld 2009; Winter 2006; Berliner 2005; Klein 2000; Lowenthal 1998; Maier 1993). We agree that some of the scholarship as well as other products about memory that have arisen in response to the memory boom may indeed have been more trendy than durable. But, in the first place, it is not clear whether the production of a scholarly and cultural surplus is a sign of a field's decadence or of its fertility. In the second place, the transformations in attitudes toward the past of which the memory boom is a part have not been as superficial as the critique implies, in part because they are longer-term, more gradual, and more

2. Significant programs include, among many others, the Warwick Centre for Memory Studies, the Center for Interdisciplinary Memory Research in Essen, the Center for the Study of History and Memory at Indiana University, the research project titled "Social Memory and Historical Justice" at Swinburne Institute of Technology in Melbourne, the Collaborative Research Centre Memory Cultures at the University of Giessen, and the Luce Program in Individual and Collective Memory at Washington University in St. Louis. Major journals in the field, in addition to many special issues of more general journals, include *History and Memory* and *Memory Studies*. Edited volumes are too numerous to cite.

complex than they have often been characterized; the preoccupation with memory in all its different forms is a perennial one, though to be sure it is varied and changing.

In contrast to the critique of the "memory boom," then, our effort here begins from the premise that, far from declining in relevance, many of the analytical frameworks with which scholars have approached the issues highlighted under the rubric of memory studies represent the outlines of an increasingly important paradigm that unifies diverse interests across numerous disciplines, and consolidates long-standing perspectives within them, in perspicuous ways. Our contemporary interest in memory, we believe, is no mere fad, though it risks being mistaken for one if it is seen entirely from the present and if certain intellectual conditions for consolidating memory studies as a coherent field of inquiry are not met.

The Collective Memory Reader presents key texts—the selection of which we explain toward the end of this essay—that underwrite and express the long-standing, though surely intensifying, interest in memory. As the title indicates, however, our focus is on a particular kind of interest in memory, namely that which emphasizes its social or collective nature. Collective memory has been a key referent of memory studies since even before its consolidation in scholarly and public discourse in the 1920s and with increasing frequency since the 1980s. Before explaining the structure of this Reader and the principles that guided our selection and arrangement of materials, the present essay aims to specify where this interest in memory—and in collective memory in particular—came from and how it has developed, for again we see it as of much longer standing than any supposed contemporary memory boom, however important the concentration of interest in the last thirty years has been.

We emphasize first the transformations in our understanding of time that emerged with—or indeed constitute—modernity, for modernity's reconfiguration of the relations among past, present, and future has transformed the meaning and role of memory in essential ways. Next, in part prefiguring the organization of the readings that follow, we explore the history of thinking about and analyzing the social dimensions of memory leading up to the landmark work of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925. While Halbwachs is often considered the founding father of contemporary memory studies, we demonstrate that his ideas did not emerge from a vacuum and that he was not the only scholar whose writings have contributed to, or should be seen as contributing to, contemporary memory studies; tracing out alternate sources of scholarly interest in memory, and the strange history of Halbwachs's canonization as a founding father, we argue, produces a richer and more coherent foundation for contemporary efforts. Finally, we examine transformations in the conditions of memory, and the ways in which we have studied it, in the contemporary period, the period that has supposedly given rise to the memory boom. Our goal in presenting these extensive discussions is twofold: first, we aim to correct what we see as a misleading narrative about the origins of

contemporary memory studies; and second, we seek to highlight the ways in which the resources we provide in this Reader can help consolidate the future of this still-developing and, we argue, crucially important field of inquiry.

Memory and Modernity

Like everything else, memory has a history. *Memoria*, mother of the muses (including *Clio*, the muse of history), is the basic form of our relationship to the past, of our existence in time. But this relationship has clearly changed in profound ways over the course of history. Obviously, as many of the readings in the following pages show, many factors are at play in defining broad epochal differences. Contemporary historians of memory, for instance, have pointed to the importance of media technologies in shaping what it means to remember: being able to read and write fundamentally alters what we remember and how we remember it; societies that keep written records have a different relationship to the past than ones that do not. Walter Ong (1967, 2002), for instance, has shown that in the contemporary period, which is dominated by images and visual culture, rhetoric has regained the prominence it once enjoyed in manuscript culture. Drawing on Ong's insight, the historian Patrick Hutton (1993: 16) argues that "over the long run, the appreciation of memory as habit is displaced by one of memory as representation." Based on Ong's history of communications media, Hutton (1993: 16) thus links the changing modes of communication with different historical perspectives on memory: "orality with the reiteration of living memory; manuscript literacy with the recovery of lost wisdom; print literacy with the reconstruction of a distinct past; and media literacy with the deconstruction of the forms with which past images are composed." During this last stage of media literacy, moreover, memory has been marked by a high degree of self-reflexivity. This new kind of self-conscious memory thus simultaneously helps to explain the so-called memory boom and contributes to it.

Moreover, given what we now know about neural plasticity, it is clear that changes in the forms of memory are not merely sociocultural: a mind that was trained to remember telephone numbers is rather different from one that was not, or is not anymore; one that developed the capacity to perform long oral narratives is in important ways different from one that was trained to reproduce long written ones, and both of these are rather different from minds that can simply use Google to search for an inscribed original, or a snippet view of it. When we say that technologies of memory and the ways we use them have changed over time, therefore, we need to remember that the brain is also a technology of memory and that even its operations are historically malleable. Psychological study, even the most brain-oriented, is thus an essential part of the history of memory, not something that stands outside it.

Of course, neither brains nor technologies nor the interactions between them exhaust the outlines of the history of memory, or of history that explains

changes in memory. At the most basic existential level, for instance, scholars commonly draw a distinction between the "cyclical" temporality of premodern societies and the "linear" temporality of modern ones (Eliade 1971), though there are good reasons to doubt the clarity with which such distinctions are often applied. Perhaps more convincingly, many have written of the history of the idea of progress, in which the horizon of expectation stretches farther beyond the space of experience after the birth of the modern age than it did before it. As Reinhart Koselleck (1985: 22) has put it, before the modern era, "the future of the end of the world is absorbed within time by the Church as a constituting element, and thus does not exist in a linear sense at the end point of time. . . . In contrast, the experience in a century of bloody struggles [the seventeenth] was, above all, that the religious wars did not herald final judgment. . . . This disclosed a new and unorthodox future." According to Koselleck (1985: 14), "There is thus a stark contrast between a world of prophecy, in which events are merely symbols of that which is already known . . . and one of prognosis, which produces time within which and out of which it weaves."

It is not difficult to extrapolate from such an account how the role of memory changes under such circumstances. From the Italian Renaissance through the age of Enlightenment, according to this kind of account, both the perception and reality of the rate of social change increased to an extent previously inconceivable. An acknowledgment of distance from the past is thus a hallmark of Western modernity, in which our sense of time—which treats past, present, and future as more clearly delineated than in previous epochs—yields a sense of difference from our ancestors. In other words, distance from the past only came to be understood and recognized as something that matters in the course of history. In the Renaissance, this sense of difference was new, and yet still different from our own. The present at that time was often seen as a matter of decline from a golden age of antiquity; by the seventeenth century, commentators were arguing vigorously in what was known as the "Querelles des anciens et des modernes" ("Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns") about the relative merits of the present and the past (DeJean 1997); it was only after this debate that belief in the superiority of the modern carried the day. But carry the day it did, with many positive consequences, and surely more negative ones than anticipated as well (Fritzsche 2004). What is most clear, though, is that the problem of our relation to the past arises in its present form only when we experience ourselves as having traveled far beyond it, as if to a foreign country (see especially Lowenthal 1985). And this has increasingly been the case over the last two or so centuries.

Beyond these transformations in temporality, moreover, related transformations in social structure altered the status of memory as well. The past is a foreign country not simply because it is long ago, but because it is often far away. In the age of mass immigration, for instance, distance from the past is quite literal, when residents of the "new world" define themselves in relation to the "old country" (Anderson 1991). But this sense of distance from the past is even more complex and of longer standing. One of the basic features of

modernization adumbrated by sociologists is the increasing differentiation of society (Durkheim 1984 [1915]). Prior to the division of labor associated with the Industrial Revolution, the varieties of experience in localities and across short life spans were rather limited and uniform. And in such times and places, the foundations of cohesion were assumed rather than hypothetical: where experiences are largely identical among people both in a given time and place and across generations (a concept that itself depends on temporal differentiation and occurs only when there is marked social change; see Mannheim 1952 [1928], Schuman and Scott 1989), identity is manifest in the rhythms of everyday life and in the ritualism of cyclical communion. But where people from different milieus congregate together in polyglot urban settings, leaving behind both their earlier contexts and to some degree their earlier selves, where the labors of life are more highly differentiated than in rural households, where classes and guilds and interest groups form, the basis of agreement and the bonds of commonality are much less obvious, requiring vast new efforts and conceptual frameworks.

Before the age of the individual, then, the bonds of civility and foundations of solidarity were less *problematic* in the authentic sense of that term: how we belong together, and are constituted as groups, seemed more obvious and less in need of contemplation and special measures. The problem of *collective* memory thus arises in a particular time and a particular place (which is not to say there are not other versions of the problem elsewhere), namely where collective identity is no longer as obvious as it once was (Nora 1989; Megill 1998).

There have, of course, been other significant changes in the conditions for memory since the era of high modernity, but we reserve comment on those transformations—usually associated with "postmodernity"—for the moment; our purpose here is to draw out longer trajectories within which to situate the discontinuities assumed in diagnoses of the late twentieth-century memory boom.

The Long History of Memory Studies

Not only does memory have a history, so too does our analysis of it. As we saw, biblical texts enjoined groups to recall their common origins, in ways both similar to and different from the ways modern national leaders do. Classical philosophers like Plato and Aristotle provided enduring metaphors—like that of the mind as a wax tablet or of memorization as a sorting into bins (Coleman 2005; Carruthers 1990). Augustine of Hippo is not only credited with having invented the autobiography as a form of memory at the turn of the fifth century, but his spatial understanding of memory, based on the image of a staircase, also contributed to the remarkable techniques medieval and Renaissance orators developed for remembering long texts (Yates 1966); these techniques clearly rested on durable intuitions about how memorization works. And later, Enlightenment philosophers like John Locke found in memory the ultimate

source of the self, namely the awareness of self-sameness through time, presaging our contemporary discourse of identity (Taylor 1992; Gergen 1991; MacIntyre 1984; Erikson 1994; Mead 1934; James 1910). Contemporary scholars who analyze memory can thus draw a lineage for their inquiries back to these and other important insights.

Nevertheless, modern perspectives on memory and historicity are profoundly different from much of what came before (though differences are not as absolute and exclusive as they are often portrayed). Part of the change in our view of the past—and of history and memory as ways of framing it—might be characterized as emanating from the triumph not only of the idea of progress but also of the associated "logocentrism" of this Western modernity—the valuation of reason and rationality over other criteria. In terms of memory, this has involved a shift from an emphasis on knowledge *from* the past about *how* to do things to an emphasis on knowledge *about* the past *that* certain things happened (Hacking 1998); memory now seems to be not so much about preservation of folkways in ritual and repetition (see the discussion of Ong and Hutton above), but about the acquisition of knowledge in learning and recitation, and our analytical frameworks thus seek to parse these capacities.

In the late nineteenth century, avatars of logocentrism in the natural sciences—particularly Wilhelm Wundt (1897, 1910, 1912) and Hermann Ebbinghaus (1913), two of the founding fathers of experimental psychology—thus began to study the cognitive substrata of remembering systematically with the tools of modern science.[3] In the early twentieth century, writers like Richard Semon (1921, 1923), whose work has proven generative for many later theorists (though this is something of a well-kept secret; see Schacter 2001), sought to understand cultural inheritance with the tools of evolutionary biology. Most famously, Sigmund Freud approached the psychodynamics of memory as a physician, though to be sure Freud had a deep, even overriding, appreciation for the role of the irrational in psychic and cultural life. Psychoanalysis of various kinds, along with the anthropological study of mythologies, has thus undertaken the tasks of demystification, individual and social. Indeed, Ian Hacking (1998: 209) has suggested that these new sciences of memory "emerged as surrogate sciences of the soul, empirical sciences, positive sciences that would provide new kinds of knowledge in terms of which to cure, help, and control the one aspect of human beings that had hitherto been resistant to positivist science." If previously we embraced memory as a source of mystery and haunting, we thus now seek to solve those mysteries and exorcise those demons with the tools of analysis.

Where we earlier derived meaning from worlds of myth, moreover, we now establish truth through the study of history and have developed methodological principles for doing so; indeed, the theory of history was one of the most

3. Efforts to clarify the neurological foundations of memory were conducted by Paul Broca as early as (1861). For a comprehensive account of the history of memory research in psychology, see Danziger (2008).

important intellectual and political growth enterprises in the late nineteenth century. Perhaps the overwhelming result of logocentrism in historical thinking was the tradition of historicism, a manifestation of the Enlightenment's widespread belief that history was linear (or at least dialectical) and irreversible. The most famous such view is elaborated in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, which offers a teleological account of history as "none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom" (2007: 19).

Modern philosophies of history, however, can be understood in at least two distinct ways. On the one hand, a progressivist account allows the evaluation of different nations according to their relative advancement. For Hegel, the Prussian state was clearly the most advanced in history, the apotheosis of Reason. More generally, as Koselleck (1985) has formulated it, such views led to a perception of the "noncontemporaneity of the contemporaneous,"[4] namely the belief that some societies are more "advanced" than others existing at the same time; and such views, whether implicit or explicit, philosophical or political, allow a great deal, including the exploitation of those considered behind or inferior. On the other hand, historicism also gives rise to its seeming opposite, namely historical relativism—the belief that each particular culture has its own intrinsic principle, incommensurable and incomparable with any other according to any general scheme.[5]

Despite the strong apparent opposition between historicism and relativism, however, both led in the same direction: namely, to a new alliance between nation-states and a sense of the past. The connections between the rise of the nation-state and the status of history writing are well documented in the historiographical literature (Iggers 1968; Breisach 1995); the role of memory understood as broader than what professional historians produce has recently emerged as a topic for scholars of nationalism as well (e.g., Smith 1986).

To be sure, the triumph of logocentrism has never been absolute, and our contemporary set of interests in memory has as much to do with the reaction against it as with its triumph. Indeed, many scholars have characterized the late nineteenth century as experiencing a "crisis of memory" (Wolf 2002; Terdiman 1993). For the Enlightenment faith in progress brought with it a Romantic reaction, in which commitment to ever increasing prosperity was challenged by perceptions that modern rationality and order brought with them a soul-withering sterility. During a period in which science and administration

4. The term comes originally from the art historian Wilhelm Pinder's work on generations (1926), and is known through the sociologist Karl Mannheim's response to it (Mannheim 1952 [1928]). Koselleck (1985) interpellates the term for his purposes as a philosopher of history.

5. While Wundt, as already mentioned, is most often recognized as the founding father of experimental psychology and thus as an avatar of logocentrism, it is much less often noted that Wundt also espoused a form of cultural relativism as the founder of what he called *Völkerpsychologie* or cultural psychology, which attributed distinct psychological dispositions to unique cultural groups and called for the study of these cultural horizons of cognition. John D. Greenwood (2009) has thus argued that scholarly amnesia about Wundt's contributions is part and parcel of contemporary psychology's more general forgetting of the social.

were reaching a previously unimaginable apogee, writers like Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust, and Freud, among many others, as we will discuss in more detail below, thus inquired into the complex dimensions that lay beneath this modern veneer of rationality and control. The principal repository of these seething wellsprings: memory.

It is significant as well to acknowledge that logocentrism has proceeded in important regards via the distinction and development of the *individual* and individualism, and that it has led to the hegemony of individualistic approaches across many fields, including the modern experimental psychology deriving from Wundt and Ebbinghaus. Indeed, many logocentrists believed firmly that modern people are less constrained by social factors than their "primitive" predecessors, who they believed were utterly beholden to the group in a way moderns supposedly are not. Such a view sometimes led them to see collective solidarity—and the shared beliefs and practices that constitute it—as an outmoded form of social organization (Douglas 1986; Shils 1981). "Primitive" societies, in such a view, are societies of collective memory, while modern ones are societies of individual memory.

Nevertheless, within the same set of developments, the recognition that memory—modern as well as premodern—has social dimensions, or is even essentially social rather than individual, distributed rather than solipsistic, did indeed come to the fore in seemingly new ways as well. Perhaps this was because these theorists, or at least their politician counterparts, understood how important strong commitments can be ideologically when they are seen to be long-standing. As Mary Douglas (1986: 86) has written, history models itself on "naturalizing analogies," and such analogies brook no dissent because they make current arrangements appear inevitable.

Indeed, for many writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the problems of historical memory were seen to be a part of nature not just figuratively, but also literally. In the late eighteenth century, the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck proposed a theory asserting that acquired traits become heritable: that if, because of environmental pressures, an organism develops a particular characteristic—for instance, builds up certain muscles at the expense of others because they are useful in obtaining food—such traits will be passed on to its offspring. One of the most important contributions of Charles Darwin's work decades later was to refute this proto-evolutionary theory through the elaboration of genetic, rather than acquired, inheritance and the principle of natural selection.

For many of those inspired by both Lamarck's problematic and Darwin's solution, however, genes were a sort of biological species-memory. On this basis, scholars like Ewald Hering (1905) and Samuel Butler (1880) asserted that cultural traits must be inscribed in the same way as physical ones. Perhaps the most durably important work in this tradition is that of Richard Semon, already mentioned above, who followed Hering and Butler in hypothesizing a social or cultural equivalent of genes. Semon, who had studied with the German evolutionist Ernst Haeckel, coined the term "engram"—now common

in psychological discourse—to refer to hypothetical changes in the brain caused by the encoding of external stimuli: in other words, the physical traces of memory. This view contributed to later theories of memory as reconstruction rather than retrieval, since in this theory experiences were seen to be broken into constituent units for storage, which are then reassembled (in new combinations) later. On this basis, Semon (1921, 1923) developed a theory of "mnemes" (much later echoed by evolutionary psychologists like Richard Dawkins [1976]), coined to sound similar to "genes," and an approach to "mimetics," which like genetics was part of a theory of inheritance, though in this case of culture.

What is important here is that the study of cultural memory in the nineteenth century was conceived not as alien to the natural science of memory in biology, but as an extension of it. It was Semon's goal to identify what the mechanism of cultural inheritance might be, rather than hinting at some kind of mystical haunting by the past. To be sure, many writers of the time and later adopted a discreditable cultural Lamarckism, again the belief that acquired characteristics—in this case, memories—could be inherited without any concrete mechanism of coding or transmission.[6] Nevertheless, Semon's influence, though itself rather coded (Schacter 2001), was profound indeed.

While Freud dismissed Semon's theories, the question of inexplicit cultural aftereffects was a central one for him, particularly in his late books *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*, in which Freud sought a cultural correlate for his ideas of the repressed memory and return of individual trauma. Indeed, Freud has also been charged with a sort of cultural Lamarckism, particularly in his claim that the Jewish people have been defined by the repressed memory of their murder of Moses (Yerushalmi 1993). In general, Freud drew much more on Wundt's neglected writings on cultural psychology than on Semon's, but his agenda was set by this general climate of interest in cultural heritability, influenced by the late nineteenth-century discourse on "organic memory" (Otis 1994).

In contrast to Freud, Carl Jung drew eagerly on Semon's ideas in developing his theory of the "collective unconscious" and its central source: "racial memory." Additionally, both Semon's ideas and Hering's were significant sources for the "iconological" theory of social memory articulated by the art historian Aby Warburg in the 1920s. And this line of thought has been a central theme in the development of contemporary theories of "cultural memory," as articulated most prominently by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann (2007).

6. A central idea here was that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny"—in other words, that the process of individual development reflects the entire history of the species (Gould 1977). For humans, this is the now common idea that the process of socialization is a matter of civilization, or the acquisition of all that the civilization has accomplished. After all, in the process of maturing, the child acquires a wide variety of social and cultural capacities—e.g., language and practical knowledge—that have taken ages to develop. Such acquisition was seen as a kind of deep cultural memory.

Memory and the Nation

Other than these often-forgotten debates in late nineteenth-century psychology, perhaps the key site in the story of thinking about social and cultural forms of memory is the rise of nationalism, and the understandings of history it depended on.

Whether to demonstrate the superiority of a particular nation in the scheme of human history, or to endow a sense of the nation's uniqueness and hence spiritual appeal as a special identity, nation-states in the late nineteenth century propagated interest in their pasts to an unprecedented extent. This is the famous "invention of tradition" thesis of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), who showed convincingly how European states in the decades before World War I sought to shore up the legitimacy they had been losing since the demise of absolutism and the introduction of democracy by generating a sense of historical endurance (often bogus) for their institutions and practices. Leaders had done this in earlier epochs too, of course, but in the late nineteenth century they did it with a new vigor and with new tools, including those of emerging mass literacy and coordinated administration (Weber 1976).

As Benedict Anderson (1991) showed in his famous book *Imagined Communities*, all nations are unities that are fundamentally imagined (which is different from saying they are imaginary). But imagining nations, Anderson argues in similar terms to Koselleck and Hutton quoted above, depended on the decline of earlier cultural models, including that of the written word as a privileged carrier of ontological truth and of cosmological time: "What has come to take the place of the medieval conception of simultaneity-along-time is, to borrow from [Walter] Benjamin, an idea of 'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and by clock and calendar" (Anderson 1991: 24). Because of transformations in the perception of time, therefore, the invention of tradition was both more possible and more effective in this period than it had previously been. At the same time, because of the advancements in record keeping and historical scholarship, it was also easier to debunk these inventions, though some historical myths have proven remarkably impervious to evidence. Again referring to Douglas's (1986) argument about naturalizing analogies, one often does not even think to question such assertions.

Whether from an Enlightenment philosophy heralding the superiority of Reason or a Romantic faith in the incommensurable uniqueness of cultures, then, nationalism was heavily invested in the past and produced new understandings of the relationship to it. As mentioned by Anderson and many others, for instance, nation-state builders often developed new calendars as an effective way to unify societies by standardizing temporal frames of reference (Landes 2000; Zerubavel 1989). In general, modern states solidify their power in part by manipulating assumptions about time and space, and they

do so with both history and memory. According to Ana Maria Alonso (1988: 40), "Historical chronologies solder a multiplicity of personal, local, and regional historicities and transform them into a unitary national time." As Prasenjit Duara (1997: 4) puts it, again echoing Benjamin's characterization of the "empty, homogeneous time of the nation state," "National history secures for the contested and contingent nation the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time." In the late nineteenth century, when nation-states were increasing their demands for allegiance and fiscal extraction from their populations, memory thus served as the handmaiden of nationalist zeal, history its high counsel (Olick 2003). Any threats to the sense of the shared past by dislocation, rampant growth, or the general unmooring of cultures from their origins produced a "memory crisis" and a redoubled search for its hidden recesses.

The parallels between the memory boom of the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries are thus rather strong, and call into question the more dismissive assumptions that our current interest in memory is a dying contemporary fad of the last thirty years. To be sure, the memory boom of the late nineteenth century was tied up with the ascendancy of nationalism, while that of the late twentieth century is tied up with its decline (Nora 1989), and the nineteenth century was still the age of monuments, while ours, given the atrocious history of the last hundred years, is one of memorials (Mosse 1991). Nevertheless, it was in the context of the nineteenth-century boom that we began theorizing the political and social dimensions of memory (and other aspects of it as well) in ways recognizably linked to how we theorize them today. Moreover, late nineteenth-century critiques of the uses and misuses of history, particularly that of Friedrich Nietzsche (1997) (and a half-century later that of Herbert Butterfield [1965] and others who attacked "Whig history"), have clearly informed contemporary approaches to the relationship between history and memory and our widespread skepticism toward modernist narratives. This skepticism has obviously shaped—though not in any universally accepted way—contemporary scholarly work on memory.

Within this story of memory's rising apparent importance and our new modes of analyzing it, other factors like the rise of the press, the development of media like photography and film, and the digital revolution, obviously warrant attention, as they contributed to a media-theoretic perspective that has clearly advanced our understanding of memory. Also important were frameworks for characterizing the dehumanizing experiences of the First World War, in which, as Walter Benjamin (1969: 84) put it, "Never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power." These cataclysms, according to Benjamin, left people not only without the conditions for telling stories in the heroic form of the epic or even the redemptive form of the novel, but with experiences that were in fact ultimately incommunicable. Indeed, many see in the First World War the beginning of the contemporary discourse of

trauma, in which any linear relationship to experience and hence narratability is disrupted.[7] This discourse of trauma as a special kind of memory, developing since the late nineteenth century, through the First World War, and with particular vigor in the 1970s and 1980s, has been a major constituent of the contemporary memory boom; but it is clearly one with a long and complex history (Leys 2000; Caruth 1995).

War, moreover, has indeed changed memory in the contemporary age, though since there has always been war, such an explanation of the new memory boom obviously requires careful specification. Many of these themes, for instance, were already presaged in Paul Fussell's (1975) magisterial book, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (thus predating the alleged contemporary memory boom), which depicts how the experience of the war and its literary articulations were inscribed (Benjamin's thesis of incommunicability notwithstanding) into the memories of an entire generation.[8] Jay Winter (1995) has also written about how commemorations of World War I served to transform individual grief into public mourning. If World War I served as a catalyst for heroic memories, World War II and the atrocities associated with what came to be known as the Holocaust, by contrast, gave rise to more skeptical memories (e.g., Gillis 1994a; Young 1993; Maier 1988).

To be sure, the relationship between memory and war is not limited to these two epochal events, though, as we discuss later, both were the subject of recurrent anniversary commemorations at the end of the twentieth century, fueling the hunger for commemorative events more generally (Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper 2001). Public controversies around cultural and political dimensions of war commemoration have been a prominent feature of contemporary debates extending to other armed conflicts, e.g., the Vietnam War and the Enola Gay exhibit (see Lowenthal 1998; Zolberg 1998; Sturken 1997; Thelen 1995; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991). The end of the Cold War along with the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s was yet another historical juncture that sustained interest in the memories of war and atrocities (Judt 2005).

The complexities of the foregoing account of memory's long history aside, two things are clear: since the late nineteenth century, memory seems to have become a top item on our intellectual and scientific, as well as public, agendas. And we have moved increasingly—though not nearly enough, as the texts in this volume imply—to seeing memory as a topic that extends far beyond the bounds of the individual mind. It is clear that "collective memory" has become

7. More accurately, the origins of the discourse of trauma are to be found in the context of the introduction of rail travel—which transformed perceptions of time and space—and of railway accidents—which produced invisible psychic traumas on a mass scale—in the late nineteenth century. See especially Schivelbusch (1987).

8. See also Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (1987), which describes the war generation in Germany and the impact memories of the war had for their artistic sensibilities and, more important, for their political views, prefiguring the rise of Nazism. For a similar analysis applied to the United States after the Vietnam War, see also Sturken (1997).

one of the emblematic terms and concerns of our age, which we nevertheless define as longer than the last thirty years; the memory boom may be recent, but it was clearly a long time in the making. What is not yet clear is exactly what the term "collective memory" means, what issues it addresses, what inquiries it inspires, and whether the intellectual conditions presently exist or can be propagated for advancing, rather than merely recycling, the insights that have already been produced under its banner.

Maurice Halbwachs and the Concept of "Collective Memory"

What do we mean when we use the term "collective memory"? Memory, our common sense tells us, is a fundamentally individual phenomenon. What could be more individual than remembering, which we seem to do in the solitary world of our own heads as much as in conversation with others? Even when we reminisce, we often experience this as a process of offering up to the external world the images of the past locked away in the recesses of our own minds. We can remember by ourselves in the dark at night, as we drive alone along the highway, or as we half-listen to a conversation about something else. By the same token, lesions of the brain—caused perhaps by Alzheimer's disease or physical injury—are surely internal rather than social defects, preventing us as individuals from remembering. Memory—and by extension forgetting—thus seems not just fundamentally individual, but quintessentially so, as primal and lonely as pain. What can we possibly mean, then, when we refer to social or collective memory?

Contemporary use of the term "collective memory" traces itself largely to the sociologist Halbwachs, who published his landmark *Social Frameworks of Memory* (*Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*) in 1925, though the term was by then in general use in a variety of contexts related and unrelated to sociology (common cognates in this regard were "public memory" and the already-discussed "racial memory," the use of which in fact predated Jung's). Halbwachs was not the only one to contribute to a social perspective on memory at the time and since. It is also true that many contemporary writers have taken little from him consciously except the term. But even when they are not apparently influenced by his arguments, many contemporary scholars at least acknowledge Halbwachs totemically. More important for many scholars, however, Halbwachs gave the term "collective memory" a theoretical weight previously unknown, and his ideas have indeed been generative for much of the more serious subsequent scholarship.

Halbwachs's interest in memory combined insights from two important figures in late nineteenth-century France, philosopher Henri Bergson and sociologist Émile Durkheim, both of whom were concerned—though in very different ways—with so-called advances of European "civilization." In the late nineteenth century, as we already discussed under the banner of logocentrism, powerful forces were pushing to overcome subjectivity, judgment, and

variability in the name of science, organization, and control. Political and commercial elites, for instance, viewed the diversity of local times as a growing problem: like railroad tracks of different gauges, the diversity of times was an impediment to increasingly complex and widespread commerce and political power (Kern 1986). As a result, élites worked hard to standardize time in terms of homogeneous criteria. One good example was the establishment of time zones and Greenwich Mean Time.[9] Scientific advances—which discovered regularities behind apparent variations—lent support to these unifying and standardizing projects. The philosophical tradition, moreover, had long favored objectivist accounts, in which empirical variety is a mere illusion behind which lie perfect conceptual unities.

Like many other thinkers of the time, the philosopher Bergson was concerned by increasing rationalization and the unifying force of science. Along with writers like Proust and Freud, among many others, Bergson became preoccupied with memory because it seemed to him that precisely in an age in which historiography, biography, and other forms of record keeping were ordering history in an increasingly objective and complete manner, meaningful connections to our pasts, personal or shared, seemed to be waning. Thus influenced in part by Romantic perceptions that the logocentric conceptual universe was somehow sterile, Bergson rejected objectivist accounts, arguing that subjectivity is the only source of true philosophical knowledge (Terdiman 1993; Bergson 1988; Kern 1986). As a result, he undertook a radical philosophical analysis of the *experience* of time, highlighting memory as its central feature. Against accounts of memory as passive storage, he characterized remembering as active engagement. Against accounts of memory as the objective reproduction of the past, he characterized remembering as fluid and changing. Bergson thus posed the problem of memory in particularly potent ways for Halbwachs and other later theorists. His work on memory drew Halbwachs's attention to the difference between objective (often transcendental) and subjective apprehensions of the past: whereas new forms of record keeping measured time and recorded history in increasingly uniform and standardized ways, individual memory was still highly variable, sometimes recording short periods in intense detail and long periods in only the vaguest outline.[10] Following Bergson, this variability of memory was for Halbwachs the real point of interest.

Like Bergson, Durkheim considered transcendentalist accounts of time and space unjustified. Unlike Bergson, however, Durkheim located the variability of perceptual categories not in the vagaries of subjective experience, but in differences among forms of social organization. Where Bergson rejected objectivist and materialist accounts of time in favor of the variability of *individual*

9. Of course, the history of the standardization of time, which depended on the development and spread of mechanical clocks, predates these developments by centuries. See especially Landes (2000).

10. More recently, however, Zerubavel (2003) has demonstrated that this variable attention span characterizes social memory as well.

experience, Durkheim rejected such accounts by attending to the ways different *societies* produce different concepts of time: forms of time, like other basic categories, do not derive either from transcendental truths or from contingent interests, but are social facts, varying not according to subjective experience but according to the changing forms of social structure. Standardization and objectivism, according to Durkheim, were central ways modernizing societies were responding to increasing levels of differentiation and individuation. By connecting cognitive order (time perception) with social order (division of labor), Durkheim thus provided for Halbwachs a sociological framework for studying the variability of memory raised by Bergson.

In his landmark work on collective memory, Halbwachs thus drew from Bergson's problematization of time and memory, but addressed the issue through Durkheim's sociological lens.[11] Memory, for Halbwachs, is first of all a matter of how minds work together in society, how their operations are not simply mediated by social arrangements but are in fact structured by them: "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (1992: 38). The forms memory takes thus vary according to social organization, and the groups to which any individual belongs are primary even in the most apparently individual remembering. Moreover, for Halbwachs, memory is framed in the present as much as in the past, variable rather than constant. Studying memory, as a result, is a matter not of reflecting philosophically on inherent properties of the subjective mind but of identifying its shifting social frames.

There are, nevertheless, a number of distinct aspects of collective remembering in Halbwachs, and different kinds of collective memory research since then have emphasized various of these aspects.[12] First, Halbwachs argued that it is impossible for individuals to remember in any coherent and persistent fashion outside of their group contexts; these are the necessary *social frameworks* of *individual* memory.[13] His favorite examples include the impossibility of being certain of any particular childhood memory: once we become adults, it is often impossible to say whether a memory of a childhood experience is more the result of stored features of the original moment or some kind of compilation out of stored fragments, other people's retellings, and intervening experiences.

11. It should be pointed out that Halbwachs's intellectual concerns were quite wide-ranging and that his interests in memory were part of his larger concern with what he called "social morphologies" (see Halbwachs 1960). Halbwachs's work on collective memory should not be isolated from his larger project, although this is not the place to provide a general intellectual portrait of Halbwachs. For a recent sketch highlighting Halbwachs's longer career, see especially Lepenies (2006). For a more comprehensive survey of Halbwachs's career and intellectual contributions, see Wetzel (2009).

12. For a more elaborated version of this argument, see Olick (1999a) and Olick and Robbins (1998). Moreover, this discussion is not meant to imply that all valuable work in contemporary memory studies is directly engaged with Halbwachs's original formulations.

13. See also Iwona Irwin-Zarecka (2007) for connections to Goffmanian frame theory.

The social frameworks in which we are called on to recall, moreover, are inevitably tied up with what and how we recall. Groups provide us the stimulus or opportunity to recall; they also shape the ways in which we do so, and often provide the materials. Following this argument, the very distinction between the individual and social components of remembering ceases to make absolute sense: "There is no point," Halbwachs (1992: 38) argued, "in seeking where . . . [memories] are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled by me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any given time give me the means to reconstruct them." All individual remembering, that is, takes place with social materials, within social contexts, and in response to social cues. Even when we do it alone, we do so as social beings with reference to our social identities, and with languages and symbols that we may use in creative ways but certainly did not invent.

Halbwachs thus distinguished between "autobiographical memory" and "historical memory." The former concerns the events of one's own life that one remembers because they were experienced directly, though it also includes reference to events which one did not experience directly but around which one's memory is oriented. For instance, you are likely to remember what you were doing when an event designated historic by the group took place—such as the attacks of September 11, 2001—even if these events did not affect you directly in your individuality rather than in terms of the group of which you are a member. "Historical memory," in distinction, refers to residues of events by virtue of which groups claim a continuous identity through time. "Historical memory" of the U.S. Civil War, for instance, is part of what it means to be an American and is part of the collective narrative of the United States. But nobody still has "autobiographical memory" of the event.

This is the more authentically Durkheimian moment in Halbwachs's theory: Durkheim (1968 [1915]) developed a sociological approach to what he called "collective representations," symbols or meanings that are properties of the group whether or not any particular individual or even particular number of individuals share them. In this sense, very few people may be able to identify key figures or events of the Civil War, but those figures or events may nonetheless be important elements of American collective memory, and individuals may still be shaped by them (as an example, many more Americans are familiar with the first phrase of the Gettysburg Address—"Four score and seven years ago"—than could give a basic account of the issues Abraham Lincoln was raising in his most famous speech). Survey researchers may conclude that a particular image or event not remembered by very many people is no longer a part of the collective memory; but for a true Durkheimian, culture is not reducible to what is in people's heads. In an alternative tradition of work on "cultural memory" founded by Warburg (1999, 2008) and culminating more recently in the writings of Jan and Aleida Assmann (J. Assmann 2007; A. Assmann 1999), mentioned above, analysis of this latency is taken to be the most interesting part of memory studies.

Representations themselves, within the Durkheimian perspective, are not to be evaluated solely in terms of their origins, resonance, or distribution in any particular population. Collective memory, in this sense, has a life of its own, though this need not be as metaphysical as it sounds: work emphasizing the genuinely collective nature of social memory has demonstrated that there are long-term structures to what societies remember or commemorate that are stubbornly impervious to the efforts of individuals to escape them; powerful institutions, moreover, clearly support some histories more than others, provide narrative patterns and exemplars of how individuals can and should remember, and stimulate public memory in ways and for reasons that have little to do with the individual or aggregate neurological records. Many scholars of collective memory believe that without such a collectivist perspective, it is difficult to provide good explanations of why mythology, tradition, and heritage, among other long-term symbolic patterns, are as robust as they are.[14] A key task for contemporary work has been to understand the mechanisms of this robustness, which are often far from obvious.

Durkheimian approaches are often accused—and often rightly so—of being radically anti-individualist, conceptualizing society in disembodied terms, as an entity existing in and of itself, over and above the individuals who comprise it. Another important feature of Durkheimian sociology can be an unjustified assumption that these societies—constituted by "collective representations" which individuals may or may not share—are unitary. A Durkheimian approach to collective memory can thus lead us to attribute one collective memory or set of memories to entire, well-bounded societies.[15] Indeed, while not usually—though sometimes—articulated in terms of Durkheimian theory, many political discussions over the past two hundred years about cultural heritage have shared such assumptions: commemoration of certain historical events is essential, so the argument goes, to our sense of national unity; without substantial consensus on the past, social solidarity is in danger; there is either a "deep structure" or a stored-up legacy of shared culture that binds us together; without its pervasive influence, there is no "us" to bind. In more extreme versions, the "truth" of such accounts is seen as irrelevant in face of the need for them: any myth of belonging, it sometimes seems, even a patently absurd one, is better than none.

Halbwachs was in some ways more careful than his great mentor Durkheim, placing most of his emphasis on the multiple social frameworks of individual memories (Coser 1992). He characterized collective memory as plural, showing that shared memories can be effective markers of social differentiation. However, Halbwachs did lay the groundwork for a more radically collectivist, in addition to socially framed individualist, approach to memory. In some con-

14. To be sure, there are many critics who see this collectivism as a metaphysical Achilles' heel. See especially Kansteiner (2002) and Klein (2000), as well as our discussion below.

15. Like many such critiques, these are based on something of a straw-man version of Durkheim's positions.

trast to his idea that what individuals remember is determined by their group memberships but still takes place in their own minds, Halbwachs also focused on publicly available commemorative symbols, rituals, and technologies. As we just noted, some later theorists treat these symbols and representations as a vast cultural storehouse; this is a wise move, since the items in a cultural storehouse are real. Others, however, take an additional step and hypothesize a deep cultural structure, a set of rules, patterns, and resources that generates any particular representation (Lévi-Strauss 1983 [1964]; Douglas 1996; Elias 1996). In even more extreme versions, the structure of collective meanings is treated not as *conscience collective*, but as a "collective unconscious," which can indeed have mystical overtones (Jung 1968). One need not become a metaphysician, however, to believe there is an emergent dimension of collective remembering that is organized without direct reference to individuals.

Halbwachs, of course, is not the only important figure who comments on memory's social character, nor was he even the only important *early* thinker who developed such a perspective. In 1882, the French philosopher and political essayist Ernest Renan gave an important—and a century later quite famous—lecture in which he defined shared remembering as well as shared forgetting as constitutive elements of national identity. Somewhat earlier than Halbwachs, Warburg was developing his theory of artistic iconology, in which present images were seen as containing the accumulated residues of their long histories. At around the same time (and partly influenced by Halbwachs), the British experimental psychologist Frederick Bartlett (1995 [1932]) was redefining the purview of psychology to include elaborate attention to the social settings of remembering. In the same period, the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1918) was writing extensively on the social construction of reputations and fame, while his Chicago colleague George Herbert Mead (2000 [1932]) was elaborating a concept of shared memory as part of his "philosophy of the present."[16] The Russian literary philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin was developing his theory of genres as carriers of social memory (Morson and Emerson 1990), as his compatriots Lev Vygotsky, Ivan Pavlov, and Alexander Luria (Bakhurst 1990) were combining social insights with experimental methods in psychology. And these are just a few examples.

According to the mythology of the memory boom, such early work on social or collective memory, including that of Halbwachs, was nearly entirely forgotten, and was itself only recovered as a sort of invented tradition in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a slogan for the memory industry (though some of it, including many of the names just mentioned, as well as such figures as Semon, in fact has not yet been recovered, or has been recovered only partially in various corners). This account has some intuitive plausibility, though it tends to be overstated. After all, if the contemporary interest in memory is a unique result

16. In 1897, Cooley and Mead's Chicago colleague George Edgar Vincent had published a book (Vincent 1897) touting the Durkheimian perspective, in which he provided an extended discussion of Durkheim's ideas about collective memory—thus years before Halbwachs developed them.

of the transformations of the late twentieth century, what explains the earlier constellation of interest and the (often subterranean) continuities with it? Halbwachs, again, was not the first or the only one to use the term "collective memory," or cognates like "public memory" or "racial memory," and indeed the conceptual history of "collective memory" before Halbwachs remains an under-researched subject in intellectual history.[17] Moreover, the development and transmission of Halbwachs's ideas (to say nothing of the important ideas by the other seminal figures mentioned above) from the interwar years to the present are themselves rather complicated, not reducible to a simple forgetting followed by recovery; indeed, the memory of that development is confused by a variety of issues surrounding Halbwachs's life and work, as well as the complexities of twentieth-century history, to which we turn directly.

The Complex Inheritance of "Collective Memory"

Despite the way we conventionally tell stories of intellectual innovation, Halbwachs was far from a lone wolf. His development of the "collective memory" concept took place within a dialogue with close colleagues at the University of Strasbourg in the 1920s and early 1930s, including the psychiatrist Charles Blondel and the historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (Friedman 1996; Besnard 1983; Clark 1973). Halbwachs refined his arguments in response to critiques he received from these and other colleagues, and he developed his ideas substantially in the decades following publication of his first work on memory in 1925.

Indeed, the relations between Halbwachs and Bloch were quite important for both the formation of Halbwachs's ideas and their transmission to the present. In the first place, Bloch engaged with Halbwachs in private and in print, encouraging Halbwachs to refine his relationship to historiography; Halbwachs's second book on memory from 1941, *The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land*, was in part a response to Bloch's question as to whether Halbwachs's approach could account for historical inaccuracies in the collective memory.

In the second place, Bloch himself contributed to the transmission of Halbwachs's ideas, both directly and institutionally. Bloch not only wrote a prominent review of Halbwachs's 1925 book but also included a chapter on collective memory in his *Feudal Society* (Bloch 1961 [1939]) and extensively engaged with the concept, as well as with Durkheim's work on "collective representations." While "collective memory" was not explicitly a central theme in the work of Febvre, with whom Bloch founded the Annales school of historiography (the major twentieth-century school of historiography in France, and of key importance elsewhere as well), Halbwachs's work affected the development of that

17. For a rather different use of the term "collective memory," see Van Doren (1967).

tradition profoundly, and collective memory was always part of the basic lexicon of the *Annalistes* (Confino 1997). Both Bloch and Febvre took significant inspiration from the Durkheimian tradition represented close at hand by Halbwachs in underwriting what later came to be called "total history," an approach that emphasized large structures and long-term transformations (the "long *durée*") over events in the short term (the "conjuncture"). And their social-psychological emphasis on "ways of life" and "mentalities"—which gave rise to the vibrant "history of mentalities" of the 1960s and 1970s—was clearly related to Halbwachs's emphasis on a social-psychological topic like memory as well as by Durkheimian ideas about "collective psychology," their understanding of which was at least partly mediated by Halbwachs.

Indeed, part of the reemergence of the memory problematic in the 1980s was led by third-generation *Annalistes* such as Jacques LeGoff, who wrote an influential series of encyclopedia entries on history and memory (later collected in an eponymous book [LeGoff 1992]); in studies by Philip Ariès (1965) and Maurice Agulhon (1981) on funerary practices and the symbols of power, respectively; and then ultimately in Pierre Nora's grand encyclopedia on "lieux de memoire" of 1984–1992 (timed to engage with the problematics of the French Revolution bicentennial).[18]

It may seem that the reappearance of "collective memory" in the 1980s was unprepared and rather sudden, a result of such contemporary political concerns as that over French national identity in the age of mass immigration (Noiriel 1996) and at the moment of the bicentennial (Kaplan 1995). But clearly the term's relative invisibility in the 1950s through 1970s was more a matter of latency than nonexistence, and this latency was inscribed through Halbwachs's direct relations with Bloch and Febvre, whose works were better known and more consequential in those intervening years.

In sociology, the story is related, but somewhat distinct. In reference to the classical founders of sociology, Halbwachs himself was already a latecomer, a member of a second, post-charismatic generation, which is always easier to forget than the founders of a tradition. Moreover, the fate of the Durkheimian tradition in French sociology, to say nothing of sociology elsewhere, was shaky (Besnard 1983; Clark 1973; Marcel and Mucchielli 1999). Part of the problem was one of overreach: Durkheim and his followers were often quite imperialistic in their ambitions for their brand of sociology (Clark 1973), and the hopes for intellectual dominance were likely unrealizable under any circumstances.

18. As with most complex works—and as the theory of collective memory predicts—the reception of Nora's ideas has reduced a vast and profound effort to a few key ideas. Suffice it to say here that the reception of Nora is too often limited to a spatial understanding of his key distinction between worlds of memory (*milieux de mémoire*) and places of memory (*lieux de mémoire*), and his association of the former with premodernity and the later with contemporary society. However, Nora also focused on the history of memory itself and the attendant realignment of temporalities, which he referred to as a shift "from a history sought in continuity to a memory cast in the discontinuity of history." As such, his work bears some comparison to projects like Koselleck's (1985).

Both the psychologist Blondel and the historian Bloch, for instance, could not follow Halbwachs's implied assimilation of their disciplines.

By the same token, the political situation in France was clearly changing dramatically in the interwar years in such a way that was not hospitable to the politics of many members of the Durkheim circle. Several of Durkheim's protégés had already been killed in the First World War (as had Durkheim's son, an event that is often said to have hastened Durkheim's own death). And many of those who survived were relatively left-leaning Jews in a time of increasing anti-Semitism and fascist agitation. Indeed, while not himself a Jew, Halbwachs died in 1945 in Buchenwald, having been arrested when he protested the murder of his Jewish in-laws (Coser 1992). Bloch was killed by the Nazis as well.

In the English-speaking world, the conditions for the reception of both Durkheim's and Halbwachs's work are also complex. Halbwachs's 1925 book received several favorable reviews in American sociology journals upon its publication, and Halbwachs was subsequently invited, though entirely for his reputation as a statistician (Topalov 1997), to spend a semester visiting the University of Chicago in 1930, where he gave a course on suicide as well as on French sociology. Halbwachs also subsequently published two papers, one each in the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*, explicating the Durkheimian concepts of "collective representations" and "collective psychology," and in this way surely played a significant role in establishing the canonical status of Durkheim for American sociologists (Halbwachs 1938, 1939). Nonetheless, Halbwachs had only limited opportunities during his visit to Chicago to call attention to his work specifically on memory.[19]

Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, however, Halbwachs continued to develop his ideas about memory, both in his book *The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land* and in a series of essays that would later, posthumously, be collected in 1950 as *The Collective Memory* (which included extensive engagement with the psychologist Blondel). Alas, key passages were left out of that 1950 publication (due to misguided efforts by Halbwachs's sister to burnish his legacy) and were not restored until many years later by the work of Gerard Namer. When Halbwachs's collective memory essays were published in an English edition by Mary Douglas in 1980, the paperback carried a blurb from Herbert Blumer, the major legatee of Mead's symbolic interactionism in American sociology, whom Halbwachs had met during his stay in Chicago (Topalov 2008). Indeed, it was Chicago neo-Durkheimians like Edward Shils and Barry Schwartz who were most prominent in re-intensifying sociological interest in "collective memory" from the mid-1970s forward, though whatever lines of influence there might have been were highly indirect.

A translation of Halbwachs's book *The Causes of Suicide* was published in 1978 with an introduction by Anthony Giddens, who by that time was already

19. It is reported that at the time of Halbwachs's visit, Mead, then in the last year of his life, was reading Bergson, though we are not aware of any evidence one way or the other about Mead's awareness of Halbwachs (Topalov 2008).

enjoying a major international reputation. Strangely, however, when Douglas's English edition of *The Collective Memory* appeared two years later in 1980 (Douglas also by that time being quite well known), it received no notice at all, despite the blurb from Blumer.[20] Indeed, that edition quickly went out of print and has subsequently become something of a collector's item.

It was only twelve years later that the émigré American sociologist Lewis Coser, who had studied in Paris in the 1930s with members of the Durkheim circle, published a volume of selections from Halbwachs called *On Collective Memory*, a title rather easily confused with Halbwachs's own posthumous *The Collective Memory*.[21] Coser's edition included about half of the 1925 *Social Frameworks of Memory* as well as only the conclusion to *The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land*; it included nothing from *The Collective Memory*—there was obviously no point in reprinting what Douglas had already published. As a result of this much more accessible volume, made readily available in the University of Chicago Press's prestigious *Heritage of Sociology* series, much of the Halbwachs reception in anglophone literatures has thus centered on his earlier presentations.[22] At best, the developments within his thought—to say nothing of the discursive exchanges with Blondel and Bloch, whose residues were much more apparent in *The Collective Memory* and which were surely influential in the transit of Halbwachs's ideas in France—are caught up together into a relatively undifferentiated picture of Halbwachs's theories of memory despite their transformations over time. While we are able to provide excerpts of our first-ever translations of Bloch and Blondel's reviews of Halbwachs's 1925 book here, *The Collective Memory* from 1950 (from which we provide excerpts as well) has never been reissued in English since Douglas's 1980 version, neither simply as a reprint nor in a new edition that could take advantage of subsequent scholarship on Halbwachs (see note 20 above). This scholarship on Halbwachs is much better known in France and Germany, and its limited availability in English is quite regrettable.

Other Trajectories

Moreover, again in response to the emphasis on the supposed latency of "collective memory" between 1945 and the early 1980s, it is important to point out

20. Additionally, an important dissertation on Halbwachs's entire oeuvre by Suzanne Vromen (1975) was never published as a book, and there is still no full-length critical study on Halbwachs in English, though there are several in French and German, including, among others, Becker (2003, 2005); Egger (2003); Wetzel (2009); Namer (1987); and Marcel and Mucchielli (1999).

21. That title, however, was not Halbwachs's own; Halbwachs more likely favored some version of "The Individual Memory and the Collective Memory" (Douglas 1980).

22. In Germany, Halbwachs's (1925) book was translated and published in (1966), while *The Collective Memory* appeared in German only in (1991). However, the critical literature on Halbwachs in German has been much more extensive than it has been in English, including the translation of Halbwachs's collected works, and a large number of intellectual historical and conceptual studies of his thought, though this interest has been pursued mostly since the mid- to late (1990s).

that "collective memory" was never entirely absent elsewhere in those years (i.e., from the end of World War II until the supposed advent of the "memory boom" in the late 1970s and 1980s), nor was its relative hibernation due entirely to an inhospitable intellectual and political climate, though in some arenas the postwar years saw a resurgence of a modernist thinking that did not necessarily favor an interest in memory rather than scientific history and rationality (or engaged Marxism).

In French anthropology, for instance, Roger Bastide (1978) wrote important works engaging with the concept. So too did the Annales school archaeologist and historiographer Paul Veyne (1984). While the art historian Frances Yates (1966) did not employ the term "collective memory" in her famous study of Renaissance mnemotechnics, her book *The Art of Memory* is a landmark work for the history of memory in general, and of clear relevance to contemporary memory studies (Yates, perhaps not incidentally, worked for many years at the Warburg Institute at the University of London). Historian Bernard Lewis (1975) produced a volume on varieties of history—"remembered, recovered, and invented"—that presaged some of Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) more famous argument. Sociologists Georges Gurvitch (1963), Pitirim Sorokin (1970), Robert Faris (1967), Alfred Schutz (1964), Peter Berger (1963), Lloyd Warner (1959), Fred Davis (1979), and Franco Ferrarotti (1990), among others, all employed "collective memory" in various works during this period as well; while some of these works used "collective memory" merely incidentally, some were centered on it and are (or should be) important models for subsequent scholarship.

Additionally, systematic work on memory in disciplines besides sociology and history made significant progress in these years as well. While psychoanalysis and other kinds of psychotherapy did not see their most vigorous development of the trauma concept until after the Vietnam War, it is not clear that the development of the discourse of trauma—which of course had much older origins in the nineteenth century—was of a piece with the "memory boom" in other spheres, though there are obvious affinities of discourse (Farrell 1998). Nevertheless, the trajectories of the trauma discourse are at least somewhat autonomous—though to be sure only somewhat—from those of social scientific work on collective memory, despite the way in which "trauma" and "collective memory" are often tightly coupled in diagnoses of the "memory boom," which has tended to focus more on regrettable or horrible pasts than on proud ones. While not explicitly an engagement with the trauma concept, Philip Rieff's (1987) diagnosis of American culture as suffering the "triumph of the therapeutic," a diagnosis with some clear similarities to more recent discourse attributed to the transformations of the 1970s and 1980s, was first published in 1966, thus before any memory boom and subsequent reaction criticizing the contemporary triumph of victimhood.

In cognitive psychology, moreover, the experimental tradition founded by Ebbinghaus developed in important ways through the 1960s and 1970s as well, autonomously from the trajectories of historiography, sociology, and

psychoanalysis. Perhaps most prominent here is the work of Endel Tulving (1985), whose models of the role of retrieval cues in recall at least hinted at exogenous factors in memory, as well as the later work of Ulric Neisser and colleagues (Neisser and Hyman 1982) on flashbulb memories (particularly powerful memories of significant events) and on "ecological" factors in recall. Nevertheless, as Greenwood (2009) points out, a clear concept of "the social," which underwrote American social psychology at the beginning of the twentieth century, has largely disappeared from the contemporary discipline (though see Coman et al. 2009 and Oishi, Kesebir, and Snyder 2009).

In this intermediate period as well, media theorists Ong (as already mentioned) and Eric Havelock (1988) also explored collective memory and its relation to writing and other forms of inscription, anticipating and laying a foundation for the later "cultural memory" work of Jan and Aleida Assmann (J. Assmann 2007; A. Assmann 1999). Additionally, while the anthropologist Jack Goody's (1986) work on similar themes to Ong and Havelock, namely his book *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society*, did not appear until 1986, this was a culmination of a great deal of work being produced by anthropologists from the 1950s through 1970s seeking to dismantle too-sharp distinctions between "primitive" and "complex" societies.

At the margins of traditional historiography, moreover, oral history, which was often, though not exclusively, motivated by a Marxist politics and which drew on "memory" in unprecedented (and to some extent unsurpassed) ways, had been developing steadily since the Second World War, and many important works appeared in the 1960s and 1970s (Perks and Thomson 1998). In many ways, it is important to note, historiography's skepticism toward "memory studies" is often tied up with its disdain of oral history, from which it often tries to maintain a distance. In the process, as we will argue below, historian critics of memory studies have often missed some of the novelty of memory studies because they associate it mostly with the project of oral history, which ascribes more importance to the "evidence" of individual memory than many "scientific" historians are comfortable doing, and perhaps rightly so given the very different aims of their enterprise. But "oral history" was always at least partly a political program as well as an epistemological one. Beyond oral history, the question of memory, heritage, and preservation also arose somewhat earlier and in different terms in Great Britain than the memory boom more generally is said to have arisen elsewhere, and key texts like those of Raphael Samuel (1996) and David Lowenthal (1985) were as much the results of ongoing debates as they were foundations for new ones (Wright 1985; Hewison 1987; Kaye 1991).

Beyond the "collective memory" tradition in so many ways founded by Halbwachs, other sources of social perspectives on memory had their own complex developmental trajectories as well. The ideas of Bakhtin, for instance, underwent a famously complex transit to their present influence, given the challenges of Soviet censorship (see especially Morson and Emerson 1990); there are similar complexities regarding the influence of the works of A. R. Luria

(1978), Vygotsky (1978), and others, whose legacies have required significant reconstructive efforts (Todes 2001); here too works like those of Yuri Lotman (2001) and the Tartu School of semiotics are worth mentioning, though their work has not been widely integrated into contemporary discussions (for an exception, see Wertsch 1988). In Western psychology, the limitations on Bartlett's ability to elaborate his social perspectives are well analyzed in Douglas's (1986) book *How Institutions Think*: Bartlett, Douglas argues, is an ironic demonstration of the powers of social frameworks to fail memory, a phenomenon Bartlett himself both discovered and suffered under. As we have already seen, Bartlett is only one such example; Wundt is another, given that he is largely known for founding experimental psychology, to the neglect of his work on cultural psychology.

Warburg's influence has been limited not only by the difficulties of his own biography—including mental illness—and his writing—which was aphoristic and telegraphic—but by the difficulties of establishing institutional legacies of a German Jew across the ruptures of the Holocaust. Nevertheless, Warburg did benefit from some extraordinary institutional and reputational entrepreneurship, not least through the work of the art historian and biographer E. H. Gombrich, who reconstructed Warburg's contributions to a theory of social memory out of the scant residue of Warburg's fragments (Gombrich 1986) (the contemporary Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben [2000] has also drawn on Warburg's work). Warburg's influence, mediated by the Assmanns, has been important for the "cultural memory" tradition that has developed in European literary and media theory (for reviews, see Erll 2005 and Winthrop-Young 2005).

Other legacies for contemporary memory studies, moreover, are relatively unknown in the same way that the Annales school preserved implicit memory of Halbwachs. For instance, it is rarely mentioned that E. E. Evans-Pritchards's (1940) well-known work on the anthropology of time-awareness was influenced in part by his reading of Halbwachs. Beyond these trajectories, we have not even begun to assay work in other areas like the sociology of scientific reputations, a key topic in the work of Robert Merton (1973) that arguably can be assimilated to memory studies, though this has not widely happened (for exceptions see Olick and Robbins 1998; Fine 2001; Cubitt 2007). There are independent trajectories in art history (Saltzman 2006) and varieties of literary criticism as well (Sommer, Nünning, and Gymnich 2006; Nalbantian 2004; Singh, Skerrett, and Hogan 1994).

Our point, however, is this: given these facts, not too widely discussed in recent literature, some of the criticisms the "collective memory" concept faced upon its supposed reemergence in the 1980s and early 1990s appear at least somewhat overstated. Kerwin Klein (2000: 127), for instance, has claimed that "outside of experimental psychology and clinical psychoanalysis, few academics paid much attention to memory until the great swell of popular interest . . . that marked the seventies." Much hinges, apparently, on the meaning of "much attention." Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam (1996: 30), moreover,

argued that collective memory was "an act of intrusion . . . forcing itself like a molten rock into an earlier formation . . . unavoidably obliterating fine distinctions." Read as intellectual history, this claim does not stand up to scrutiny: while "memory studies" may be a "new formation," "collective memory" and interest in it is not, and one might, moreover, question whether the fine distinctions it supposedly obliterated—such as among myth, tradition, and custom—were all that fine to begin with.

As conceptual critique, of course, the charge is more serious and warrants further examination. It is one that has been echoed elsewhere as well, even among distinguished contributors to memory studies, such as Alon Confino (1997: 1387), who wrote in the mid-1990s of a "sense that the term 'memory' is depreciated by surplus use, while memory studies lack a clear focus and have become predictable." This charge is connected to a similar-sounding one that is nonetheless distinct, namely that of the historian Charles Maier (1993), who famously asked around the same time whether we had in fact reached "a surfeit of memory." The important difference between these two points, however, is often conflated: one concerns memory scholarship, while the other concerns the visibility of memory in culture and politics. But memory studies is not to be dismissed along with the phenomena it studies; indeed, without the frameworks of "collective memory," we believe, it is impossible to determine how much memory there is and what kind it is, to explain its operation, and to evaluate whether there is indeed a "surfeit" or when, where, and why it might be seen as such. Before exploring these issues further, however, it is necessary to complete the story of the supposed rise of memory in the culture and politics of the second half of the twentieth century, and to explore its relation to the development of memory studies, remembering that the latter is not entirely reducible to the former.

Did the Holocaust Cause Memory Studies?

According to a much-quoted line by Pierre Nora, "Whoever says memory, says Shoah" (Mueller 2002: 14). More recently, Paul Connerton (2009: 1), whose 1989 book *How Societies Remember* is one of the seminal texts for contemporary memory studies, has claimed that the "frequent discussion of and the apparently high value ascribed to memory in recent years" is vitally connected to "the accumulated repercussions of the holocaustal [sic] events of the last century." Like other characterizations of the memory boom, this one requires scrutiny and does not necessarily bear up well under it (though such generalizations rarely do).[23] It is certainly true that the Holocaust has generated new and particularly intense forms of memory (Bartov 1996). When one speaks of the

23. For his part, Connerton looks beyond this conjunctural explanation and ascribes the memory boom to broader trends in modernity (his 2009 book is called *How Modernity Forgets*).

memory boom, one is indeed speaking in part—though far from exclusively—of the vast terrains of Holocaust memory, and other terrains of memory modeled on it.

Nazis as well as the Holocaust have been condensation symbols of evil over many decades, though to be sure increasingly since the 1970s, with major landmarks like the *Holocaust* TV miniseries (1979) and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993); equally important for memory scholarship was Claude Lanzmann's nine hour documentary from 1985, *Shoah*, which included reminiscences and testimony of witnesses and survivors. These aesthetic and intellectual confrontations have been matched by documentary and museological ones as well, including the assembly of vast video and other testimonial archives at many locations around the world, numerous museums and memorials, documentation collections, school curricula, and pilgrimage tourist sites. Indeed, the proliferation of such sites, and those in other contexts modeled on them, is a major part of what those who describe the memory industry are referring to.

However, it is not only the quantitative presence of Holocaust memory that leads one to connect memory in general with the Holocaust in particular. The Holocaust, after all, is not the first or only historical event to have generated artistic and other responses. Rather, it is the specific content of these memories and what they symbolize. In part due to the power of new media such as photography and film, in part due to new political institutions like those developed to enforce universal human rights, in part because the victims were so numerous, and in part because of the industrial method of the destruction, the image of the Holocaust victim has not simply become first among images of victims generally, but has supposedly placed the image of the victim at the core of contemporary culture as a whole. The post-Holocaust landscape is one littered with victims, including not only the victims of the Holocaust but those whose victimhood is often defined by the master image of the broken Auschwitz inmate, and unfortunately often compared to or measured against him or her (Chaumont 2002).

For many Western scholars and artists, even given the horrors of trench warfare in World War I the Holocaust marked the decisive turning point because it was an event "at the limits," one that, according to the historian Saul Friedländer, "tests our traditional conceptual and representational categories" (1992: 4). Historians like Mosse (1991) and Winter (1995), as already mentioned, among others, have traced how the First World War led to new, more introspective war memorials and to a general democratization of the cult of the dead appropriate to the mass devastation. By the same token, these new forms of consolation were made more public than ever before, and were often exploited to foment renewed nationalist sentiment, principally a desire for national revenge. However, this no longer seemed possible or desirable after World War II. The Holocaust, according to the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1988), was simply impossible to describe as other than "useless suffering."

Just as modern science ushered in an era of progressive temporality, the Holocaust is thus seen as having ushered in "traumatic temporality," the

hallmark of which is supposedly an inability to tell a linear narrative in which one thing comes after another; instead, as the survivor Jean Améry (1986 [1966]: 68–69) put it, "anyone who has been tortured remains tortured." The natural result of this, for Améry, is resentment, "which blocks the exit to the genuine human condition, the future" (69). Because "the time-sense of the person trapped in resentment is twisted around, disordered . . . the man of resentment cannot join in the unisonous peace chorus all around him, which cheerfully proposes: Not backward let us look but forward, to a better, common future!" (69). Neither the individual nor the society has the means to tell a redemptive narrative, Améry thus argued in 1966, and memory of the events and memory of other events after them are thus of a very different sort. Traumatic culture does not merely represent a pocket of dissent from modernist narratives; it undermines them at their core (sociologist Zygmunt Bauman [2000] has articulated a kindred thesis about the Holocaust and modernity).

Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear to what extent these developments are the results of the Holocaust itself and the transformations in perceptions it inevitably gave rise to, whether the effects of Holocaust consciousness were enabled by other, broader processes, or whether subsequent events retrospectively transformed the view of the Holocaust (and these three things can be true simultaneously). In the first place, according to sociologist Jeffrey Alexander (2004), for instance, memory of the Holocaust itself has since 1945 undergone a shift from a "progressive" narrative to a "trauma" narrative, or what he calls a "trauma drama." In the earlier frame, the Western Allies fought the good war against Nazi evil, triumphed, and were ushering in a new era of liberal prosperity and humanitarianism. By the 1960s, however, a new narrative regime was forming, one in which the events of the Holocaust—a term not previously in wide use—were seen as somehow universal and emblematic of the pathologies of modernity.[24] The Holocaust victim was no longer the exception to be marginalized with pity, but the exemplar with which each of us can identify. As Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2005) have demonstrated, this dynamic is connected to wider processes of globalization, which they address in terms of a "cosmopolitanization" of memory cultures. This refers to practices that shift attention away from the territorialized nation-state and the ethnically bounded frameworks that are commonly associated with the notion of collective memory. In this view, moreover, the iconographic status of Holocaust memories is reflected in and contributes to the formation of a global memory imperative (Levy and Sznaider 2010; Olick 2007).

Moreover, the very distinction of the genocide of the European Jews as an event apart—the Holocaust—let alone the view of it as a trauma both individual and cultural emerged only after what trauma theorists might describe as a

24. It should be clear that Alexander is characterizing broader public culture. In their famous *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002 [1944]), for instance, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno had already diagnosed what they saw as the barbaric core of modernity in the early 1940s, even before the Nazi exterminations had mobilized to their full extent.

period of latency. But unlike the "return of the repressed" in individual psychology, it is not clear what the mechanisms of such latency are for societies as a whole (a debate, again, that goes back at least as far as Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*), nor are all scholars in agreement about the evidence. American historian Peter Novick (2000), for instance, has also traced the transformations of Holocaust discourse in the United States, arguing that memory of the Holocaust was not a significant part of public discourse and American Jewish consciousness until the 1970s and that it emerged as such for instrumental reasons, namely to shore up Jewish identity in the American diaspora. Hasia Diner (2009), by some contrast, has emphasized the presence of the past in Jewish families and communities early on (see also Gerson and Wolf 2007). In Germany as well, many scholars have spoken of a "silence" about the Nazi past in the 1950s that was only broken by the New Left of the 1960s. While some ways of talking about the past did change over time in Germany, however, recent research has shown that it is inaccurate to speak of any sort of silence, at least not a straightforward one (Moeller 2003; Olick 2005).

More convincing, perhaps, are explanations that emphasize the reactivation or invigoration of Holocaust references in light of subsequent events. During the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s, for instance, Martin Luther King Jr. famously employed the Jewish Passover song "Let my people go" in his rhetoric (Walzer 1986), and many Jews saw parallels between their oppression by the Nazis and the situation of American blacks in that period, and many other oppressed groups subsequently adopted the redemptive narrative of civil rights and the victim status of the Jews. The emancipatory claims of the civil rights and subsequent movements thus profitably drew on, and in the process contributed to, memory of the Holocaust, as contemporary genocides are compared to it (and, given the origins of the term "genocide" in the wake of the Holocaust, are defined by it).[25]

By the same token, the European transformations of 1989 also mobilized Holocaust memory, if in different ways. In the first place, Cold War antipathies had hindered exploration of Eastern European history and memory, and the demise of the Soviet Union thus opened the door to new explorations (Lebow, Kansteiner, and Fogu 2006). And in the second place, restitution claims that had previously been impossible were now able to be pursued (Deak, Gross, and Judt 2000; Diner and Wunberg 2007; Torpey 2006, 2003; Barkan 2000). The emancipation from authoritarianism, moreover, invited comparison with earlier such liberations (Courtois et al. 1999; Snyder 2009).

For many critics, however, the sum total of these developments has been what Maier (1993), again, called a "surfeit of memory," which is intended as an understatement, for the diagnosis is substantially more grim than a "surfeit." According to Dominick LaCapra (1998: 8), "Recently the concern with the

25. Such "inter-textual" and "dialogical" qualities of memory are central topics in the theories of Olick (1999, 2007).

problem of memory has become so widespread and intense that one is tempted to take a suspicious view and refer to fixation." The literary critic Geoffrey Hartman (2002) refers to a Proustian *Schwärmerei* or unwholesome swarming. Maier (1993: 140) argues that "we have in a sense become addicted to memory" and asks "whether an addiction to memory can become neurasthenic and disabling."

Despite the liberatory nature of many recent political developments, then, within the narrative of trauma culture the memory boom is often seen as a sort of pathology of the post-Holocaust era, resulting in a culture of complaint and a competition among victims. According to Maier (1993: 147), "Modern American politics . . . has become a competition for enshrining grievances. Every group claims its share of public honor and public funds by pressing disabilities and injustices. National public life becomes the settlement of a collective malpractice suit in which all citizens are patients and physicians simultaneously." As Schwartz (2009: 8) puts it (though he attributes the transformations to the social movements of the 1960s rather than to the Holocaust), "The moral and social leveling supporting the most congenial society in history . . . is precisely the kind of society in which great men and women and their achievements count for less, while the victimized, wounded, handicapped, and oppressed count for more than ever before."

Most important in this triumph of trauma and regret, then, is what it is seen to signal about our prospects. According to LaCapra (1998: 8), "In certain of its forms, the preoccupation with memory may indicate a failure of constructive will and divert attention from the needs of the present and the necessity of attempting to face the future." For Schwartz (2009: 17), "the discrediting of America's grand narratives is postmodernity's distinctive achievement. . . . As postmodernity disparages stories that Americans tell about themselves, the orienting past tense of the individual's life, the bond that once linked men and women to vital symbols of their cultural tradition, is weakened." Others, nevertheless, highlight that these transformations were a long time in the making. As the literary critic Hartman (2002: 100) has put it, "We have known for a long time that there is great suffering in the world, suffering impossible to justify. . . . But we also know from the time of Job's so-called friends to that of Holocaust negationists, that suffering is explained or rationalized against all odds."

Although much can be said for the argument that the Holocaust was simply too much for common theodicies to rationalize its suffering, it is nevertheless not convincing to say that the events themselves overpowered theodicy, rather than that the conditions for theodicy had been moving toward a breaking point for a long time and that they were not truly as broken as such diagnoses claim (Neiman 2002). After all, although Hartman has been one of the most significant voices in articulating the ways in which the Holocaust caused a crisis of representation, his comments about the rationalization of suffering actually refer to a later period, at most to a failure of the triumphalist interpretation of the Holocaust to fulfill its promises: "Today we have entered a new period,"

Hartman says, referring to the 1990s. "Until recently, perhaps until news from Bosnia reached the screen, we clutched at the hope that had the indifferent masses in Germany or American known what was going on in the concentration camps, known with the same graphic detail communicated today by TV, surely the atrocities would not have continued" (2002: 100).

The rise of memory into what has been characterized as a boom thus clearly cannot be explained entirely by the "civilizational rupture" of the Holocaust, however important a moment it was, or by the emergence of "post-Nuremberg sensibilities," which is a description rather than explanation of the problem. The sources of the transformations, and their varieties, have simply been too diverse. Again, without wishing to advocate a technologically determinist view, it is relevant to recount some of the broader explanations in terms of media and social structure some theorists—including some whose interests in memory were indeed shaped by study of the Holocaust—have recently advanced. As Hartman (2002: 99) has argued, for instance,

> The substantial effects of film and telecommunications are having their impact. An 'information sickness,' caused by the speed and quantity of what impinges on us, and abetted by machines we have invented that generate endless arrays, threatens to overwhelm personal memory. The individual, we complain, cannot 'process' all this information, this incoming flak: public and personal experience are not being moved closer together but further apart.

In a similar vein, literary critic Andreas Huyssen (1994: 6) argues that "the evident crisis of the ideology of progress and modernization" signals "the fading of a whole tradition of teleological philosophies of history."

> The memory boom for Huyssen (1994: 7) "represents the attempt to slow down information processing, to resist the dissolution of time in the synchronicity of the archive, to recover a mode of contemplation outside the universe of simulation and fast-speed information and cable networks, to claims some anchoring space in a world of puzzling and often threatening homogeneity, non-synchronicity, and information overload."

In a marked departure from many of the critiques, however, Huyssen actually sees in these developments "a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity" (1994: 3).

The preceding account is thus in accord with that of Winter (2001: 53), who has emphasized that there are "distinctive sources of the contemporary obsession with memory" and that these "arise out of a multiplicity of social, cultural, medical, and economic trends and developments of an eclectic but intersecting nature." It is important to note, however, that these distinctive sources operate at different wavelengths: that is, some are conjunctural (e.g., the impact of 1989), some occur over decades (e.g., the "traditional conceptual and representational categories" Friedländer sees as tested by the Holocaust), some operate at the level of epochs (e.g., modernist teleologies of progress and philosophies of history), and some work at the level of eons (e.g., the technologies of memory

ranging from oral narrative through writing, through electronic communication, storage, and retrieval). Additionally, there is much space for analysis of the ways in which these "eclectic" trends are or are not "intersecting:" Are such intersections coincidental (for instance, the bicentennial of the French Revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union)? Are they co-produced but still theoretically independent (like the development of video recording and interest in oral history and others forms of testimonial preservation)? Or are they part of a tightly coupled political-cultural profile (Olick and Levy 1997; Olick 2007) (e.g., neoconservatism and the building of historical museums)? Identification of such a political-cultural profile is obviously no mere empiricist induction: it is part of a diagnosis which, in its more serious versions, draws on a sociohistorical theory that must include the kinds of considerations we have outlined in our history of memory in the foregoing pages and that inevitably places collective memory at its center.

Such distinctions as these between wavelength and kind of intersection, however, are not often addressed in diagnoses of the boom, which first concatenate these diverse sources into a single result and then often criticize the language of the result for being too general. Critics have thus charged that "ubiquitous" use of the term "memory" has led to a "dangerous overextension" (Fabian 1999) of it, such that the term suffers a "semantic overload" (Klein 2000) in which it "seems to be losing precise meaning in proportion to its growing rhetorical power" (Gillis 1994a: 3). As a result, they say, the "concept of memory may become indistinguishable from either identity or culture" (Fabian 1999: 51).[26]

To be sure, we do not disagree that use of the term "memory"—individual or collective—has been imprecise and occasionally profligate. But it is not clear to us what the source of this supposed overextension is and thus how seriously it is to be taken. In the first place, some overuse, for instance, is a matter of employment of the term in the memory boom itself: purveyors of exhibits, celebrations, artworks, and other such products often articulate their projects as addressing "memory," which is no more precise a label than most others used for promotional or broadly thematic purposes and of no greater concern for scholars.

In the second place, by the same token, some of the overextension comes from precisely those critics of "memory" wishing to identify a proliferation of various kinds of history-politics and other forms of historicity as a unitary phenomenon that they label a *memory* boom: after all, whatever rhetorical power memory has, it is often those of us trying to characterize a variety of products, processes, and practices as related who employ the umbrella term "memory" to cover phenomena that are not obviously articulated with that term (e.g., heritage tourism and nostalgia). The value of such an effort, of course, is to be assessed on the basis of what the concatenation adds—an

26. For a survey of these critiques, see Berliner (2005).

assessment that, again, requires a serious social-theoretic approach and imagination.

The third possible referent for such accusations is memory studies itself, including the varieties of serious research in various disciplines into mnemonic products and practices. And here surely the concern about conceptual precision is weightier. Before addressing this concern, however—a concern we believe requires institutional remedies, of which the present Reader is intended to be a part—we need to specify the unique contributions of memory studies.

What Is Memory Studies?

It is certainly true that memory studies is to some extent tied up with its moment, though like everything else we have addressed in the foregoing pages this relationship is complex too. First, scholarship on memory, individual or collective, has obviously contributed to the memory boom: witness, for instance, the wide use of the term "collective memory" beyond the provinces of academic sociology or the prestige accorded public debates by the reference to science and scholarship. Second, memory studies in the last thirty or so years has been motivated by some of the same interests as the memory boom, which has certainly reshaped the trajectories of research on memory, for example, the transformations in information technology, which pose new challenges to scholarship (especially in media studies, though also in other fields that pay more attention to media now than they did in the past), or the moral force of the Holocaust, which has drawn many scholars into memory studies. And third, memory studies has also sometimes been part of the memory boom itself. For surely the field would not have achieved the institutional status it has without the stirring up of interests by the politics of regret, the fear of memory loss, and the commodification of nostalgia, among other parts of the memory boom. Many of us have surely asserted such connections, particularly in our efforts to impress deans, obtain funding, and secure publication (including that of *The Collective Memory Reader*!).

None of this is either surprising or inappropriate. What is perhaps surprising is that it sometimes seems as if memory studies were being pronounced dead from the very moment of its supposed arrival. In contrast, our effort here is founded on the conviction that memory studies—and the terms "memory" and "collective memory"—adds unique and valuable perspective to our understanding in ways that would otherwise be missed. To be sure, part of this is because memory has such contemporary resonance and has assumed a peculiarly reflexive character in the contemporary era—that is, the coincidence of the memory boom and the potential consolidation of memory studies, with its widespread acceptance of social perspectives on remembering and on the intersections of wide varieties of mnemonic practices (Olick and Robbins 1998).

But part of it stems as well from the perennial nature of the questions "memory," individual or collective, raises. For memory, as Terdiman (1993: 9) puts it, "functions in every act of perception, in every act of intellection, in every act of language." From a phenomenological perspective every social act is permeated with memory. The philosopher Edward Casey (1987: xix) notes that "in the case of memory, we are always already in the thick of things. . . . Not only because remembering is at all times presupposed, but also because it is always at work: it is continually going on, often on several levels and in several ways at once. . . . Indeed, every fiber of our bodies, every cell of our brains, holds memories—as does everything physical outside bodies and brains, even those inanimate objects that bear the marks of their past histories upon them in mute profusion." As Philip Abrams (1982: 8) put it,

> Doing justice to the reality of history is not a matter of noting the way in which the past provides background to the present; it is a matter of treating what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future out of the past, of seeing that the past is not just the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed.

Memory—relating past and present—is thus the central faculty of being in time, through which we define individual and collective selves: "I, entelechy," as James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus thought it, "form of forms, am I by memory." This insight remains as true, though in different ways, as it was a century ago when Joyce wrote it.

The new insight of memory studies is thus not merely that memory is omnipresent but that it is at once situated in social frameworks (e.g., family and nation), enabled by changing media technologies (e.g., the Internet and digital recording), confronted with cultural institutions (e.g., memorials and museums), and shaped by political circumstances (e.g., wars and catastrophes). Social frameworks and historical circumstances change over time and, with them, the aforementioned alignments of past, present, and future (e.g., the discourse of progress in modernity). Studying (and theorizing) memory allows us to shift our focus from time to temporalities, and thus to understand what categories people, groups, and cultures employ to make sense of their lives, their social, cultural, and political attachments, and the concomitant ideals that are validated—in short, the political, cultural, and social theories that command normative attention.

Whatever the waxing and waning of the public concern with "memory," then, memory studies clearly has a lot of work to do: as in economics, busts are as much its subject matter as booms. To be sure, as we have seen, the status of social memory studies as a field is not unproblematic or undisputed. Part of this certainly derives from the profligacy with which the terms "memory" and "collective memory" have been employed. But we question the extent to which that profligacy is the result of conceptual issues, how much it is the result of a conflationary critique that associates scholarship with the excesses of popular discourse, how much it is the result of rhetorical slippage and blurry bound-

aries between studies and boom, how much it is a response to widespread dilettantism (a common problem when scientific and lay terms coincide), and how much of it, instead, is due to the institutional conditions for memory studies as a field of scholarship.

In 1998, Olick and Robbins offered the following characterization of what they called "social memory studies:" "Scholars have viewed social memory narrowly as a subfield of the sociology of knowledge and broadly as 'the connective structure of societies.' They have seen it as involving particular sets of practices like commemoration and monument building and general forms like tradition, myth, or identity. They have approached it from sociology, history, literary criticism, anthropology, art history, and political science, among other disciplines. They have studied it in simple and complex societies,[27] from above and below, across the geographical spectrum. Social memory studies," that review announced, "is nevertheless, or perhaps as a result, a nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise" (1998: 105–6).

Certainly, some of these qualities are inherent in the undertaking: the variety of practices, processes, and products memory studies touches on is vast indeed, and the range of methods—from the neuropsychological to the hermeneutic—reaches across the spectrum of academic inquiry. In part because of these qualities, however, which have kept potentially related inquiries within segregated disciplinary contexts, memory studies has not yet fully developed all of the institutional supports that underwrite the formation and operation of a coherent scholarly field. As already mentioned, it does now have several journals and book series, as well as a place within various disciplinary orthodoxies and their publication outlets, but these programs and centers operate independently and are often unaware of each other, and memory studies as of yet has no society or organization.

Even more important, we believe, are intellectual institutions. The 1998 assessment thus stated its goal as follows: "to (re-)construct out of the diversity of work addressing social memory a useful tradition, range of working definitions, and basis for future work in a field that ironically has little organized memory of its own" (1998: 106). In the last ten years, there has indeed been a good deal of progress, theoretical, conceptual, and empirical. Unfortunately, this progress has been hampered by continued lack of cross-disciplinary and cross-case reading, as well as by redundancy and lack of systematicity in the enterprise.

Finally, and most important, we believe, is the ironically lacking organized memory the 1998 review mentioned. As the sociologist Donald Levine (1995: 11) has argued, "Like all human communities, those organized to cultivate intellectual disciplines depend on some view of their past. Such views give their disciplines identity and direction, important for functioning effectively in the

27. The authors of that review were duly chastised for the outdated vocabulary of "simple and complex." There is nothing simple about premodern, non-Western societies.

present." In doing so, Levine not only contributes to memory studies—giving a clear demonstration of the value of the collective memory concept for understanding intellectual organization—but helps us understand part of the institutional conditions for the advancement of memory studies itself. For our assessment is that such a "life-story" for memory studies has failed to form robustly enough, partly because of the prominence of the memory boom narrative, and partly because memory studies requires a very capacious narrative indeed.

Within such disciplinary narratives, "classics" clearly assume a central place (Alexander 1987). This is one reason we have devoted so many of the foregoing pages to the seminal work of Halbwachs, though also including information about his complex reception along with reference to other classics, established and potential. For indeed, as already indicated, references to such iconic figures need to be more than totemic, lest, as Halbwachs himself might have put it, they risk becoming "dead memory," a past with which we no longer maintain an "organic" relationship. References to classics—acknowledged or forgotten—also make clear that the enterprise is much older and more persistently vibrant than typically described.

The time is thus ripe, we believe, for an effort to collect, present, organize, and evaluate past work and provide essential materials for future teaching and research on the questions raised under the rubric of collective memory. In the collection that follows, therefore, we aim to provide a foundational resource for research and teaching in the field, which includes not only a sense of history but also a body of exemplars, concepts, and tools for contemporary work.[28] While the field is too vast for comprehensive coverage, we intend our product to be an essential starting point for students and scholars, providing wide-ranging reference points in, and landmarks from, the extensive literature, and hence to be one version—surely to be challenged and revised—of a life-story for memory studies.

The Collective Memory Reader

The task has indeed been challenging. There are quite a few reasonable principles by which one could present such a complex, long-developing, and multidisciplinary field, and an extraordinary number of candidates for inclusion (we considered more than a thousand). One could well imagine an equally valuable Reader with only a small percentage of overlapping selections. It should be clear that we have left out many worthy candidates for inclusion. To include

28. We have greatly benefited from and highly recommend important assessments of the field such as Erll and Nünning (2008); Cubitt (2007); Irwin-Zarecka (2007); Jelin (2003); Misztal (2003); Wertsch (2002); Zelizer (1995); Hutton (1993); Coser (1992); Fentress and Wickham (1992); LeGoff (1992); Middleton and Edwards (1990); Connerton (1989); and Lowenthal (1985).

merely the ninety or so we have here has required great efforts of selection, exclusion, and condensation. How, then, have we proceeded?

In the first place, despite the foregoing discussion, the designation "memory studies" is still rather a broad one to constitute a coherent field. The full extent of what has been referred to as memory studies can include work across disciplines and even academic enterprises ranging from neuroscience to museology, and including the panoply of what critics mean when they employ the term "memory industry" pejoratively. And in this sense, the critics are correct: if all of these things are memory, or part of memory studies, what is not? It would, for instance, be misleading to imply that the interest of neuroscientists in the molecular and cellular bases of memory is principally due to the "memory boom" in late modern culture or is tightly associated with the interests of sociologists in commemoration and collective identity. The purpose of this volume, therefore, is somewhat more restricted than to assay the wide territories of all serious work on memory, which are likely too far-flung to constitute a field of study, though to be sure there are interesting questions to be asked about the epochal character of these diverse interests. Instead, we focus here on the kinds of "memory studies" that develop, employ, react to, and engage with the concept of "collective memory" and its cognates across the disciplines.

To be sure, as we have seen, the term "collective memory" is not a philosophically or operationally precise one, and its conceptual rather than signaling value may indeed have diminished over time as critiques and alternatives—e.g., cultural memory, communicative memory, social memory—have been articulated; moreover, much important relevant work employs none of these while yet advancing the discussion. There are thus many kinds of work on memory that we do not include within our purview, though we are aware of their potential relevance. Perhaps most important here are, toward one end of the spectrum, neurobiology of memory and cognitive psychology that does not directly address supra-individual influences (or addresses them only as determinants of individual outcomes), as well as psychoanalytic discourses about memory (though to be sure there are huge overlaps, and we include seminal texts from Freud that address *social* memory directly); and, toward the other end of the spectrum, areas like museum and preservation studies, which are certainly related but raise issues of professional practice that extend beyond our story here.

How, then, do we define our enterprise? Perhaps a better term than the more general "memory studies" and the more historical "collective memory studies" for the field we believe we are describing is "social memory studies," which we see as related to, but not identical with, the cognitive psychology of memory, oral history, museology, the literary analysis of memoir and autobiography, history and theory of the trauma concept, and the study of transitional justice or "transitology," among other enterprises. Unlike "collective memory studies," "social memory studies" does not raise confusions about its object of reference, recalling that for Halbwachs collective memory sometimes seems to

include socially framed individual memory, and sometimes seems to refer only to the common memory of groups. And unlike other candidates, including "social studies of memory"—which sounds as if the social component is not in memory itself but only in the study of memory—"social memory studies" remains presuppositionally open to a variety of phenomena while pointing out that all remembering is in some sense social, whether it occurs in dreams or in pageants, in reminiscences or in textbooks.

Nevertheless, "collective memory" clearly still has its residual value as an emblem. And our goal here is to contribute to the consolidation of "collective memory," or "social memory studies," into a more coherent field than it has heretofore been by providing it with a more common set of references than it has so far acknowledged. This is, obviously, a more controversial and complex aim than it might at first appear. A principal source of this complexity, however, is the way in which social memory studies is crosscut by established disciplines. For the problematics of social memory are indeed rather different within its major disciplinary homes, which include first and foremost—but are not limited to—sociology, history, psychology, and anthropology.

Sociology

Within sociology—in which, as we have shown, the concept of "collective memory" was first formulated and has perhaps been elaborated theoretically to the greatest extent—the question of memory has been most clearly linked to issues of identity. It has rarely been pointed out, for instance, the extent to which Halbwachs's interest in group memory—family memory, religious memory, and class memory—was part of a Durkheimian effort to elaborate the mechanisms of social solidarity in a manner distinct from the Marxian emphasis on "consciousness," namely of the class variety. Halbwachs's work on memory followed on, and was part of, his long-standing interest in the living standards of the working class, but while he was on the Left politically, he was never tempted by Marxism in his scholarship. Is working-class identity to be understood wholly in terms of material circumstances—"class in itself"—and in terms of when and where it is transformed into political action—"class for itself"? Or are there other considerations? It is important in this regard to recall that Halbwachs was one of the most significant conduits for the introduction of Max Weber's writings into France (Lepenies 2006); Weber's critique of Marx, in which he argued for the consideration of status and party in addition to class, is surely relevant here as well, though Halbwachs's analysis remains wholly Durkheimian. Collective memory, divided into family memory, religious memory, and class memory, addresses many of the same questions Marx handled in terms of class consciousness but with a clearly different inflection.[29]

29. In an arguably similar manner, and at roughly the same time, Mannheim (1952 [1928]) sought to add "generation" to Weber's "class, status, and party" as axes of social organization.

On this and other bases, many sociologists have explored collective memory as a major source for, and carrier of, identities. From above, memory has thus been studied as an integrative force that overcomes individual and partisan interests and bequeaths to large collectivities a sense of purpose and obligation; as such, it allows for demands ranging from taxation to soldierly sacrifice. From below, memory has been studied as a force of opposition, endowing subgroups with a sense of distinctiveness, often deriving from a particularistic sense of continuity with previous generations, whether this leads to a special sense of pride, a special complaint, or often both.

At the same time, a great deal of the contemporary sociological literature on collective memory has been inspired by Halbwachs's and others' implication that memory is formed largely in the present rather than in the past and is thus to be seen from the perspective of contemporary interests. As such, sociological studies of collective memory emphasize processes of memory "entrepreneurship" as well as contestation about and through images of the past (this strategy of analysis is thus assimilable to Hobsbawm's [1983] "invention of tradition" perspective). We now take very much for granted "constructionist" approaches that emphasize the ways images of the past distort, are deployed for instrumental purposes, propagate myths, and so on. In the process, however, we should not forget the novelty and power of such perspectives, nor should we reduce them to a version of "lies my country told me." While such approaches can devolve into what Schwartz (2003: 11) has called "cynical muckraking," they nevertheless provide important insights into the complex connections between knowledge and power, the disentangling of which is more profound than a simple unmasking.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of collective memory to sociology, however, has in our opinion been the way in which it has participated in a temporalization of sociological concepts and to a more processual theorization of modernity. Sociology, particularly American sociology, has long been a notoriously presentist enterprise, one that does better comparing present and past moments than it does identifying the paths from past to present and resisting the temptations of reification.[30] In one sense, then, Halbwachs may not be the best exemplar of temporalization: as J. Assmann (2006: 170) has written, emphasizing Halbwachs's interest in the present sources of memory, "Being a sociologist, Halbwachs had only limited interest in the past, in the 'vertical anchoring' of mankind." In our reading, this is a mischaracterization of Halbwachs's contribution, as well as of sociology overall. Nevertheless, Assmann's own contribution, which emphasizes that memory is not a timeless structure

30. As Abrams (1982: xvi) has put it, "It was not so much the relevance of history that sociologists failed to see as the relevance of time. Even when interest in the sociology of past societies was at its highest, and even among those who were themselves working on such historical questions, sociologists retained an impressive ability to ignore the fact that history happens in time. Accordingly, they also managed not to see either the possibility or the need to reconstitute the action and structure antinomy as a matter of process in time, to re-organize their investigations in terms of the dialectics of structuring."

but a fundamentally temporal process, is an example of the contribution attention to memory can make to a more genuinely historical approach in sociology. Moreover, sociological theorists of modernity such as Anthony Giddens (1991), who have paid greater attention than some of their predecessors and contemporary colleagues to such processual aspects, thus emphasize the complex reflexivity that is at the heart of late modernity.

Historiography

If collective memory has for sociologists been most closely associated with questions of identity and identity-politics, for historians the principal concern has been epistemological (Cubitt 2007; Ankersmit 2001; Hutton 1993). Here the divide has been between those who see history and memory as entirely distinct (usually with the implication that memory is inferior) and those who see them as continuous with each other. On the one side, for instance, R. G. Collingwood (1999 [1946]: 8) has argued vigorously for the distinction, because he believes that "history is a certain kind of organized and inferential knowledge, and memory is not organized, not inferential at all. If I say 'I remember writing a letter to So-and-so last week,'" Collingwood (1999: 8) continues, "that is a statement of memory, but it is not an historical statement. But if I can add 'and my memory is not deceiving me; because here is his reply,' then I am basing a statement about the past on evidence; I am talking history." By contrast, Hobsbawm (1997: 24–25) has argued that historians "compile and constitute the collective memory of the past," while Richard Hofstadter (1968: 3) has claimed that "memory is the thread of personal identity, history of public identity." In one of the most important synthetic and critical works early in the consolidation of memory studies, Hutton (1993) thus referred to history as "an art of memory." Others, for instance Yosef Yerushalmi (1996 [1982]: 101), have sought a compromise formula that preserves the distinction yet allows a relation: "historiography that does not aspire to be memorable is in peril of becoming a rampant growth." A century earlier, Nietzsche (1997) was critical of both "antiquarian history" (perhaps scientific, but sterile) and "monumental history" (memorable, but inevitably distorted). In the present, it sometimes seems as if the battle continues unashamedly between these two misconceived varieties (Funkenstein 1989).

In this context, it is also important to distinguish two threads that are often confused: namely, the evidentiary problem of relying on individual memory and the functional problem of the role of history as collective memory. Outside of the Annales tradition, as pointed out above, most historians' discussions of memory concern either oral history or the value of testimony and eyewitness accounts. But eyewitness accounts are notoriously unreliable. So while oral history has aimed at recuperating voices left out from traditional historiography, traditional historiography has been wary of such approaches, and perhaps rightly so. Of course, historians have also become increasingly less sanguine about the "objectivity" of documentary evidence and the generality of the view from above.

Nevertheless, this use of "memory" is rather distinct from the problematic of "collective memory," as well as from an assessment of the social function of history-writing. Indeed, while some of the most significant and profound writing about memory has been by historians, it is also true that the lion's share of skepticism about, and even disdain for, "memory" comes from historians as well. And this seems to be the reason. Often it seems as if the unreliability of individual memory is adduced as the reason to maintain the distinction between history and collective memory. But the poor epistemological status of memory—distorted and distorting—should have no bearing on history's interest in commemoration as an activity with a history (e.g., Kammen 1991). As Hutton (1993: 22) puts it, "To the historians' fascination with the commemorative practices of the past . . . we must juxtapose their reluctance to bear the taint of being identified with commemorative historical writing." Such juxtaposition has often led to conflation when historians have dismissed memory—individual or collective—wholesale or, again, as part of a passing fad whose disappearance is to be celebrated. But does the reliability of individual memory, or even the distortions of collective memory, say anything about the role history plays in society?

What, then, does a greater sensitivity to the advances of memory studies have to contribute to the historians' enterprise(s)? In the first place, as the Annales tradition demonstrates, it opens up vast new topics, namely commemoration, historical imagery, ritual, and the like, all of which have histories. Moreover, "the discrepancy between fact and memory," Alejandro Portelli (1991: 26) writes, "ultimately enhances the value of oral sources as historical documents because such discrepancies reveal how ordinary people caught up in historical events make sense of their experiences. This too is worthy of historical analysis."[31] A commemoration of a past event, moreover, is itself an event and thus worthy of historical analysis. Beyond this, memory as a practice of relating to the past, as well as the forms and symbol of group life, also clearly have histories and warrant rigorous investigation, for instance the kind of history of memory that media theorists in particular have offered, though not only this kind of history of technology.

To these contributions, Hutton and others have pointed out, one can also add a transformed view of historical processes that sees the two meanings of history—what happened and our study of what happened—as mutually constitutive. One version of this comes from the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1975) reconstruction of philosophical hermeneutics, which encourages a "fusion of horizons" between past and present in an ongoing circle of interpretation. Another, related approach comes from J. Assmann's (1997: 9) articulation of "mnemohistory," which is "concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as it is remembered," and is thus a sort of "reception theory applied to history." Mnemohistory, Assmann (1997: 9) argues, helps us understand

31. For a broader discussion, see Cubitt (2007: 87).

history as "the ongoing work of reconstructive imagination." Despite historiography's narrative and temporal commonsense, which is greater than sociology's, there is still room for greater temporalization of history's approach. And a greater appreciation of the complexities of memory can provide this.

Psychology

If sociology has principally seen social memory through the lens of identity, and history has seen it through the lens of reliability, the social memory problematics in both psychology and anthropology are rather more difficult to pinpoint (Hirst and Manier 2008). In regard to psychology, we have already referred to the overriding individualism of the field, whose method is controlled experimentation and whose focus is the individual mind (Danziger 2008; Greenwood 2009). Perhaps one of the most significant changes in some branches of psychology in recent years has been the move away from mind and toward the brain. Ironically, this may have meant a *greater* emphasis in some hands on "exogenous" factors, since neuroscience has discovered an even greater plasticity in the brain than might have been anticipated (we referred to this in the first pages of this introduction). By the same token, even the most physiological understandings of memory long ago abandoned straightforward ideas of memory as storage. Already at the turn of the twentieth century, we saw, Semon (1921, 1923) coined the term "engram," which refers to the basic units of memory. We now know that we do not perceive every aspect of a situation, that not every aspect of a situation we do perceive is converted into engrams, that a situation perceived as unitary is preserved in fragments (hence the value-added quality of the term "engrams"), and that the act of "remembering" often involves a new combination of stored engrams, noise, extrapolation, and features of the present. As such, remembering is a matter not of retrieval but of recombination and creation.

Nevertheless, in the view of some scholars who have become more interested in social memory, experimental psychology has been limited by its emphasis on recall. Other developments, already mentioned, thus include the turn toward ecological considerations and memory in "natural settings." Research has shown, for instance, that events socially defined as particularly significant yield different memory outcomes from those defined as mundane. While such interests have not often been directly connected to work on posttraumatic stress, moreover, the connections are obvious: traumatic events affect, and reside in, the brain in different ways than ordinary events; but at least some of the experience of trauma may be mediated by cultural categories (this is a central point of contention in the literature on trauma). Experimental psychology can also obviously bear on other contemporary issues like suggestibility, particularly in the debate over recovered versus false memory syndrome (Prager 2000).

Yet another important avenue toward social memory in psychology has been the development of ideas partly deriving from cognitive science: namely,

the extension of the distributed cognition idea into a concept of distributed memory (Sutton 2006, 2003). The potential overlap between psychology and sociology here (particularly sociology that has developed methods for studying such operations, which include both network methods and traditional ethnography) is clear (Oishi, Kesebir, and Snyder 2009; Manier and Hirst 2008). What is even clearer is that there is at least as much to be gained by addressing, if not outright abandoning, the supposed barriers between individual and society that lie at the heart of psychology's disciplinary self-identity. This does not, as some fear, threaten psychology's scientific status (Coman et al. 2009). Psychology has thus seen the development of narrative (Bruner 1990), cultural (Shweder 1991; Cole 1996), and other approaches that have reached out—sometimes through the connections between memory and identity—to other social sciences, philosophy, and even literary criticism.

Anthropology

Beyond the media-theoretic considerations we outlined many pages ago (e.g., Goody and the orality-literacy question), the role of social memory studies in anthropology has been deeply tied up with some of anthropology's own disciplinary identity struggle. In particular, anthropology in the last fifty years has often been a struggle to overcome its definition as the study of premodern difference and to see itself as one that endeavors to dismantle the sharp dichotomies associated with "primitive" versus "complex" societies, between the "hot" and the "cold," and by extension between timeless societies of memory and custom and progressive societies of history and tradition. Anthropological interest in memory has thus been part of the effort to demonstrate the varieties of cultural organization, as well as the mixing of different temporalities in both preindustrial and industrial societies. As already mentioned, the work of Goody (1986) on orality and writing has been particularly key here. Recent anthropology's connections to history have also been complex and multidirectional, in face of earlier assumptions that anthropology was the study of societies that do not have history (see Wolf 1982). Premodern societies are not as ahistorical as previously assumed, and modern societies are rife with ahistorical forms of thought and representation (Sahlins 1987, 2004). Moreover, there are obvious synergies between anthropological work on myth and ritual and the "new cultural history," within which "collective memory" has been more prominent than in other corners of history, and which has benefited greatly from anthropological theory and methods (Ortner 1999; Hunt 1989; Chartier 1988).

A wide range of additional disciplines and fields have both contributed to, and benefited from, the consolidation of memory studies, including media studies (e.g., van Dijck 2007; Edy 2006; Hoskins 2004; Landsberg 2004; A. Assmann 1996; Thompson 1995; Zelizer 1992), urban studies (e.g., Jordan 2006; Crinson 2005; Ladd 1997; Hayden 1995; Boyer 1994;), geography (e.g., Foote and Azaryahu 2007; Jonker 1995; Boyarin 1994), gender studies (e.g., Hirsch and Smith 2002; Leydesdorff, Passerini, and Thompson 1996), cultural

studies (e.g., Sturken 1997; Lipsitz 1990; Wallace 1996), literary criticism (e.g., Huyssen 2003; Wood 1999; Young 1993; Felman and Laub 1992), heritage and preservation studies (e.g., Koshar 2000; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Handler and Gable 1997; Barthel 1996; Lowenthal 1996; Hewison 1987), museum studies (e.g., Crane 2000; Dubin 1999; Maleuvre 1999; Bennett 1995), archaeology (e.g., Jones 2007; Kohl, Kozelsky, and Ben-Yehuda 2007; Alcock 2002; Ben-Yehuda 2002; Jones 2007), architecture (e.g., Bastéa 2004; Rosenfeld 2000; Young 2000), politics (e.g., Bell 2006; Booth 2006; Dienstag 1997; Schudson 1993; Rousso 1991), law (e.g., Wieviorka 2006; L. Douglas 2001; Osiel 1999; Teitel 2002), and certainly philosophy (e.g.,Whitehead 2008; Ricoeur 2004; Todorov 2003; Margalit 2002; Sutton 1998; MacIntyre 1984), each in at least somewhat distinctive ways and motivated by somewhat distinctive concerns. But to organize our selection and presentation of materials according to established disciplinary and field categories would be at cross purposes with our hope for memory studies: namely, that its transdisciplinary connections and relevances be promoted, without any suppression of important distinctions of concern and history. Instead, we have selected and organized the materials that follow on the basis of our intention to fulfill both the narrative and conceptual requirements for memory studies' productive future, though to be sure some arbitrariness and bias is inevitable.

The five parts, then, are: Precursors and Classics; History, Memory, and Identity; Power, Politics and Contestation; Media and Modes of Transmission; and Memory, Justice, and the Contemporary Epoch. We introduce the (loosely) governing principles in short introductions to each part. Suffice it to say here that the allocation of a particular work to one or the other part, the order of the parts (with the exception of the first), and ultimately the content of each, could well have been (and at times was) different.

Criteria of Selection

What principle, then, has governed what we have done here? In the age of easy electronic access to previously published materials, the production of a Reader faces perhaps a greater bar of worthiness than in the past. Our overriding concern has thus been with the "value added" of any particular candidate for inclusion. This was always an imprecise calculus of difficulty of availability, fame, impact, and generativity.

First, it makes no sense to include the most obvious pieces that most people with the slightest interest in the field have at their fingertips or can include easily on a course syllabus without the access we provide, though to be sure some are so important that our narrative would make no sense without them (e.g., Hobsbawm). In such cases, and in others, "value added" is defined by the rigorous editing work we have done. Our goal has been to extract the key and durable ideas from complex texts, which are often interspersed with rich examples and complex case narratives. We thus recognize that our editing has often involved a sort of editorial violence, in some cases perhaps too extreme. But

every additional page from a given piece reduces the space remaining for others. And we have striven for more than simply a lightly-edited selection of our twenty or thirty favorite pieces; in the age of JSTOR, downloadable PDFs, and Google Books, a Reader, we believe, must provide more.

Second, the principle of value added may seem to be at odds with the standards of fame and impact, both rather nebulous concepts too. As we have demonstrated in the foregoing pages, impact is not always a straightforward process, nor is it always, or even usually, instantaneous and constant. So some of our choices have been recuperative. Additionally, sometimes a work is very well known in the sense of appearing frequently in references, but is actually rarely read because it is hard to obtain (a good example here is Bloch's 1925 review of Halbwachs, which was hard to find and in French).

Finally, generativity is no more precise a criterion. In the most mundane sense, this guided our editing within texts. Namely, we sought to carve out of often richly illustrative and complexly argued texts the central definition, concept, or novel idea that has been, or in our opinion should be, a stimulus to further thought. This is part of creating a life-story for the field. But it is also about laying the foundation for a more erudite future discourse and a more cumulative research enterprise. Mundanely, this has resulted in two rules, which we followed fairly rigorously throughout, with only a few exceptions: namely, no secondary commentary on the literature (including no introductory or overview texts, though there are by now many excellent ones [see note 28 above]) and no case studies or illustrations. Again, this is a trade-off in terms of time and space. As we argued to authors and publishers whose texts we have so vigorously edited, we intend our selections to lead readers to the original, more complete texts rather than to substitute for them.

We also recognize that such an aim as ours is not universally viewed as desirable. It might appear as if we are attempting to establish or represent a canon for memory studies. And canon-making can be a process of exclusion, selection, and ultimately as much destruction as construction. But it does not have to be if we refer instead to curricula and understand these as starting points rather than end points, as guides to and common ground for future discourse rather than as an effort to end such discourse. Within our grand posture is thus a rather more modest aim to invite debate, dissent, contestation, and continuous revision. But we believe such processes have to start somewhere. Too many studies in different fields announce the same conclusions as if they were new, remain within a small section of the literature without looking over the disciplinary hedges, or fail to speak in a language general enough to advance truly interdisciplinary dialogue, a value announced much more often than it is redeemed.

While inclusion in this volume does indeed imply an assertion of importance—"value added" to both the Reader and the reader—noninclusion should not be misinterpreted. Indeed, some of our personal favorites have not been included, for a variety of reasons. Again, some texts unfold their contributions principally through commentary on and engagement with the established

literature (a worthy strategy that this Reader is meant to support); nevertheless, often this has made them difficult to excerpt in any coherent yet not overly long fashion. Other texts make their arguments by closely developing a case or subtly elaborating a description, which again made them difficult to excerpt. Beyond this, there were other outstanding and important texts with which we struggled but whose crucial fragments, for one reason or another, we could not coherently weave together (in many cases, this speaks very well of a text rather than poorly of it). As a result, this means that many wonderful works have not been included here.

Finally, we must acknowledge our own editorial biases. All three of us were trained as sociologists. Although we have read far and wide and strived for "balance" of some sort, this volume would surely look at least somewhat different had we been trained in different disciplines. By the same token, "collective memory," as we have shown, does have a special place in sociology, as sociology has a special place in memory studies, given both the historical origins of the concept and the definition of the subject matter. Just as well, any effort to "represent" different disciplines or areas proportionally would have entailed its own biases. Additionally, while our linguistic range includes English, German, Hebrew, and French, we have indeed been hampered by our relative ignorance of literature in other languages, just as the field itself is limited by the very poor conditions for the translation and exchange of ideas internationally. Again, by pointing out these biases we mean not simply to defend the choices we have made but to articulate that we look forward to the constructive reactions to this text and to the dialogue we hope will develop out of those reactions. We offer it as the continuation of a dialogue that is already ongoing but that we hope will now proceed somewhat more efficiently than it has to date.

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