Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction

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1. Towards a Conceptual Foundation for Cultural Memory Studies

Over the past two decades, the relationship between culture and memory has emerged in many parts of the world as a key issue of interdisciplinary research, involving fields as diverse as history, sociology, art, literary and media studies, philosophy, theology, psychology, and the neurosciences, and thus bringing together the humanities, social studies, and the natural sciences in a unique way. The importance of the notion of cultural memory is not only documented by the rapid growth, since the late 1980s, of publications on specific national, social, religious, or family memories, but also by a more recent trend, namely attempts to provide overviews of the state of the art in this emerging field and to synthesize different research traditions. Anthologies of theoretical texts, such as *The Collective Memory Reader* (Olick et al.), as well as the launch of the new journal *Memory Studies* testify to the need to bring focus to this broad discussion and to consider the theoretical and methodological standards of a promising, but also as yet incoherent and dispersed field (cf. Olick; Radstone; Erll). The present handbook represents the shared effort of forty-one authors, all of whom have contributed over the past years, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, to the development of this nascent field, and it is part of the effort to consolidate memory studies into a more coherent discipline. It is a first step on the road towards a conceptual foundation for the kind of memory studies which assumes a decidedly cultural and social perspective.

"Cultural" (or, if you will, "collective," "social") memory is certainly a multifarious notion, a term often used in an ambiguous and vague way. Media, practices, and structures as diverse as myth, monuments, historiography, ritual, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge, and neuronal networks are nowadays subsumed under this wide umbrella term. Because of its intricacy, cultural memory has been a highly controversial issue ever since its very conception in Maurice Halbwachs's studies on *mémoire collective* (esp. 1925, 1941, 1950). His contemporary Marc Bloch accused Halbwachs of simply transferring concepts from individual psychology to the level of the collective, and even today scholars continue to challenge the notion of collective or cultural memory, claiming, for example, that since we have well-established concepts like "myth," "tradition," and "individual memory," there is no need for a further, and often misleading, addition to the existing repertoire (cf. Gedi and Elam). What these criticisms overlook, of course, is that it is exactly the umbrella quality of these relatively new usages of "memory" which helps us see the (sometimes functional, sometimes analogical, sometimes metaphorical) relationships between such phenomena as ancient myths and the personal recollection of recent experience, and which enables disciplines as varied as psychology, history, sociology, and literary studies to engage in a stimulating dialogue.

This handbook is based on a broad understanding of cultural memory, suggesting as a provisional definition "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts." Such an understanding of the term allows for an inclusion of a broad spectrum of phenomena as possible objects of cultural memory studies—ranging from individual acts of remembering in a social context to group memory (of family, friends, veterans, etc.) to national memory with its "invented traditions," and finally to the host of transnational *lieux de mémoire* such as the Holocaust and 9/11. At the same time, cultural memory studies is not restricted to the study of those ways of making sense of the past which are intentional and performed through narrative, and which go hand in hand with the construction of identities—although this very nexus (intentional remembering, narrative, identity) has certainly yielded the lion's share of research in memory studies so far. The field thus remains open for the exploration of unintentional and implicit ways of cultural remembering (see Welzer, this volume) or of inherently non-narrative, for example visual or bodily, forms of memory.

But if the range of themes and objects of memory studies is virtually limitless (everything is, somehow, related to memory), then what makes our new field distinct? With Alon Confino, I would argue that it is not the infinite multitude of possible *topics* which characterizes cultural memory studies, but instead its *concepts*: the specific ways of conceiving of themes and of approaching objects. However, despite two decades of intensive research, the design of a conceptual toolbox for cultural memory studies is still at a fledgling stage, because (to quote Confino in this volume) memory studies is currently "more practiced than theorized"—and practiced, at that, within an array of different disciplines and national academic cultures, with their own vocabularies, methods, and traditions. What we need is to take a survey of the concepts used in memory studies and, in doing so, cross intellectual and linguistic boundaries.

Even a cursory look at the host of different terminologies which have emerged from memory studies since Maurice Halbwachs will shed light on the challenges faced by those who are searching for a conceptual foundation for the field: *mémoire collective*/collective memory, *cadres sociaux*/social frameworks of memory, social memory, *mnemosyne*, *ars memoriae*, *loci et* *imagines*, *lieux de mémoire*/sites of memory, invented traditions, myth, *memoria*, heritage, commemoration, *kulturelles Gedächtnis*, communicative memory, generationality, postmemory. The list could go on.

What this wealth of existing concepts shows, first of all, is that cultural memory is not the object of one single discipline, but a transdisciplinary phenomenon. There is no such thing as a privileged standpoint or approach for memory research (for the systematic and historic reasons for this, see sections 2 and 3 of this article). Cultural memory studies is a field to which many disciplines contribute, using their specific methodologies and perspectives. This makes for its terminological richness, but also for its disjointedness. At the same time, it has been clear since its very inception that the study of cultural memory can only be successful if it is based on cooperation among different disciplines. Cultural memory studies is therefore not merely a multidisciplinary field, but fundamentally an interdisciplinary project. Many exciting forms of collaboration have already been fostered. And indeed, the strongest and most striking studies in cultural memory are based on interdisciplinary exchange—between media studies and cultural history (J. Assmann; A. Assmann), history and sociology (Olick), neuroscience and social psychology (Welzer; Markowitsch), cognitive psychology and history (Manier and Hirst) or social psychology and linguistics (Echterhoff; all this volume). An even more intensified dialogue among disciplines will help uncover the manifold intersections of memory and culture. This, however, requires a very sensitive handling of terminology and a careful discrimination of the specific disciplinary uses of certain concepts and of their literal, metaphorical, or metonymical implications (see section 2).

2. Establishing the Framework: Dimensions, Levels, and Modes of Cultural Memory

If we want to establish a framework for cultural memory studies, working on concepts is inevitable. In the following I will propose some basic definitions and conceptual differentiations which may help to prevent misunderstanding and resolve some of the controversies which have been sparked time and again within and about cultural memory studies.

(a) *Dimensions of Culture and Memory: Material, Social, and Mental*

Arguably the most important and by far most frequently used key concept of cultural memory studies is the contentious term *mémoire collective* (collective memory), which was brought into the discussion by Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s. Our choice of "*cultural* memory" for the title of this handbook is due, in the first place, to the highly controversial nature of Halbwachs's term and the many wrong associations it seems to trigger in those who are new to the field. Secondly, according to the definition given above, the term "*cultural* memory" accentuates the connection of memory on the one hand and socio-cultural contexts on the other. However, the term "cultural" does not designate a specific affinity to Cultural Studies as conceived and practiced by the Birmingham School (although this discipline has certainly contributed to cultural memory studies). Our notion of culture is instead more rooted in the German tradition of the study of cultures (*Kulturwissenschaft*) and in anthropology, where culture is defined as a community's specific way of life, led within its self-spun webs of meaning (cf. Geertz).

According to anthropological and semiotic theories, culture can be seen as a three-dimensional framework, comprising social (people, social relations, institutions), material (artifacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities) (cf. Posner). Understood in this way, "*cultural* memory" can serve as an umbrella term which comprises "*social* memory" (the starting point for memory research in the social sciences), "*material* or *medial* memory" (the focus of interest in literary and media studies), and "*mental* or *cognitive* memory" (the field of expertise in psychology and the neurosciences). This neat distinction is of course merely a heuristic tool. In reality, all three dimensions are involved in the making of cultural memories. Cultural memory studies is therefore characterized by the transcending of boundaries. Some scholars look at the interplay of material and social phenomena (for example, memorials and the politics of memory; see Meyer); others scrutinize the intersections of material and mental phenomena (as in the history of mentalities; see Confino); still others study the relation of cognitive and social phenomena (as in conversational remembering; see Middleton and Brown; all this volume).

(b) *Levels of Memory: Individual and Collective*

It is important to realize that the notions of "cultural" or "collective" memory proceed from an operative metaphor. The concept of "remembering" (a cognitive process which takes place in individual brains) is metaphorically transferred to the level of culture. In this metaphorical sense, scholars speak of a "nation's memory," a "religious community's memory," or even of "literature's memory" (which, according to Renate Lachmann, is its intertextuality). This crucial distinction between two aspects of cultural memory studies is what Jeffrey K. Olick draws our attention to when he maintains that "two radically different concepts of culture are involved here, one that sees culture as a subjective category of meanings contained in people's minds versus one that sees culture as patterns of publicly available symbols objectified in society" (336). In other words, we have to differentiate between two levels on which culture and memory intersect: the individual and the collective or, more precisely, the level of the cognitive on the one hand, and the levels of the social and the medial on the other.

The first level of cultural memory is concerned with biological memory. It draws attention to the fact that no memory is ever purely individual, but always inherently shaped by collective contexts. From the people we live with and from the media we use, we acquire schemata which help us recall the past and encode new experience. Our memories are often triggered as well as shaped by external factors, ranging from conversation among friends to books and to places. In short, we remember in socio-cultural contexts. With regard to this first level, "memory" is used in a literal sense, whereas the attribute "cultural" is a metonymy, standing for the "socio-cultural contexts and their influence on memory." It is especially within oral history, social psychology, and the neurosciences that cultural memory is understood according to this first aspect of the term.

The second level of cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past. "Memory," here, is used metaphorically. Societies do not remember literally; but much of what is done to reconstruct a shared past bears some resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity inherent in the creation of versions of the past according to present knowledge and needs. In cultural history and the social sciences, much research has been done with regard to this second aspect of collective memory, the most influential concepts to have emerged being Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* and Jan and Aleida Assmann's *kulturelles Gedächtnis.*

The two forms of cultural memory can be distinguished from each other on an analytical level; but in practice the cognitive and the social/medial continuously interact. There is no such thing as pre-cultural individual memory; but neither is there a Collective or Cultural Memory (with capital letters) which is detached from individuals and embodied only in media and institutions. Just as socio-cultural contexts shape individual memories, a "memory" which is represented by media and institutions must be actualized by individuals, by members of a community of remembrance, who may be conceived of as *points de vue* (Maurice Halbwachs) on shared notions of the past. Without such actualizations, monuments, rituals, and books are nothing but dead material, failing to have any impact in societies.

As is always the case with metaphors, some features can be transferred with a gain in insight, others cannot. The notion of cultural memory has quite successfully directed our attention to the close connection that exists between, say, a nation's version of its past and its version of national identity. That memory and identity are closely linked on the individual level is a commonplace that goes back at least to John Locke, who maintained that there is no such thing as an essential identity, but that identities have to be constructed and reconstructed by acts of memory, by remembering who one was and by setting this past Self in relation to the present Self. The concept of cultural memory has opened the way to studying these processes at a collective level. More problematic is the migration of concepts between the individual and social levels when it comes to trauma studies. Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnböck (this volume) show the (ethical) pitfalls of attempting to conflate processes of the individual psyche with the medial and social representation of the past.

To sum up, cultural memory studies is decidedly concerned with social, medial, *and* cognitive processes, and their ceaseless interplay. In the present volume, this fact is mirrored not only by the dedication of different sections to (clusters of) different disciplines (history, social sciences, psychology, literary and media studies) which have an expertise with regard to one specific level of cultural memory, but also by the incorporation of as many approaches as possible which go beyond those boundaries. Readers will therefore discover numerous cross-connections between the paths taken in the individual parts of this book.

(c) *Modes of Memory: The "How" of Remembering*

The last distinction to be made in this introduction—that between different modes of remembering—is one which aims to confront another source of vehement dispute within and about memory studies. One of Halbwachs's less felicitous legacies is the opposition between history and memory. Halbwachs conceives of the former as abstract, totalizing, and "dead," and of the latter as particular, meaningful, and "lived." This polarity, itself a legacy of nineteenth-century historicism and its discontents, was taken up and popularized by Pierre Nora, who also distinguishes polemically between history and memory and positions his *lieux de mémoire* in between. Studies on "history vs. memory" are usually loaded with emotionally charged binary oppositions: good vs. bad, organic vs. artificial, living vs. dead, from below vs. from above. And while the term "cultural memory" is already a multifarious notion, it is often even less clear what is meant with the collective singular of "history" (cf. Koselleck): Selective and meaningful memory vs. the unintelligible totality of *historical events*? Methodologically unregulated and identity-related memory vs. scientific, seemingly neutral and objective *historiography*? Authentic memory produced within small communities vs. ideologically charged, official *images of history*? Witnesses of the past vs. academic *historians*? The whole question of "history and/or/as memory" is simply not a very fruitful approach to cultural representations of the past. It is a dead end in memory studies, and also one of its "Achilles' heels" (see Olick, this volume).

I would suggest dissolving the useless opposition of history vs. memory in favor of a notion of different *modes of remembering* in culture. This approach proceeds from the basic insight that the past is not given, but must instead continually be re-constructed and re-presented. Thus, our memories (individual and collective) of past events can vary to a great degree. This holds true not only for *what* is remembered (facts, data), but also for *how* it is remembered, that is, for the quality and meaning the past assumes. As a result, there are different modes of remembering identical past events. A war, for example, can be remembered as a mythic event ("the war as apocalypse"), as part of political history (the First World War as "the great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century"), as a traumatic experience ("the horror of the trenches, the shells, the barrage of gunfire," etc.), as a part of family history ("the war my great-uncle served in"), as a focus of bitter contestation ("the war which was waged by the old generation, by the fascists, by men"). Myth, religious memory, political history, trauma, family remembrance, or generational memory are different modes of referring to the past. Seen in this way, history is but yet another mode of cultural memory, and historiography its specific medium. This is not at all to lessen its importance or the merits of generations of historians. Since the early nineteenth century, the historical method has developed into the best-regulated and most reliable way of reconstructing the past (even though its specific operations have been justifiably criticized by Foucault and others, and may be complemented by other modes).

3. Genealogies and Branches of Cultural Memory Studies: The Design of This Handbook

This handbook has a historic and systematic (or diachronic and synchronic) layout. Although its main focus is on *current* research and concepts of cultural memory studies, it also provides insights into the different roots of the field. Whereas a history of thought about memory and culture would have to go back to Plato, the beginnings of a modern notion of cultural memory can be retraced to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Olick; Straub; Marcel and Mucchielli; all this volume). The present field of research is built on the emergence of a "new wave" of cultural memory studies since the 1980s (see Confino; Harth; Fortunati and Lamberti; all this volume).

Maurice Halbwachs was the first to write explicitly and systematically about cultural memory. If one reads through the essays of this volume, there can be little doubt that his studies of *mémoire collective* have emerged as the foundational texts of today's memory studies—unequivocally accepted as such no matter what discipline or country the respective researchers call home. Halbwachs not only coined the fundamental term "collective memory"; his legacy to cultural memory studies is at least threefold. Firstly, with his concept of *cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (social frameworks of memory) he articulated the idea that individual memories are inherently shaped and will often be triggered by socio-cultural contexts, or frameworks, thus already pointing to cultural schema theories and the contextual approaches of psychology. Secondly, his study of family memory and other private practices of remembering have been an important influence for oral history. And thirdly, with his research on the memory of religious communities (in *La topographie légendaire*) he accentuated topographical aspects of cultural memory, thus anticipating the notion of *lieux de mémoire*, and he looked at communities whose memory reaches back thousands of years, thus laying the foundation for Jan and Aleida Assmann's *kulturelles Gedächtnis*.

However, although Halbwachs's work is rooted in French sociology, memory studies was an international and transdisciplinary phenomenon from the very beginning. Around 1900, scholars from different disciplines and countries became interested in the intersections between culture and memory: notably Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg, Arnold Zweig, Karl Mannheim, Frederick Bartlett, and Walter Benjamin (see also Olick, this volume). Sometimes those scholars critically referred to one another's work (for example Halbwachs to Durkheim, or Bloch and Bartlett to Halbwachs), yet more often this early research remained unconnected. Early memory studies is thus a typical example of an emergent phenomenon, cropping up at different places at roughly the same time—a process which would be repeated in the 1980s, with the "new memory studies."

If Halbwachs is the best remembered founding father of memory studies, then Aby Warburg is arguably the most forgotten one. The German Jewish art historian was an early and energetic ambassador of the interdisciplinary study of culture (cf. Gombrich). He famously pointed out that researchers should stop policing disciplinary boundaries (*grenzpolizeiliche Befangenheit*) in order to gain insight into processes of cultural memory. Warburg—whose writings are more a quarry providing inspiration for subsequent scholars than the source of clear-cut theoretical concepts—drew attention, moreover, to the *mediality* of memory. In a great exhibition project called *Mnemosyne* (1924-28) he demonstrated how certain "pathos formulae" (*Pathosformeln*, symbols encoding emotional intensity) migrated through different art works, periods, and countries. Whereas the sociologist Halbwachs and the psychologist Frederick Bartlett (who popularized the notion of cultural schemata) laid the foundations for cultural memory studies with a view to social and cognitive levels, Warburg's legacy to present-day research is to have given an example of how cultural memory can be approached via the level of material objects.

The interest that the works by Halbwachs and others had sparked in a small community of scholars dwindled away after the Second World War. It was only in the 1980s (after the "death of history," the narrative turn, and the anthropological turn) that "collective memory," first slowly and then at breathtaking speed, developed into a buzzword not only in the academic world, but also in the political arena, the mass media, and the arts. The "new cultural memory studies" was, again, very much an emergent phenomenon, taking shape more or less concurrently in many disciplines and countries. The 1980s saw the work of the French historian Pierre Nora on national *lieux de mémoire* (see den Boer) and the publications of the German group of researchers around Jan and Aleida Assmann, who focused on media and memory in ancient societies (see Harth). In psychology, meanwhile, behavioral and purely cognitive paradigms had been superseded by ecological approaches to human memory and the study of conversational and narrative remembering (see Straub; Middleton and Brown). Historical and political changes became a catalyst for the new memory studies. Forty years after the Holocaust the generation that had witnessed the Shoah began to fade away. This effected a major change in the forms of cultural remembrance. Without organic, autobiographic memories, societies are solely dependent on media (such as monuments; see Young) to transmit experience. Issues of trauma and witnessing were not only discussed in the context of Holocaust studies, but more and more also in gender studies and postcolonial studies (see Kansteiner and Weilnböck). More recently, major transformations in global politics, such as the breakdown of the communist states and other authoritarian regimes, have brought new memory phenomena to the fore, such as the issue of "transitional justice" (see Langenohl). More generally, the shape of contemporary media societies gives rise to the assumption that—today perhaps more than ever—cultural memory is dependent on media technologies and the circulation of media products (see Esposito; Rigney; Erll; Zelizer; Zierold; all this volume).

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In keeping with the double focus of this handbook—on genealogies and disciplinary branches—each of its six parts is concerned with historic *and* systematic aspects of cultural memory studies. Part I is dedicated to the one concept that has arguably proved most influential within the new, international and interdisciplinary memory studies: Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, which he introduced in a multivolume work of the same name, featuring French "sites of memory" (1984-92). The notion of *lieux de mémoire* quickly crossed national borders and was taken up in books about sites of memory in Italy, Germany, Canada, Central Europe, and the United States. The ubiquity of the term cannot belie the fact, however, that the *lieu de mémoire* is still one of the most inchoate and undertheorized concepts of cultural memory studies. On the one hand it lends itself particularly well to the study of a wide array of phenomena (from "places" in the literal sense to medial representations, rituals, and shared beliefs), but it is precisely because of its sheer limitless extension that the term has remained conceptually amorphous, and it would be well worth initiating another round of scholarly scrutiny (cf. Rigney). In this volume, Pim den Boer traces the roots of the *lieu* metaphor back to the ancient art of memory, its founding myth about Simonides of Ceos, and the method of *loci* and *imagines* (places and images) as we find it described in the rhetorics of Cicero and Quintilian. He uncovers the French *specificité* of Nora's concept, comments on its translatability, and considers the prospects for a comparative study of *lieux de mémoire*. Some elements of such a comparative perspective on sites of memory are provided by the following articles: Mario Isnenghi gives an insight into Italian *luoghi della memoria*; Jacques Le Rider writes about *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe) as a site of memory; Udo J. Hebel distinguishes literary, visual, performative, material, virtual, and transnational memory sites of the United States; and Jay Winter provides a comparative view of the sites that commemorate twentieth-century wars.

Part II presents memory research rooted in cultural history. Alon Confino reveals the intellectual and methodological affiliations between memory studies and the history of mentalities, reaching back to the fathers of the Annales school, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, and shows how Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* emerged from this tradition. He then takes a critical look at present-day memory studies and the chances and pitfalls it offers to historians. The next three articles form a unity in many ways, not surprisingly, as they are written by members of the interdisciplinary, Heidelberg-based group of scholars who have been working on cultural memory since the 1980s. Dietrich Harth reconstructs the "invention of cultural memory" in this research context; Jan and Aleida Assmann present some of their eminently influential concepts, among them, for example, the distinction between "cultural" and "communicative" memory and between "canon" and "archive." Jürgen Reulecke delineates recent approaches to generational memory, which also have their source in the 1920s: Karl Mannheim's writings belong to the foundational texts of cultural memory studies, since memory within and between generations is a significant form of collective remembering. With the development of terms such as "generationality" and "generativity," his legacy has been updated. Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti complete this second part of the volume not only by giving a comprehensive overview of the wide array of concepts, but also by providing an insight into the actual practice of international and interdisciplinary cultural memory studies as carried out within the European thematic network ACUME.

Part III directs attention towards the different kinds of memory studies that have emerged in philosophy and the social sciences. Here, again, the history of memory studies and its protagonist Maurice Halbwachs get their due: Jean-Christophe Marcel and Laurent Mucchielli provide an introduction to Maurice Halbwachs's works on *mémoire collective* as a "unique type of phenomenological sociology." Jeffrey K. Olick then delineates in a grand sweep the development from Halbwachs's beginnings to the current "sociology of mnemonic practices and products." The articles by Andreas Langenohl and Erik Meyer address specific social, political, and ethical questions which have arisen out of contemporary memory politics. Langenohl provides an overview of forms of remembrance in post-authoritarian societies and elaborates on the issue of transitional justice; Meyer develops a policy studies perspective on cultural memory. The articles by Elena Esposito and Siegfried J. Schmidt represent the contributions of systems theory and radical constructivism to cultural memory studies. Esposito theorizes the powerful other side of cultural memory, namely social forgetting. This part ends with Maureen Junker-Kenny's critical recapitulation of the philosophical and hermeneutical perspective on memory, forgetting, and forgiving that was introduced by Paul Ricœur.

The inclusion of psychological concepts in part IV provides a bridge from memory studies in the humanities and the social sciences to the natural sciences. Representatives of different disciplines (including the neurosciences; psychotherapy; and narrative, social, and cognitive psychology) provide insights into their work on cultural memory. An historical perspective is assumed by Jürgen Straub, who traces the genealogy of psychological memory studies back to the late nineteenth century and charts the history of narrative psychology, up to and including its current state. Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnböck take a strong stand "against the concept of cultural trauma." From a psychotherapy studies perspective they reconstruct and criticize the various uses and abuses of the concept of trauma in cultural memory studies. David Middleton and Steven D.

Brown introduce their work on conversational remembering and stress the important connection between experience and memory. David Manier and William Hirst outline what they call a "cognitive taxonomy of collective memories," thus showing how group memories are represented in individual minds. Gerald Echterhoff presents new interdisciplinary research on the relation of language and memory, which lies at the very basis of cultural memory. Hans J. Markowitsch provides an introduction to memory research in the neurosciences and discusses how the social world shapes the individual brain. Harald Welzer rounds off this part of the volume by presenting the key concepts of his inherently interdisciplinary research, which spans the field from oral history to social psychology and to the neurosciences.

Parts V and VI move on to the material and medial dimension of cultural memory. The articles in part V represent the main concepts of memory found in literary studies (cf. Erll and Nünning). Renate Lachmann shows how the ancient method of *loci imagines* is linked to literary imagination and describes her influential notion of intertextuality as the "memory of literature." With Herbert Grabes's article on the literary canon, the perspective on literature and memory moves from relations between texts to the level of the social systems which select and evaluate literary works. Max Saunders's article on "life-writing" is concerned with those literary works which are most obviously connected to cultural memory: letters, diaries, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, etc. However, he also shows that life-writing extends beyond these genres and that individual and cultural memory can indeed be found in most literary texts. Birgit Neumann provides an overview of how memory is represented in literature, using a narratological approach to describe the forms and functions of a "mimesis of memory." Ann Rigney stresses the active and vital role that literature plays as a medium in the production of cultural memory. She understands memory as a dynamic process (rather than a static entity), in which fictional narratives can fulfill an array of different functions—as "relay stations," "stabilizers," "catalysts," "objects of recollection," or "calibrators."

With its focus on mediality and memory, Ann Rigney's article already points to the last part of the volume, which is concerned with the role of memory in media cultures. Here more than ever disciplines converge. Scholars from literary studies, history, media studies, journalism, and communication studies introduce their views on a set of questions which has emerged as one of the most basic concerns and greatest challenges of memory studies: the intersections between media and cultural memory (which, of course, also give this series its title). Cultural memory hinges on the notion of the medial, because it is only via medial externalization (from oral speech to writing, painting, or using the Internet) that individual memories, cultural knowledge, and versions of history can be shared. It is therefore no accident that many articles which have made their appearance in earlier parts of this volume could just as easily have been included in the media section. This certainly holds true for the entire section on literature, which can be viewed as one medium of cultural memory. Many other articles of this volume, such as those written by Udo J. Hebel, Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann, Siegfried J. Schmidt, Elena Esposito, Gerald Echterhoff, and Harald Welzer, are characterized by their strong media perspective—ranging from medial sites of memory to the role of communication technologies for social forgetting and to language as a basic medium of memory.

Part VI begins with a contribution by James E. Young on what is arguably one of the most important artistic media of cultural memory—and its most intricate: the Holocaust memorial. Jens Ruchatz scrutinizes the double role of photography as medial externalization of memory and trace of the past. Barbie Zelizer writes about the connection between journalism and memory, identifying journalism, despite its strong emphasis on the present, as a memorial practice. I look at literature and film as media of cultural memory. Martin Zierold concludes this volume with a more general perspective on how memory studies might develop its focus on media cultures.

We hope that in bringing together many different voices from interdisciplinary and international memory studies and providing an overview of its history and key concepts, we will be able to give some definition to an emerging field. Most importantly, the aim of this volume is to inspire further sophisticated and exciting research by addressing scholars who are as fascinated by the possibilities of "thinking memory" as we are.

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Loci memoriae—Lieux de mémoire

PIM DEN BOER

1. Cicero and Quintilian: *Loci memoriae*

Centuries ago a Greek poet, Simonides of Ceos, was witness to a terrible accident. The roof of the dining hall of the house of a wealthy man, Scopas in Crannon in Thessaly, collapsed and caused the death of everybody present in the hall. Simonides, who had left the hall for a moment, was the only survivor. It was not possible to identify the completely mutilated bodies. However, when asked by the mourning relatives, Simonides was able to identify the dead because he remembered who had been seated where just before the accident happened. Simonides thus realized the importance of localization for memory and discovered the importance of "places" for good memory. This Greek story about the invention of mnemotechnics circulated widely and was transmitted in Latin treatises on rhetoric.

Cicero (first century BC) mentioned Simonides's discovery (or that of "some other person," as he cautiously added), in his famous *De Oratore*:

> The best aid to clearness of memory consists in orderly arrangement [...]. [P]ersons desiring to train this faculty select localities [*loci*] and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities, with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts, and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves [...]. (2.86.353-54)

Then Cicero makes the oft-quoted comparison that we should "employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it" (2.86.354). According to Cicero "the keenest of all our senses is the sense of sight [...]" (2.87.357), and consequently what the ear hears and the intellect conceives is best preserved if the eyes help to keep it in your head. In this way the invisible takes shape in a concrete appearance. About the *loci memoriae* Cicero writes that it is well known that "one must employ a large number of localities which must be clear and defined and at moderate intervals apart, and images that are effective and sharply outlined and distinctive, with the capacity of encountering and speedily penetrating the mind" (2.87.358).

In the elaborated *Rhetorica ad Herennium* attributed to Cicero and often printed together with other works by him, but actually written by an anonymous, less brilliant author, one finds a more detailed description of *loci memoriae.* A distinction is made between two kinds of memory, one natural, the other artificial:

> The natural memory is that memory which is imbedded in our minds, born simultaneously with thought. The artificial memory is that memory which is strengthened by a kind of training and system of discipline. (16.28) The artificial memory includes backgrounds [*loci*] and images. We can grasp [...,] for example, a house, an intercolumnar space, a recess, an arch or the like. (16.29) And that we may by no chance err in the number of backgrounds, each fifth background should be marked. For example, [if] in the fifth we should set a golden hand [...], it will then be easy to station like marks in each successive fifth background. (18.31)

All this seems to be mnemotechnical common knowledge in an age before the printing press. The most influential textbook on rhetoric was composed by Quintilian (first century AD). His *Institutio Oratoria* is very didactic:

> [I]t is an assistance to the memory if localities are sharply impressed upon the mind, a view the truth of which everyone may realise by practical experiment. For when we return to a place after considerable absence, we not merely recognise the place itself but remember things that we did there, and recall the persons whom we met and even the unuttered thoughts which passed through our minds when we were there before. [...] Some place is chosen of the largest possible extent and characterised by the utmost possible variety, such as a spacious house divided into a number of rooms. (vol. 4, bk. 11, 2.17-18) The first thought is placed, as it were, in the forecourt; the second, let us say, in the living-room; the remainder are placed in due order all around the impluvium and entrusted not merely to bedrooms and parlours, but even to the care of statues and the like. This done, as soon as the memory of the facts requires to be revived, all these places are visited in turn [...]. (vol. 4, bk. 11, 2.20)

As a good teacher Quintilian warns his audience not to overestimate the usefulness of the *loci memoriae*: "Such a practice may perhaps have been of use to those who, after an auction, have succeeded in stating what object they have sold to each buyer, their statements being checked by the books of the money-takers [...]" (vol. 4, bk. 11, 2.24). However, *loci memoriae* are "of less service in learning [...], [f]or thoughts do not call up the same images as material things" (vol 4, bk. 11, 2.24). Quintilian warns several times that it is impossible to represent certain things by symbols (vol. 4, bk. 11, 2.25).

2. Pierre Nora: *Lieux de mémoire* and National Identity

After the *loci memoriae* according to Cicero and Quintilian come the *lieux de mémoire* according to Nora. Collective memory, although a vague and ambivalent concept, is perhaps as fruitful and strategic for the innovation of historical research as the concept of mentality was thirty years earlier, as Nora remarked in his contribution to the French encyclopedia of *La Nouvelle Histoire* ("La mémoire collective" 401). In the *lieux de mémoire* project which started in 1977 with his inaugural seminar at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, Nora has given the concept of *lieux de mémoire* not only a new meaning but also a highly successful programmatic significance.

For the ancients, the *loci memoriae* were a necessary mnemotechnics in a society without modern media (see also J. Assmann, this volume). For Cicero and Quintilian the *loci memoriae* were practical mental tools, free of ideology. *Loci memoriae* were not determined by social values, by historical views, or future expectations. Nora's *lieux de mémoire* are also mnemotechnical devices, but extremely ideological, full of nationalism, and far from being neutral or free of value judgments. Most *lieux de mémoire* were created, invented, or reworked to serve the nation-state. *Lieux de mémoire* were primarily part of the identity politics of the French nation and functioned to imprint the key notions of national history on the *outillage mental* ("set of mental tools") of the French citizens.

In his 1984 introduction to the first volume, Pierre Nora was very clear. Convinced by the perspective of a future European integration, Nora put forward without any ambiguity the necessity of inventorying the French *lieux de mémoire*: "The rapid disappearance of our national memory seemed to me to call for an inventory of the sites where it [the national memory] was selectively incarnated. Through human willpower and the work of centuries, these sites have become striking symbols: celebrations, emblems, monuments, and commemorations, but also speeches, archives, dictionaries, and museums" ("Présentation" vii).

3. French "*specificité*": Republican Universalism

In his conclusion Nora is also very clear about the special position of France. Nora seems to be convinced that there is a French *specificité*, a kind of French *Sonderweg* compared to the English monarchy and the German Empire. "The Republic distinguishes itself [from them] through an profound investment in and the systematic construction of memory which is simultaneously authoritarian, unified, exclusive, universal, and intensely historical" ("De la République" 652).

However, if one looks more closely, it seems that the French Republic is only different in one—very important—respect: universalism. The British and German *lieux de mémoire*—symbols, handbooks, dictionaries, monuments, commemorations, and expositions—were also authoritarian, unifying, exclusive, and intensely historical. The crucial element that is lacking in the British and German political regimes is this universalism, crystallized in the French Revolution and codified in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. This universalism is typical for French republicanism and also marks the difference between the two French monarchies and the two French empires in that turbulent nineteenth century. These non-republican French regimes were as authoritarian, unified, exclusive, and historically orientated as the British and German Empires were.

4. Translating *lieux de mémoire*

Nora's project has been very successful and comparable projects and studies on national *lieux de mémoire* were recently published in Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, and other countries will soon follow (see also Isnenghi; Hebel; and Le Rider; all this volume). Impressed by the success of this kind of historical approach easily accessible for a large audience, publishers in different countries are commissioning multi-volume series of essays on the *lieux de mémoire* of their respective nations.

The translation of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* does not pose fundamental problems in several European languages, such as Spanish and Italian, but in less Romanized European languages a fitting translation is less evident. In the English translation of the ancient rhetorical treatises in Latin, *loci memoriae* was translated as "the backgrounds of memory." The modern French concept is often translated by the more concrete expression "sites of memory." If the concept *lieux de mémoire* is used on a more abstract level a different translation in English is necessary.

In German not only the spatial designation in this context but also the term "memory" is not so easily translatable (see also Harth, this volume). The successful German series is entitled *Erinnerungsorte*. In his essay in the German series, Nora himself wrestles with the proper translation of *lieux* and uses *Herde* (centers), *Knoten* (knots), *Kreuzungen* (crossings), and even *Erinnerungsbojen* (buoys) (François and Schulze 3: 685). If a marine metaphor is chosen, perhaps "anchor" would have been more appropriate than "buoy." But even more problematic is the translation of "memory" with *Erinnerung*. This forceful modern German word—*erinneren*, "to internalize," from an older word *inneren*—has a didactical connotation and can even mean "to learn" or "to teach." Martin Luther, for example, used *erinneren* frequently in his Bible translation.

In each language a proper translation will pose different problems of translation which can be related to conceptual history. For example, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Flemish and Dutch, the German neologism *erinneren* was not yet accepted. Although translated in Latin as *revocare in memoriam*, it was considered to be dialect from the eastern provinces (Kiliaan 112). In the seventeenth-century authoritative Dutch Bible translation *(h)erinneren* was never used. Even in the beginning of the eighteenth century it was considered a Germanism (see Sewel 129). In Dutch, *memorie* was a common word, as was the old Dutch word *geheugen.* Due to the growing influence of the German language on Dutch in the nineteenth century, the word *herinnering* became a common Dutch word and lost its original Germanic flavor. In contemporary Dutch speech, *memorie* is not frequently used anymore and has a solemn, old-fashioned connotation. Thus, the Dutch project of four substantial volumes was appropriately entitled *Plaatsen van herinnering* (Wesseling et al.).

Lieux de mémoire is not a transnational term such as, for example, democracy. The translation problems are not just a matter of definition. In a comparative historical European perspective the positivistic reification of the concept of *lieux de mémoire* has to be avoided and an awareness of linguistic conceptual differences taken into prominent consideration.

5. Comparing *lieux de mémoire*

The next challenge will be to compare *lieux de mémoire* in different countries (den Boer and Frijhoff). Given the general European context of nation-building one may expect that the international structural similarities will be more evident than the national dissimilarities (see also Fortunati and Lamberti, this volume).

The comparative approach has two advantages. Firstly, national history will be enriched by understanding how the history of one's own nation is embedded in European and global history. A nation is never quarantined, but in a large degree determined by transnational context. Secondly, comparative research will open up transnational perspectives on the European *lieux de mémoire.* Christianity, humanism, enlightenment, and scientific development are crucial elements in European cultural history and offer a rich number of significant transnational *lieux de mémoire* such as the *ora et labora* of the Regula Benedicti, the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis, the *dignitas humanum* of Pico della Mirandola, the trial of Galileo Galilei, Spinoza's *Ethics*, Newton's apple, Linnaeus's taxonomy, Ranke's historical seminar, Pasteur's vaccine, Einstein's theory of relativity, or Niels Bohr's quantum mechanics, to name a few (cf. Nora, "La notion").

As *lieux de mémoire* of political European history one cannot pass over the Congress of Vienna, the peace of Versailles and Saint Germain, or the defeat of Hitler's Third Reich and the creation of an Iron Curtain. At the heyday of European nationalism, during the first half of the twentieth century, Verdun and Auschwitz present the most terrible *lieux de mémoire.*

It is remarkable to observe that even long before the disastrous outcome of nationalist rivalry and the terrible experiences of two European wars, Ernest Renan had already traced a transnational perspective. In a famous lecture about the question of what a nation is, delivered a decade after the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), which intensified the process of nation-building considerably, Renan prophesied: "The nations are not something eternal. They had their beginnings and they will end. A European confederation will very probably replace them. But such is not the law of the century in which we are living. At the present time, the existence of nations is a good thing, a necessity even" (53).

European nation-building has developed during successive periods of violent military confrontations and peaceful episodes of flourishing commerce. No European nation ever witnessed splendid isolation or any sort of quarantine. Nonetheless, to this day history teaching is still, generally speaking, dominated by the perspective of the nation-state. National history is often misunderstood and even occasionally disfigured by nineteenth-century national prejudice. For the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the national perspective is an anachronism that makes no sense. The comparative study of *lieux de mémoire* can help to analyze the topography of nineteenth-century national identity politics, an even more important task in the face of attempts to create "national canons" (see also the articles by A. Assmann and Grabes, this volume).

Contemporary Europe urgently needs a kind of transnational identity politics. In order to instruct their young citizens, European countries need teachers with at least a degree of knowledge, affection, and sympathy for Europe. After the *lieux de mémoire* of the nations, the future of Europe requires a new kind of *loci memoriae*: not as mnemotechnical tools to identify the mutilated corpses, not as devices of national identity politics, but to learn how to understand, to forgive, and to forget (see also Junker-Kenny, this volume).

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Italian *luoghi della memoria*

MARIO ISNENGHI

Writing on "sites of memory" in a united Italy is set against a background of *disunited* factors and developments. Disunity is a constituent element of events, memory, and narrative.

1. From Country to State

The peninsula's great past was the original symbolic heritage through which the dawning Nation Italy took its initial form, developed as both consciousness and a project of common space, between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. For centuries already, what other nations had seen and encountered was the past, but the past of a "land of ruins" peopled by a resigned "population of the dead." Establishing the new Nation was a matter of referring to this past from a different viewpoint. Two thousand years before, the secondary peoples of the peninsula had been unified by Rome; a few centuries before unification, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, there had been a flowering of arts and culture, yet that Italy of city-states and dominions was divided politically and militarily while Europe experienced the growth of great absolute monarchies. This spelled both pre-eminence and impediment. The *Risorgimento* was born from this premise: Italy is—or rather will be, will return to being—because it was; it was founded on the memory of having been, and having been great—compared to its present lowliness. The Nation and the national State were thus conceived, establishing and legitimating themselves as a great regenerative process founded on, and made of, memory. The intellectuals and politicians who solicited this reawakening took on a maieutic role, seeking an eclipsed collective "us."

The time invested in laying the foundations spans the first seventy years of the nineteenth century, ideally framed by two great literary works expressing the predominant character of the literature and the men of letters who "invented" Italy: *I Sepolcri* ("The Sepulchres") (1807) by Ugo Foscolo, the first in a series of poet-prophets and heralds of the nation, and *Storia della letteratura italiana* ("History of Italian Literature") (1871) by Francesco De Sanctis, critic and minister, a major summing up of identity, completed as Italy's church towers—for the occasion risen to the status of civic towers, no longer controlled by mourning priests, but rather by celebrating laymen (Sanga)—rang out the conquest of Rome, thereby completing unification (De Sanctis himself recorded this). Putting the seal on this cycle we should add that in the very same year, 1871, Foscolo's remains were moved to Santa Croce, the temple of great Italians that the poet had postulated in his work in 1807.

"Oh Italians, I urge you to history," Foscolo proclaimed, opening his courses at the University of Pavia (1809), courses that undermined the regulations and mental landscapes, the traditional identity of subjects rallied to citizenship; the foreign governors soon saw the need to censure him. Foscolo was born of a Venetian father and a Greek mother, on Zakynthos, an island in the Ionian Sea, a modern Ithaca for a new Odyssean quest for a denied fatherland. Thus he had three homelands: Zakynthos, Venice, and Italy. His birth granted his poetic fantasy both classical and romantic analogies and empathies with Greece and Italy: the great civilizations of the past now fallen low, appealing to history from the nineteenth century, recruiting idealists and volunteers in sentiment and action. The move to Venice exposed the poet-citizen to further losses and deprivations, at the hands both of France, head of the "new order," and Austria, head of the ancien regime. Foscolo took on the role of exile, exiled from both his small and large homelands; this separation allowed him to associate them in memory and nostalgia, as rarely occurs unless fate consigns one to some painful, though fertile, "elsewhere." But living outside of Italy, and making it real through thought and dream, was normal for the eighteenth-century Italian patriot. This was the fate of Giuseppe Mazzini (Ridolfi): protagonist and father of the nation; author of the triple motto "Unity, Independence, Republic"; a leading force in the first Italian political party, *Giovane Italia* ("Young Italy"), in 1831; and an exile in life and death, even though he died in Italy (1872), spurned by the victorious monarchy, defeated, but not broken, living under an alias, almost like an ordinary English Mr. Brown. The Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont of the centuries-old Savoy dynasty became the guiding state. It achieved dominance over the national movement, either confining the democrats of the *Partito d'Azione* ("Action Party") to opposition or subordinating them to moderate monarchical initiatives, and became—when it intercepted the political diaspora from Italy to England, France, and Switzerland—itself the land of exile for several thousand refugees during the 1850s. In Turin they re-elaborated their deluded post-1848 revolutionary aspirations and the memory of their respective homelands (Tobia).

Foscolo's personal experience—from "Greek" to Venetian and from Venetian to Italian—is replicated by Ippolito Nievo in *Confessioni d'un Italiano* ("Confessions of an Italian"; Eng. trans. *The Castle of Fratta*), thus becoming the narrative path of a historical and formative novel and forming the nation, national consciousness, and citizenship in a broader than municipal context. Nievo was a great young writer who died prematurely at the age of thirty (he was one of the Garibaldi Thousand), just after having completed narrating and elaborating the entire historical cycle he had experienced. Here, too, the narrative process, in this case that of an eighty-year-old man who had experienced and describes the period of the *Risorgimento*, represents and politically welcomes a territorial and mental passage from small to large—in this case from Venetian to Italian. Reality showed this process of deconstructing and reconstructing old separate identities within a new unity to be more difficult and time consuming than in its literary depiction.

Looking towards the past to lay the foundations of Italy as a country (cf. Romano) involved not only dealing with municipalism as a permanent factor of disunity, the negative side of *civitas* and municipal energy, but also the geographic and mental centrality of the Roman Catholic church, already identified by Machiavelli in *The Prince* (1513) as the most powerful and structured anti-unity barrier. A third great divide was itself the fruit of the very process of unification, namely the discovery, identification, and accentuation of two distinct macro areas, both material and symbolic: North and South.

2. The Rivers of Memory

Recognizing "sites of memory" in a united Italy involves operating on three planes: Until 1861 the building of the Nation and the State actually proceeded by means of the selection and renewed streamlining of artifacts from the past (from an extended period of over two thousand years of history); after 1861, meaning and distance change under a second interpretative pressure, this time aimed at establishing and broadcasting the coordinates of collective memory and a public account of yesterday's events, in other words the events that led to the birth of the Kingdom of Italy (in an accelerated period of less than half a century). The third operation carried out on memory has involved historiography; this has been our task, we who over one hundred and fifty years later have come to draw the conclusions, in a period when the great tale of our origins has lost much of its aura.

Our volumes on the Italian sites of memory, written, conceived, and elaborated during the mid-1990s, did not share the emerging revisionist and anti-unitary spirit of certain environments (the municipalism, regionalism and even secessionism expressed by the new movements of the *Lega* in Veneto and Lombardy, and the clerical revanchism of a certain powerful right-wing Catholic group, *Comunione e Liberazione*, torchbearers of a counter-memory and counter-history of ancien-regime imprint). However, we were encouraged not to remain prisoners of the lofty schemes forged in post-unity public discourse, which were more a form of hegemonic pressure exerted on memory, a political operation and public usage of history, and certainly not a balanced and reliable presentation of events. As often happens, silence, omission, and oblivion are of no less importance in their own way than the emphasis placed on other facts. The concern of historians dealing with the Italian nineteenth century is, and has been, to reintegrate the political targets of oblivion, restoring importance to republicans such as Mazzini, Cattaneo and Garibaldi who "invented" the Nation and sustained the idea; but also to the clericalists who, in the name of legitimist principles and the Pope-King, had thwarted it, and blighted feelings of citizenship among the faithful *ab origine*, in other words a considerable portion of the population (then around twenty million); and to more than a few southerners who, without necessarily feeling nostalgia for the "Neapolitan homeland" and accomplices to bandits, may have struggled, and continued to struggle for some time, to subscribe to the mental adjustment necessary to experience and identify with Piedmontese occupation as national liberation. Above all, it is obviously not the task of the historian of memory to assign posthumous compensation or ideological corrections of real processes. When certain memories have the strength to impose themselves and marginalize, or even cancel others—like the post-1861 moderate, monarchical memory—they themselves become "facts" under which successive generations live, even though subordinate to forms of false consciousness. The reconstruction we sought was, therefore, that of a conflict of directions, whether open or unspoken, with victors and vanquished but without dogmatization: The waterways of history are, after all, not straight, artificial canals but instead exhibit bends, meanders, and resurgences. The waters of republican memory—but also those of anti-unitary, clerical, pro-Bourbon or pro-Austrian memory—may recede but they continue to flow underground and sometimes re-emerge.

The liberal monarchy is well represented by monuments in public squares by the "disciplined revolutionary." (In 1866, during the third war of independence, the government ordered Garibaldi to curtail his volunteers, who were setting out for Trent, as they were winning "too much" against the Austrians. The military leader of the left responded with a laconic telegram: "I obey.") In Italian imagery a different, rebel Garibaldi (Isnenghi, "Garibaldi") persisted as a counter-memory and political resource that has never been completely deactivated, lasting through several generations, made real and reactivated by the left (and during the twentieth century by the right). The Catholics prevailed in the long run: Liberalism and democracy—repudiated in the motto "be neither elector nor elected" (1861), excommunicated by the Syllabus (1864), adverted by the scandalous refusal of the early-twentieth-century "Christian Democrats" and the liquidation of the newly established *Partito Popolare Italiano* ("Popular Party of Italy") by a Vatican attracted to the "Man of Providence" Benito Mussolini—also prevailed after the Second World War under the form of a moderate popular party built on denominational foundations (cf. Tassani; Riccardi; Bravo). And this occurred precisely when the majority of Italians denied having ever been fascists, during the several decades when fascism seemed to disappear both as a real fact and as memory, becoming almost a mere "digression."

3. History and Memory

The Italian sites of memory project, though it was conceived during a period when memory appeared to be depreciated and at risk and was thus approached as a "battle for memory" (Isnenghi, "Conclusione") has therefore endeavored not to put history in a subordinate position in relation to memory. Were I to edit it today I would redress the balance even more in favor of history. In a work on memory this means insisting on the mechanisms, the players, the means of construction, the non-innocent character of memory—subjective and belonging to specific spontaneous and organized groups—and their conflicts. (We have known this since the time of Maurice Halbwachs, but today we live in an age of "invalidated memories" and the "dictatorship of witnesses.") The Savoy monarchy effectively prevailed; Turin, a northern city, marginal in relation to the rest of the peninsula—with a history, moreover, in many ways less significant than Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples or Milan—managed to take the central role in the mid-nineteenth century, during the formative phase of a country in the making, a country which had, historically, a plurality of centers and capitals. Turin—if Rome was recognized as destined to become capital—had in any case to accept and suffer the fact that, in the eyes of the world and most Italians, Rome was firstly the city of the Pope and then the city of the King.

Plurality, therefore, is a key concept; Italy was multi-centered, a public arena charged with tensions and retorts, not sufficiently well-represented by the elevated post-unitary oleography of its four great figures—Vittorio Emanuele, Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi—to which the most zealous even added Pius IX, the would-be "liberal pope," who should have been the mediator between "good and evil" and instead never tired of dogmatizing his own primacy and repudiating the *Risorgimento.* It was an arduous task to foster citizenship in this country, especially among an illiterate people used to believing their priests, who were induced by the ecclesiastical hierarchy during the first forty years of the Kingdom not to acknowledge the "legal Italy" that had been brought into being by a secular, often Masonic and not infrequently Jewish revolution; against this the Church offered a "real Italy," the only conceivable nation, which was that of the Guelphs. Dualism was therefore perpetuated, exhuming—and yet again exploiting the sedimentation and language of memory—the most ancient names (Guelphs and Ghibellines).

It was a decision to capitalize on an effective expression of antimony—"real Italy/legal Italy"—, flaunted for almost half a century by a considerable part of the Catholic hierarchy under three pontiffs: Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X. This "real Italy" was the response of a self-referential Catholic world, resistant to the state (and incidentally not only to the "illegitimate" State) and the "legal Italy" of a liberal monarchy which had broadened, though not to any great extent, its social base in the passage (in 1976) from the governmental legacy of Cavour to the governments of the historical left, strengthened by ex-republicans and ex-followers of Garibaldi who had entered the parliamentary arena. This bi-polar image of late-nineteenth-century, post-unitary Italy, however, suffers from the absence of some interesting positions of the period such as the revanchist attitude of the Church and the intransigent clerical movement. It is also fitting to include a third Italy within this framework of competing identities that developed within public debate: the broad range of left-wing movements, the "non-repentant" remains of the Action Party, republicans and irredentists, and the newly born socialist party, especially in the 1890s when, under Andrea Costa and Filippo Turati, the socialists disassociated themselves from anarcho-socialism and entered the electoral competition. Though denying the Nation, the same Internationalists, under Bakunin, Cafiero and Merlino, ended up contributing to the definition of the arena: After several failed attempts one of them managed to assassinate Umberto I (1900). The Nation was also the Anti-Nation: The Kingdom also included its own denial of both "black" and "red." The "Italies" in conflict are substantially three. Shifting back in time, the title of a work by the national-fascist historian Gioacchino Volpe—*L'Italia in cammino* ("Italy on the Move") (1927)—suggests a conceptual framework into which we can fit the formation and conflict of subjects, identities and memories of what we can call "three Italies on the move." This framework ensured several results: the multiplicity and dialectics of the subjects in question; a division and conflict which unfolds, moreover, within the same public arena, becoming both charged and registered; and the processes of historical dynamics.

This was what we needed to underscore the specific elements of the unity-disunity of "Italy as a country," not yet finalized but *in itinere. Symbols and Myths*, *Structures and Events*, *Personalities and Dates*, variants and titles of the volumes of the Italian *Sites of Memory* project, take on and give structure and meaning to the lives of generations of "Italians." They, too, were on the move, and "on the move" does not necessarily mean going forward, united in one single direction.

The twentieth century engaged the Italians in two great historical events which can also be seen as opportunities and incentives to dissolve the disuniting factors within superior forms of unity. These were the First World War and fascism, two chapters in the transition from elitist society to mass society. The Great War—debated for ten months in the press and by the public at large, much less in Parliament—was chosen, desired but also imposed by many and on many and represents new antitheses, new dualisms, and the elaboration of new divided memories (Isnenghi, "Grande Guerra"). Victory over the "Historical Enemy"—the Habsburg Empire, Austria—created a unity never seen before and at the same time new aspects of division in experience, in representation, and in the mass of private and public accounts. Eighty years after the First World War the conflict over the pros and cons of the war, and its supporters, have not yet been appeased or become the mere object of historiographical study. Neither did the most large-scale project and endeavor towards social, political, and cultural reunification since the *Risorgimento*—fascism—manage to create unity out of differences. Not only did the dictatorship and single party allow different lines of thought to persist in a variety of fields—economy, art, concepts of city and rural life; it also retained significant powers such as the monarchy, the armed forces, and the Church, who were to promote and orchestrate the transition of the regime in 1943; in fact they primarily nourished the need and desire for *another* Italy among the antifascist minorities. Again, therefore, in researching these processes and mental redistributions the historian must maintain a balanced view of all the different levels, which at this point also include, diversely: the memory of republican and imperial Rome; a refocusing on the *Risorgimento*—excessively liberal and parliamentary in the regime's policy of memory and the object of a nostalgic countermelody for both internal and external exiles; and the memory of the "Italy of Vittorio Veneto," in other words the victorious army and D'Annunzio's "greater Italy" which Mussolini (Passerini) claimed to have "brought" to Vittorio Emanuele III when the March on Rome (Isnenghi, "Marcia") ended in Palazzo Chigi instead of in prison. The compact vision of a society reunified within a "totalitarian" State was, moreover, paradoxically crushed by the regime itself when it decided, in 1938, to annul the rights of around 40,000 citizens, those Jews who suddenly became "internal foreigners" (di Cori) though many of them—and their forefathers—had played an active role in creating the Nation.

In this necessity to contemporaneously grasp unity and disunity as permanent coordinates of Italian history the summit was reached in the Second World War. It would be impossible to disentangle the complex layers of events and memory here. There were several wars within the war, successive and intertwined, with major points of division defined by two significant moments in 1943: July 25, the end of the Mussolini government; and September 8, the armistice, in other words unconditional surrender. The *Comitato di Liberazione Nationale* ("Committee of National Liberation"), the motor of antifascist resistance and the transition from Monarchy to Republic, attempted to give a structure to the re-emerging plurality of positions and parties, yet the pressures and figures involved, in that devastated Italy between 1943 and 1945 which had ceased to believe in itself as a Great Power, created a field of tensions which included a last-minute fascism reborn in republican guise, which competed with the antifascists on the concept of Nation and fatherland, but outdid them in the name of a "new Europe." On the issues surrounding the war, in the different phases from 1940 to 1945, there are numerous essays, by witnesses such as Nuto Revelli on the "retreat from Russia," and scholars such as Marco Di Giovanni, Giorgio Rochat, Mimmo Franzinelli, Adriano Ballone, Massimo Legnani and Nicola Galleran. The second post-war period was organized—institutionally, politically, and mentally—according to two great dividing factors: the antifascism/fascism antithesis, sanctioned by the republican constitution which formally took effect in 1948, and the anticommunist/communist antithesis, which, with the Cold War, became a material constitution of greater effectiveness than the formal constitution and was never repealed in the political arena, even after 1989.

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Mitteleuropa as a *lieu de mémoire*

JACQUES LE RIDER

The formation of *Mitteleuropa* can be traced back to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and to the first Germanic settlements east of the empire. In a direct line with Austro-Prussian dualism, entrenched at the time of Maria Theresa and Frederick II, two empires—the German *Reich* proclaimed in 1871 and the Habsburg monarchy—succeeded the Holy Roman Empire (abolished at the time of Napoleon, partially restored in 1815 in the form of the German Confederation, irrevocably destroyed by the Austro-Prussian War in 1866). In the twentieth century, the mental map of German Central Europe is marked by the geopolitical concept of *Mitteleuropa*, which is linked to the liberal nationalist ideology of Friedrich Naumann, which defined the German war aims in 1915. Naumann's ideas attenuated the pan-Germanic program by limiting it to the area of Central Europe. As a result, German-speaking historians and political scientists today tend to avoid the word *Mitteleuropa*, preferring the terms *Zentraleuropa* (closer to the French "*Europe central*" and the English "Central Europe") or *Mittelosteuropa.*

Why are *Mitteleuropa*, *Zentraleuropa*, and *Mittelosteuropa* of contemporary interest for the history of *lieux de mémoire*? Because from the Enlightenment to the Second World War, this area has, through the individual national identities, provided the center of the European continent with its identity. The twentieth century has striven to dismantle and deform *Mitteleuropa*: the First World War, Nazism and the Shoah, the Second World War, Stalinism and Neo-Stalinism. One can say that since the peace treaties of 1919-1920 and since 1945, *Mitteleuropa* as a whole has become a *lieu de mémoire*, a space of memory (*Erinnerungsraum*).

The dissemination of German culture formed a space which, from the end of the eighteenth century on, became the site of confrontation between, on the one hand, German *Kultur* and other cultural identities and, on the other hand, the German-Slavic, German-Jewish, German-Hungarian, German-Rumanian mixture. Cultural *Mitteleuropa* is thus an ambivalently defined notion. In certain contexts, it evokes the catastrophic path of Europe's destiny during the time of nationalisms and imperialisms. In other contexts, it designates a civilization of cultural mingling at the intersection of Northern and Southern Europe, halfway between Occidental Europe and Oriental Europe.

In the "center" of the European continent, other *lieux de mémoire* older than *Mitteleuropa* retain a subliminal presence, always ready to become current again. The distinction between Byzantine Europe and Central Europe, and later between Islam and Christianity, created religious and cultural borders separating the Orthodox peoples from the small islands of Islam which still exist in the Balkans, and Catholics from Protestants. These borders are *lieux de mémoire* which have often served to justify discourses of rejection (Russophobe or anti-Serbian), or to explain conflicts in the post-Communist era, particularly in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. However, the secularization of European culture renders it impossible to reduce contemporary conflicts to religious wars. These religious borders are *lieux de mémoire* manipulated by neo-nationalistic propaganda. Yet forgetting them would also be unfortunate: For example, considering attempts to define "fundamental values" and Europe's cultural identity, *Mitteleuropa* is a reminder that both Islam and Judaism have left an indelible mark on Europe, and that Byzantine Christianity is not only to be found on the Oriental edge of Europe, but instead also in its geocultural center.

Two other borders, present earlier and still existent, belong to the *lieux de mémoire* of *Mitteleuropa.* The first is that separating Russia from Central Europe. For the Slavophile Russians, the Catholic, Protestant, and nonreligious Slavs of Central Europe were an exception to the rule which identified the Slavic soul with the Orthodox church. For Russian Occidentalists, Central Europe was merely a connecting passageway one had to traverse to get to Germany, France, Italy, or England. Poland, lastly, seen from the Russian perspective, occupied a place apart, as it could, after all, to a certain degree be seen as an integral part of the Russian empire. *Mitteleuropa* certainly defined itself most often in opposition to Russia, whose political and cultural regression appeared threatening from the Central European point of view. This *lieu de memoire*, namely the border between *Mitteleuropa* and Russia, could possibly reemerge, if the question of closer ties between Russia and the European Union were to be broached.

The other long-standing border which exists as a *lieu de mémoire* in Central Europe is that dividing the "Balkans" from the population of Central Europe. The *homo balkanicus* is a caricature originally conceived of by Westerners to denote a primitive European, merely picturesque within his folklore tradition but barbaric when he takes up arms. European discourses regarding "the Balkans" highlighted an Orientalism without positive characteristics. They originate from a cultural colonialism which expects Western civilization to bring a bit of order and rationality to the fragmented and underdeveloped territories. "The Balkans" were contrasted with the Southeast Central Europe of the Habsburgs. Still today, the expansion of the European Union to include the "Balkans" remains incomplete and faces difficulties, of which the symbolic constraints are not the least important.

The Western borders of Europe are not any simpler to define than its Eastern borders. Do the German-speaking countries belong to Central or Western Europe? When the German *Reich* and the Habsburg monarchy were in contact with Russia and the Ottoman Empire, they undoubtedly were a part of Central Europe. Between 1949 and 1990, the Federal Republic of Germany belonged to Western Europe, whereas the German Democratic Republic was a part of "Eastern Europe" and under Soviet influence.

In 1990, after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., the emancipation of the Central European republics, and German reunification, Central Europe seemed to be coming to life again. After the consolidation of the European Community, the center of Europe was no longer the Berlin-Prague-Vienna-Budapest axis, but rather the axis Rotterdam-Milan. Would the Eastern enlargement of the European Union allow Europe to recover its historical center? Or would it become clear that the Central Europe in question is no longer in the center but rather at the margin of the Europe of the Treaty of Rome, and that *Mitteleuropa* now only has the status of a *lieu de mémoire*?

This *lieu de mémoire* had been the talisman of certain intellectual, anti-Soviet dissident groups. In the 1980s, György Konrád in Budapest and the Czech Milan Kundera and the Yugoslav Danilo Kis in Paris revived the discussion about *Mitteleuropa*. Kundera's text, first published in Paris in November 1983, became famous under the title of the American version from April 1984: "The Tragedy of Central Europe." Members of the anti-Soviet resistance of November 1956 in Budapest, Kundera writes, were fighting for their fatherland and for Europe. It took the repression of the Prague Spring in 1968 to awaken once again the memory of Central Europe, the myth of a Golden Age, the end of which was the time around 1900 and the 1920s.

However, the memory of Central Europe also includes fateful episodes which line the history of the "small nations" that were exposed to mortal threats. The nations of Central Europe know the experience of downfall and disappearance. The great Central European novels, namely those by Hermann Broch, Robert Musil, Jaroslav Hasek, and Franz Kafka, are meditations on the possible end of European humanity. The tragedy of Central Europe is, in short, the tragedy of Europe. When the Iron Curtain falls, Kundera concluded in his text of 1983-84, the peoples of Central Europe will realize that the culture of Europe (scientific, philosophical, literary, artistic, musical, cinematographic, audio-visual, educational and universitarian, multilingual) has ceased to be of value in the eyes of Europeans themselves, and constitutes at best only a *lieu de mémoire.*

Almost at the same time, in June 1984, the Hungarian writer György Konrád published the German version of his essay, "Der Traum von Mitteleuropa" ("The Dream of Central Europe"), first presented at a conference in Vienna in May 1984. *Mitteleuropa* for him evoked the memory of Austria-Hungary during the Belle Époque. The Central European spirit, he wrote, is a view of the world, an aesthetic sensibility that allows for complexity and multilingualism, a strategy that rests on understanding even one's deadly enemy. The Central European spirit consists of accepting plurality as a value in and of itself; it represents "another rationality," Konrád affirmed, an anti-politics, a defense of civil society against politics.

In Central Europe, the "literary republic" was long near to the heart of the *res publica.* The first configuration of the cultural identity of Central Europe appeared when Renaissance and Baroque were spreading via Vienna, Prague, Krakow, and Buda (in Hungary). This "delayed" Renaissance fused with the art and zeitgeist of the Baroque period and significantly influenced the entire Central European region. The primary factor determining the establishment of a literary republic in Europe was the reaction to the Ottoman threat, which led to the founding of the "Sodalitas litteraria Danubiana" by Conrad Celtis around 1500, unifying German, Hungarian, Slavic, Bohemian, and Wallachian humanists.

At the time of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, a new cultural system emerged in Northern and Central Germany, which broke with Latin and Italian Central Europe, and the Reformation called forth the first stirrings of a consciousness of national cultures, for example among the Czechs or Slovaks. In contrast, the Counter-Reformation elevated Baroque to the official style and it would be two centuries before Josephinism at the end of the eighteenth century achieved the first synthesis of German Enlightenment and Baroque, all the while endeavoring to establish German as the lingua franca in *Mitteleuropa,* after Latin, Italian, and French, which incited as a reaction the inexorable protest of the nations against this Germanization.

The production of the national through philology, which exalts the oral and written literary traditions, and through linguistics, which codifies the spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, corresponds to a German model one could call "Herderian." The diffusion of Herder's theoretical system among the peoples of Central Europe constitutes an essential stage in the formation of the cultural *Mitteleuropa.* Hungarian, Romanian, Polish, Czech, Serb, Croatian, Slovenian, etc. intellectuals, through exposure to Herder's texts, forged the conviction that love for one's fatherland is impossible without love for one's mother tongue, and that the poet is the true father of the nation, far more than the rulers who scoff at linguistic borders and only recognize dynastically defined territories.

Mitteleuropa is one of the *lieux de mémoire* that was of decisive importance in the way the "literary republic" constituted cultural and national identities. One could say that *Mitteleuropa* is the *lieu de mémoire* par excellence of a model of the production of the national through the cultural, against the pure reason of the political and military state.

Delayed by their coercion into the collectivity of the German and Habsburg empires, since the nineteenth century the historical nations of Central Europe have been demanding their emancipation, and striving to connect to earlier epochs of independence and greatness. During the twentieth century, at the time that the central empires disappeared, representations of a federal order and a cosmopolitan culture resurfaced, generally in connection with the Austrian tradition. "Central Europe is just a term which symbolizes the needs of the present," Hugo von Hofmannsthal wrote in December 1917 in his lecture on "Die österreichische Idee" (457-58). And in his notes for an article about the idea of Europe we find this definition of the *lieu de mémoire Mitteleuropa*: "Millennial struggle for Europe, millennial mission by Europe, millennial belief in Europe. For us, the Germans and Slavs and Latins who dwell on the soil of two Roman empires, chosen to bear a common destiny and inheritance—for us Europe is truly the fundamental color of the planet" (54).

Faced with the shock of the Third Reich, the Habsburg myth and, beyond that, the memory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation are transformed by Joseph Roth or Stefan Zweig into a retrospective utopia of the coexistence of nations in a cosmopolitan cultural space, into a literary republic covering a vast Central European territory from Italy to the coast of the Baltic Sea.

The history of the Habsburg monarchy from this time can be interpreted as a political and socio-cultural process of harmonization of the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural plurality. Thanks to institutions which managed conflict and structured the pluralism in the form of the "Compromise" (*Ausgleich)* within the framework of each "crownland" (*Kronland*), the liberal Empire founded in 1867 on the basis of new principles attempted to improve the relationships among the nations. This is the meaning of the "Habsburg myth," which Claudio Magris has spoken of so masterfully. This ideology of the state, brought to the fore by the Habsburgs since the time when Prince Eugene referred to the monarchy as a *totum* and particularly emphasized during the time between 1866 and 1871 when Austria, removed from the Holy Roman Empire which it had long dominated and in competition with the German Empire, newly proclaimed in 1871, had to invent a new geo-political identity for itself, based on that which was left over: the territories in the East and Southeast. The Habsburg myth of a pluralistic society and a pluralistic state which provided all peoples the *Heimat* entitled to them was merely a propagandistic disguise for the battle between two hegemonic peoples, the German Austrians and the Hungarians, both fighting to defend and expand their privileges and their advantages, a struggle presented as being of general interest and "supranational" reasoning.

The comparison (flattering for Austrian Cisleithania) with the policy of Germanization pursued by the German *Reich* in its Eastern, Polish regions is an integral part of the "Habsburg myth." One also has to distinguish between the Austrian part of the Danubian Empire and the Hungarian Transleithania. The integrative force of the Habsburg model, characterized by its cultural pluralism, is incontestable in Cisleithania (even allowing for a confusion of myth and reality), but did not function in Hungary. The Slavic regions that belonged to the Hungarian part of the monarchy undoubtedly never had the feeling that they were part of a Slavic-Hungarian cultural community. The same can be said of the Romanians in Transleithania. It is Cisleithania that has romanticized the "Habsburg myth" and made it a *lieu de mémoire* of a cosmopolitan *Mitteleuropa*, in which the cultural plurality was able to form itself into a harmonic pluralism.

Since World War II, *Mitteleuropa* has become the *lieu de mémoire* of Jewish Central Europe, destroyed by the Shoah. The Jewish culture of the shtetl, the contemporary renaissance of Yiddish, and the spreading of Hasidism have drawn new maps of Central Europe. This Jewish culture of *Mitteleuropa* was also that of the Jews assimilated into the national cultures. In Prague during Kafka's time, assimilated Jews were part of both the German and the Czech cultures; in Lemberg, intellectual capital of Galicia and birthplace of Joseph Roth, they were divided between German and Polish culture; in Czernowitz, metropolis of Bukovina, the territory made famous by Paul Celan, they hesitated between assimilation into the German culture and Rumanization.

The Austrian-Marxist tradition constructed the *lieu de mémoire* of a Central Europe of the working class. The Austrian social democracy of the Habsburg era found it difficult to overcome the contradiction between "class" and "nationality." Victor Adler led a supranational, official discourse and wanted his party to become a *Reichspartei*, in opposition to nationalist currents. But from the 1890s on, even for him the nationalist arguments prevailed over internationalist class solidarity. In the Cisleithanian parliament, the Social Democratic fraction was divided into five national clubs. The trade unions tried to unite the nationalities within a factory, one branch of industry, one organization. In sum, the Austrian social democracy was a mirror image of the Habsburg monarchy: supranational in its "political myth," but in reality divided along national lines.

Mitteleuropa is a European space of memory which combines two constitutive elements of European identity: first, cultural and linguistic plurality and second, the difficulty to structure this plurality without giving in to the "holistic" temptation of a homogeneous society, the course usually followed by nationalism.

Until the 1920s, German, the lingua franca of *Mitteleuropa*, is added in some linguistic regions as an international language alongside the "national" language, occasionally in competition with another international language such as French. Gradually, with the growing sense of national consciousness and the affirmation of literary languages, German is reduced to the status of a "second language" which allows for international communication within the Central European region.

The phenomenon of true multilingualism, combining two or three languages of the Central European region, is generally limited to certain zones of contact, the children of mixed marriages, and the elites of certain metropolises (such as Trieste, Prague, Bratislava, Czernovitz, or Lemberg). It should be mentioned that cases of Polish-Lithuanian, Slovakian-Hungarian, or Austrian-Italian-Slovenian multilingualism, to name just a few possible combinations, are far less numerous than cases of multilingualism in which a Central European national language is combined with German or French. An intellectual from *Mitteleuropa* who chooses a language other than his native tongue for his literary or scholarly works seldom chooses another language of the region; only German, English, or French come into consideration.

As a *lieu de mémoire* of cultural plurality which allows multilingualism and "hybrid identities" to flourish, *Mitteleuropa* is also a *lieu de mémoire* of the degradation of nationalism, as analyzed by Gumplowicz, who depicted Central Europe as the theater of a "struggle of races" (*Rassenkampf*), a war between the various social and ethnic groups. The "race" theories of this professor at the University of Graz are dominated by a pessimism that would be worthy of Hobbes, and form the other interpretative framework for the plurality of Central Europe.

In Cisleithania, the Habsburg system had attempted to guarantee the cultural autonomy of the nationalities through constitutional compromises which controlled the balance between the ethnic-linguistic groups in each territory. In Moravia, for example, one could not simultaneously be both Czech and German, but had to choose one or the other. A majority of the Jews chose a German linguistic identity. In Cisleithania, this cohabitation without cohesion did not lead to "supranationality," but rather to a curious alloy of Habsburg citizenship and Czech, Polish, Serb, Croatian, Slovenian, Italian, Romanian, Ruthenian, or German "private nationality." Were the Jews of the Habsburg monarchy "supranational" as well, as Joseph Roth suggested? In reality, the Jews of Austria-Hungary were swept along with everyone else in the movement affirming the individual nations and took on the language of the dominant nationality in their province.

Regarding the notion of *Mitteleuropa* from the perspectives of the different societies of the Central European region, profound divergences are evident. For most Poles, memory of *Mitteleuropa* is inextricably bound up with the successive divisions of Poland among three empires. The Poland that existed between the two world wars refused the restoration of a Central European federation and drew inspiration for being a major regional power from its own national historical references, by challenging the German enclaves within Poland maintained by the Treaty of Versailles, yet also nourishing great territorial ambitions in the East.

In Bohemia, did the national independence achieved in Saint-Germain-en-Laye do away with the nostalgia for the old Danubian order, and did Czech intellectuals in the 1920s forget the "Austroslavism" of Frantisek Palacky, that liberal Czech who insisted after 1848 that had the Habsburg monarchy not existed, it would have had to be invented, in the interest of Europe and of all mankind? In fact, the empire of the Habsburg Bohemians, which belonged to the old Holy Roman Empire, offered the best protection against Russian imperialism. The high degree of economic and political modernization achieved in Bohemia before the Second World War confirms that the Czech nationality was able to flourish in the heart of Cisleithania. But the First World War destroyed the faith that the peoples of Central Europe had in the Habsburg *Mitteleuropa*. After the summer of 1914, the Habsburgs, having betrayed their historical mission, were merely the "shining representatives" of Germany, which reduced the small nations of Central Europe to the status of oppressed peoples, as highlighted by Jaroslav Hasek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk.*

In Hungary, a historical nation in Central Europe recaptured from the Ottomans by the Habsburgs, *Mitteleuropa* has remained a positively connotated *lieu de mémoire.* Budapest, capital of the dual monarchy after the Compromise of 1867, experienced in the last third of the nineteenth century and up until the First World War one of its most splendid periods, politically, economically, and culturally. The Treaty of Trianon, for the Hungarians a traumatic experience, is part of the reason for the idealization of the memory of *Mitteleuropa.*

Mitteleuropa is also a *lieu de mémoire* of French-German and French-Austrian tensions and conflicted relations with Italy, which, going by the "mental map" of German imperialism, was the decisive party in the fate of *Mitteleuropa*, based on the Italian territories first belonging to the Holy

Roman Empire and then the Habsburg monarchy. Since the end of the nineteenth century, French historical thought, primarily committed to the cause of the Slavic peoples, has criticized the "prison of the peoples." One of the most systematic deconstructions of the term *Mitteleuropa* comes from Ernest Denis, an expert in Czech history, friend of Benes and Masaryk, advocate of the idea of Czechoslovakia and also a defender of the idea of Yugoslavia. These negative interpretations of *Mitteleuropa* as an imperialistic German and Habsburg project corresponds to the majority opinion in France at that time. The geographer Emmanuel de Martonne, who played an eminent role in the committee that paved the way for the peace conference of 1919-20 (he suggested the borders of Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, and the Polish corridor), published in 1930-31 volume 4 of *Geographie universelle*, dedicated to *L'Europe Centrale.* This French concept of Central Europe, in contrast to the idea of *Mitteleuropa*, influenced the peace treaties of 1919-20 and inspired the politics of the "small entente" in Central Europe.

From the Italian perspective, the term *Mitteleuropa* evokes a debate carried out in Northeastern Italy in the time leading up to the First World War, about attempts to bring together Italians, Germans, Austrians, and Slavs in a regional community, held together by deeper links than the dynastic connections of the Habsburgs. In the 1920s, Trieste remained a hub for Austrian-Italian-Jewish-Slavic cultural contact. Under fascism, Italy tried to play a role in the foreground of Central Europe and the Balkans, but was unable to penetrate Nazi domination (see also Isnenghi, this volume).

In the years following German unification, the dissolution of the Soviet system, and the emancipation of the nations of Central Europe, one could expect *Mitteleuropa* to reconstitute itself. The French and perhaps the English might well worry that this negative *lieu de mémoire* could gain currency again and a zone of German (and Austrian) influence be re-established. In the lands that belonged to the Habsburg monarchy until 1918, *Mitteleuropa* remained the Belle Epoque, a fashionable topic re-discovered in the 1980s.

Paradoxically, at precisely the point that the expansion of the European Union to include Central Europe has been completed, *Mitteleuropa* seems to have lost its importance. But does not precisely the forgetting of this *lieu de mémoire* of Central Europe show that Europe itself has lost its memory and the markers of its identity? In the new member states of the European Union, will the feeling of being European be engulfed by the return of national emotions, by the appetite for economic and cultural globalization after decades of being trapped in the Soviet bloc, and by strategic considerations that would seem to be better guaranteed by

NATO than by Europe? Does not neo-Nazi and xenophobic populism highlight the fact that the suppression of *Mitteleuropa—lieu de mémoire* of the great catastrophes which nationalism and racism led to—does not contribute to a democratic political culture? Indeed, it is instead witness to the atrophying of historical consciousness, without which it is likely impossible to strengthen the European Union.

Translated by Anna-Lena Flügel

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Generation/Generationality, Generativity, and Memory

JÜRGEN REULECKE

The term "generation" is used in public discussions in an ambiguous manner, such that several different meanings are often blended one with another. In everyday language, the term is used to refer to a member in the natural sequence of grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, a progression that traditionally assumes a distance between generations of about thirty years (the "pulse-rate hypothesis"). In reference to the population structure of a society, "generation" is used (although "cohort" would be the correct term) to statistically group all those born in the same year or the same five-year period or decade. A new understanding of the term which originated in the humanities and social sciences has now become common, however, which defines "generation" as a group within a society that is characterized by its members having grown up in the same particularly formative historical era. Often, such a generational identity exists throughout its members' lives due to their having experienced times of radical upheaval and new beginnings (primarily in adolescence) and as a result sharing a specific habitus (the "imprint hypothesis").

The term "generationality" gets at the particular features of this identity and has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it refers to characteristics resulting from shared experiences that either individuals or larger "generational units" collectively claim for themselves. On the other hand, it can also mean the bundle of characteristics resulting from shared experiences that are ascribed to such units from the outside, with which members of other age groups—and often also public opinion as expressed in the media—attempt, in the interest of establishing demarcations and reducing complexity, to identify presumed generations as well as the progression of generations. This led during the twentieth century in particular to many blanket labels that caught on in public discourse in Germany, such as the "superfluous," "disinherited," "oppressed," "skeptical," or the "conformist" generations. Thus, generation and generationality are, in the end, not tangible entities but rather mental, often very zeitgeist-dependent constructs through which people, as members of a specific age group, are located or locate themselves historically, and accordingly create a we-feeling.

Linking processes of societal change to generational relations, and characterizing individual generations as, say, engines of progress or as initiators of a particular, perhaps avant-garde, style did not start until the early nineteenth century, in the wake of the experiences of upheaval during that era. As contemporaries from Goethe to Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher all the way to Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill realized, the various age groups living then perceived the rapid political, social, and technical-economic changes of their epoch differently and, as a result, assessed and reacted to them differently. In the time since, there have been numerous trends in the public discourse on generations, including arguments which in the twentieth century frequently led to demagoguery and political actionism, with slogans such as "Make way, you old men!" ("*Macht Platz, ihr Alten*!"; Gregor Strasser 1927) and "Trust no one over 30!" One could almost argue that grave changes generally lead, first immediately afterwards and then again at a distance of one to two decades, to society-wide debates about the generational background and results of these events.

Scholarly attempts at a more thorough analysis of the generation problem began in earnest in Germany around 1870 with the philosopher and statistician Gustav von Rümelin, and in particular with Ranke's student Wilhelm Dilthey. The latter strongly favored the imprint hypothesis, in that the starting point of his theory of generations was the "dependence" of particular groups of individuals on "the same significant facts and changes which emerged in the period when they were most susceptible." Shortly before World War One, Sigmund Freud introduced to the debate an additional, psychoanalytical interpretation of the role the mental generational legacy played in determining the course of individuals' lives in subsequent generations. At the end of the 1920s, the sociologist Karl Mannheim then supplied his theory of generations, which remains the operative approach today, albeit in a modified form. He distinguished between the "generational location" (*Generationslagerung*), exposure to the same historical contexts during youth, which he saw as a disposition that under certain circumstances could lead to a "generational connection" (*Generationenzusammenhang*) and "generational consciousness" (*Generationenbewußtsein*), and the groups these could feed into, the "generational units" (*Generationseinheiten*), identifiable and influential groups within a society. Mannheim compared "generation" with "class" and believed that the specific location "primarily eliminates a great number of the possible ways of experiencing, thinking, feeling, and acting and [limits] the scope of the effect of individuality to certain circumscribed possibilities" (528).

Mannheim's belief that "generation" was a quasi-objective, existent entity to which he also ascribed a fixed purpose, a "generational entelechy," has been criticized and rejected, yet to this day his other fundamental assumptions provide manifold impulses not only to the social sciences, but also in political science, the history of education, the history of mentalities, and the history of experience. In addition, the strengths of the generational approach in the context of a recent turn to cultural-historical approaches have only gradually been discovered: Studying historical contexts with the generational approach, in combination with the concept of "generationality," connects the identification of general structures and processes, especially those of various social levels, with the subjective perceptions and experiences of contemporaries, including their interpretations, spheres of action, and options for action. This achieves an at least partial dissolution of the far too heavily emphasized pair of opposites "objective vs. subjective," in favor of an integrative perspective. This view places the concrete temporality of humans, including their generational "baggage," into the context of general historical change, which the individual may face passively as well as actively. In other words: With such an approach, the individual is left his unmistakable historicity within the framework of his realm of experience as well as his life story, with a view not least towards his actions in light of the future open to him. The oft-voiced criticism of the generational approach is that it creates—through hindsight and quite arbitrarily—artificial clusters of people, and that it is oriented solely on birth years and thus reduces the continuous passage of time to segments of time constructed retrospectively. Yet this is not the case if one takes seriously as historically influential phenomena the subjective generational positioning—both the self- and the historically specific external positioning—of people during their lives, including the associated creations of meaning, interpretations, and memory, which are ever changing according to the particular stage of life.

Generational research, in the 1980s and 1990s rather narrowly limited primarily to the political and social sciences and social and everyday history, which were increasingly taking up questions of the history of mentalities, has expanded significantly due to increasing interdisciplinarity. New ideas include questions that, on the one hand, are derived from the current interdisciplinary study of culture, which is paying more attention to historical phenomena of perception, experience, and memory. On the other hand, there has also been increased collaboration between generational researchers in the humanities and the social sciences and those interested in generationality in the psychological sciences, including psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychosomatic medicine, and psychogerontology. In addition to this there are also the challenges that arose from the new findings of neuroscientific research, especially with respect to the research area of memory and remembering (see also Markowitsch, this volume): These motivated further efforts to investigate the complex concurrence of generationality, memory, and generativity (see below). And there was one more, rather extra-scientific, impulse: For several years, in the context of a "memory boom," new, catchy generational attributions have constantly been invented in the media, in politicians' speeches, in advertising, and in essays—from the "Generation [VW] Golf," the "Generation Berlin," and the "Generation '89" in Germany to the "Generations X," "Y," and "@" in the United States and elsewhere. Moreover, there is an age group that has recently begun, in their self-biographization or retrospective reconstruction of the course of their own lives, to position themselves generationally and speak as a generational unit, one that until this point had drawn little attention to itself: the war babies. Born in the late 1930s and early 1940s and now reaching retirement age, they are calling to memory their early childhood experiences—or these are "catching up" with them—of the bombing war, expulsion, the loss of their fathers, etc. Some of these memories are extremely traumatic, and can have grave results for their self-image, creation of aims and meaning for their lives, and mental stability. Here we see that not only—as assumed up to now throughout generational research—are the experiences from adolescence able to create a long-term generationality, but also that grave experiences in other phases of life, even in very young years, can lead to a we-feeling of special generational units.

Only slowly, however, are studies beginning to get under way which pursue the question of whether national characteristics can be determined in comparison to other societies (such as in Germany, where this is a current topic). For example, can the problem of the generational mental "baggage" of the children of war, which these then pass on in a specific manner to their children and grandchildren, be studied in international comparison and not solely in relation to the Second World War? This question lends significance to a new concept, namely that of "generativity," used to some extent as a synonym for "natality." It refers primarily to the—conscious or unconcious—examination, especially within particularly distinctive generationalities, of their ties to the diachronic sequence of "generations" in the genealogical sense of the word. Sigmund Freud alluded to this already in 1912 in his book *Totem and Taboo*, with his exhortation to consider how a generation transfers its specific mental problems to the next generation. According to Freud, no generation is capable, in the end, of hiding meaningful mental processes from the following generations. The extremes that can result range from passing the problems on in an individual manner to a massive generation break, leading to sometimes quite considerable consequences for entire societies. Especially after experiences of major upheaval, the aftershock can be felt "into the third and fourth generation," as it is said in the Old Testament. "Generational rejection," whether institutionally absorbed or revolutionary, thus belongs, according to the historian Reinhart Koselleck, to the elementary preconditions of a generation becoming aware of its historicity. How this happens in each individual case is a question of the "factual history," the potential of which is contained in each individual generativity.

It is clear that individual as well as collective forms of memory and the maintenance of memory typical of a specific period project into this central, downright existential-anthropological complex. A broad debate about the dissimilarity vs. the insoluble connection between a "communicative" and a "cultural" memory in distinct cultures of memory, about memory spaces, sites of memory, and the different "temporal *Heimate*" of age groups living together, about the mediality of memory, about competing memories and the (often generationally definable) "interpreting elites," about the changing, reshaping, or even erasure of memory has since been led in a lively interdisciplinary exchange. Age groups with distinct generationality are understood in this context as communities of experience and carriers of memory, who then can also potentially exhibit a "memorial resistance" towards the more or less official interpretations of history, since a memory that is subjectively coded as "true" or "correct" can prove to be resistant to the given images and interpretations of history of a society in which one lives.

To sum up: With the triad "generationality-generativity-memory" discussed here key anthropological facts are thus addressed, as with such memorable phrases as "*ohne Herkunft keine Zukunft*" ("without a past no future") (Odo Marquard) or "*Erfahrungsraum und Erwartungshorizont*" ("'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation'") (Reinhart Koselleck), which—both individually and collectively—refer not only to the fundamental problem of human historicity, but are also of central importance for every concrete analysis of contemporary history. Their strongly formative experiences and the specific ways in which they process their experiences make each generation unique and unmistakable. These can, it is true, not be passed on directly, but they do indeed flow, in the form of memory contents created through later selection, attribution, interpretation, etc., into the generative succession as well as into the subjective positioning in one's own "temporal *Heimat*." They can also be a legacy intentionally offered to posterity in the form of narratives, bequeathed works, institutions, designed places, and more, and also, according to Freud (see above) engraved in subsequent generations even without an expressed intention to pass them on, although these later generations might also (consciously or unconsciously) reject, re-interpret, or erase them. The latter can happen rather casually, without particular activity or controversy, in times of upheaval and new beginnings, or with pathos, with demagogic arrogance, with great pressure and, in the extreme case, with massive force. All historical processes in concurrence with generationality, generativity, and memory can, following Koselleck, be accordingly assessed by asking whether the generational break, which is fundamentally always present as a possibility, can be bridged or not. Scholars in disciplines which work from the premise of humans' temporality understand that each generation makes its decisions based on the rich experience it is carrying forward and that which it has accumulated itself, and against the backdrop of a wide-open horizon of experience. They are thus called upon to see themselves in their own societies as communication partners who provoke stimulating as well as critical self-questioning regarding the neverending adventure that is history.

Translated by Sara B. Young

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Memory and Politics

ERIK MEYER

Political science mainly focuses on aspects of memory culture insofar as it understands itself as a discipline contributing to the foundation of democratic conditions. According to this agenda and considering the success of parliamentarian democracy as a form of government on a global scale, this approach does not deal with the normality of political systems. It rather concentrates on the special case of regime change, which generally causes a confrontation with the previous regime: Wherever an abrupt transformation from pre-democratic, autocratic, or dictatorial regimes to democratic governance takes place, there is the necessity to come to terms with the past. The notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, currently used to name this process in the German discussion, is nevertheless controversial. In the course of the debate, the connection established between this term and the historical context has been transformed. Formerly only meant to signify Germany's ethical dealing with the Nazi past, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* has turned into a generic term, referring to the abolition of dictatorship and its replacement with democratic institutions. It refers to those activities that societies and states which are committed to the principles of democracy and human rights unfold when they grapple with the crimes and the dictatorial past of the predecessor regime (König, Kohlstruck, and Wöll). Questions of guilt and responsibility are not only treated in their political and penal-juridical dimension, but also discussed in their moral and meta-physical facet. Whereas studies in democratic theory address these dimensions in their entirety, empirical investigations tend to examine institutional measures of the perpetrator-victim relationship taken by the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary.

1. Transitional Justice and Political Culture

At the international level, the subject is discussed under the term "transitional justice" and explored in historical comparative perspective (Barahona de Brito, Gonzaléz-Enriquez, and Aguilar; Elster; Kritz; see also Langenohl, this volume). Various measures concerning specific groups of persons—be they penal sanction, disqualification, or rehabilitation as well as material compensation—are tied to the temporal proximity to the fallen regime: They only make sense if they take place during the lifetime of victims and perpetrators. This dimension in a broader sense affects the relationship to other states or citizens insofar as they have suffered injustice. Thus, aspects of transitional justice may become matters of foreign policy and diplomacy. All in all, this point of view underlines the necessity of confronting the past as a precondition for functioning political systems and their ability to act in international relations.

Meanwhile, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is not limited to the implementation of the measures outlined so far: The concept contains the totality of actions and knowledge new democratic systems make use of with regard to the antecedent state. Sanctioning past behavior not only has a material impact, it also has symbolic significance: A standard is set, allowing an evaluation of the previous regime. Thus, its legitimacy and acceptance depends on public communication. The study of the past and the information about practices, mechanisms, and modes become elements of a discourse through which post-dictatorial societies account for their grasp of history. This process of coming to terms with history on a cognitive level includes activities, both of a developing civil society and of the political-administrative system, which impact the political public sphere, scholarly research, political education, cultural representation by means of artistic artifacts, as well as institutionalized commemoration through monuments, museums, and memorial days. The methods and the extent of coming to terms with the past can be seen as a sign of the condition of a country's political culture. The concept of political culture touches upon the issue of how members of society situate themselves with respect to the political system. Conventional political culture research defines this dimension as follows: "The political culture of a nation is the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among the members of a nation" (Almond and Verba 14f.). From that perspective, the starting point is the assumption that the establishment of stable democratic institutions is congruent with specific individual orientations. Thus both political culture research and studies on transitional justice have an interest in transforming systems; however, they differ in that the former focuses on the continuity of attitudes and values, whereas the latter centers on aspects of political-institutional change. In this context, one can criticize the orientation on the Anglo-Saxon model of civic culture as well as the empirical evaluation of relevant attitudes by means of survey research. As a result of the research discussion, the understanding of political culture has been broadened to the extent that political culture is not only considered as a fixed scheme, but also as practice and process. Consequently, not only internalized attitudes can figure as appropriate indicators. This function is also fulfilled by externalized ideas, thus the expressional side of culture. One factor of this approach is the political-cultural dimension of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

For instance, Thomas Herz and Michael Schwab-Trapp sketch a theory of political culture by means of conflicts about National Socialism in Germany. They understand controversies on the subject as conflicts of interpretation which have to be reconstructed through the use of discourse analysis. At the center of this concept is a model of political narratives, formulating the relation between a society and its history. Starting from concrete occasions, competing interpretations of the past are publicly negotiated and discussed in regard to their legitimate validity. These "conflicts unveil the fundamental components of societies [and] allow us to perceive structures of power as well as interests, norms, and values on which a society is based" (Herz and Schwab-Trapp 11). In contrast to conventional political culture research, this approach is based on a conflict-oriented perception of culture focusing on the process of negotiating shared meanings.

2. Policy for the Past and Politics of History

Particularly in the context of German historiography, one can confirm a systematic application of the notions of *Vergangenheitspolitik* ("policy for the past") and *Geschichtspolitik* ("politics of history"). Norbert Frei uses the term "policy for the past" to denote a concrete historical phenomenon, namely a political process spanning approximately half a decade. Its results are, on the one hand, regulations and measures of impunity for perpetrators and fellow travelers of the Nazi regime, aiming to reintegrate those suspected, indicted, and in many cases convicted. On the other hand, efforts were simultaneously made to create a distance, both politically and judicially, from ideological remainders of National Socialism. What is defined as "policy for the past" is constituted by three different elements: amnesty, integration, and demarcation. Whereas Frei conceptualizes "policy for the past" as a closed period of the political-judicial dimension of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with regard to the "Third Reich," the term is meanwhile also used in a more general form, abstracting from the concrete reference to German history. Despite this generalization, *Vergangenheitspolitik* is still dependent on the presence of involved individuals. Among the conditions mentioned, it is also possible to grasp "policy for the past" in a comparative perspective as a generic term for temporary policies by which post-dictatorial states primarily, through legal regulations, deal with problems resulting from regime change.

In contrast, the research subject *Geschichtspolitik* ("politics of history"), sketched by Edgar Wolfrum, who uses the history of the Federal Republic until 1990 as an example, is considerably wider: "While 'policy for the past' […] refers primarily to practical-political measures, which are subordinated to public-symbolic action, 'politics of history' is characterized by precisely the opposite relationship" (32). Furthermore, *Geschichtspolitik* is neither specified by coming to terms with the effects of dictatorship, nor does it depend on temporal proximity to the referring subject. Instead, it generally deals with the history of a community, whose interpretation and significance is, as assumed, always disputed. The fact that relevant interpretive controversies are politically charged results from the orientation function ascribed to history. Conflicts within the field of "politics of history" deal less with the facticity of historical reconstructions and the appropriateness of resulting interpretations than one might assume for discussion within the academic community. The interest lies instead in the meaningful connection between past, present, and future, which is often coupled with a reference of action. In this perspective, the question is not if the image of history communicated is scientifically truthful. Instead, the crucial factor is how and by whom, as well as through which means, with which intention, and which effect past experiences are brought up and become politically relevant.

By defining "politics of history" as a political domain—where different actors not only seek to provide history with their specific interests, but also use it for their political benefit—Wolfrum follows the pejorative use of the term: It often serves to mark a political-instrumental way of dealing with history and historiography which aims to influence contemporary debates. In this perspective, "politics of history" is a matter of public political communication, primarily taking place in the mass media (see also Zierold, this volume). This process reveals forces and counter-forces competing for hegemony of discourse and interpretive patterns. Thus, the approach assumes the existence of a pluralistic public, functioning as an arena for these controversies. Not only representatives of the political-administrative system are involved therein, but also individuals and groups who possess a privileged access to the political public sphere. In addition to politicians, this elite includes journalists, intellectuals, and scholars.

Wolfrum also distinguishes another dimension of the intentional instrumentalization of history and its short-term effects in political controversies of pluralistic democracies, namely the indirect consequences of publicly deliberated interpretation clashes: "Conflicts within the field of politics of history can be considered as expression of affirmation and renewal of specific value patterns, behaviour patterns as well as belief systems, which—observed in long-term perspective—frame and change political culture" (29). Hence, "politics of history" not only serves the purpose of legitimating contemporary political projects, but—in a conflicting theoretical perspective—also contributes to the negotiation and clarification of normative orientations which should be applied in society. In this context, it again becomes obvious that Wolfrum conceptualizes "politics of history" in opposition to "policy for the past" primarily as discursive practice.

Other conceptions of "policy for the past" and "politics of history" largely correspond with the understanding described above. After the so-called *Historikerstreit* ("historians' controversy") in the 1980s, the notion of "politics of history" was used to criticize the politicized perception of history by historians and politicians. With the end of the GDR dictatorship, the focus of interest has shifted towards the role of "politics of history" during the Cold War. Peter Reichel sums up with reference to the GDR: "Politics of history was [...] a convenient resource in the German conflict of systems and at the same time politically significant symbolic capital" (37). As a result, a semantic generalization can certainly be perceived, but "politics of history" as an empirical observable phenomenon still remains under ideological suspicion. This doubt does not refer to concrete political actors or systems any longer. Instead, it assumes a general instrumentalization of history by politics. In the context of cultural memory studies, this heuristic seems to be problematic: Following Maurice Halbwachs's concept of collective memory as social construction, remembrance of the past is impossible without current interests.

Nevertheless, according to concrete conflicts regarding the contemporary significance of National Socialism, the term is conceived of instead as an analytical category which can be generalized. Subsequently, Reichel understands sites of memory as a field of political activity: "Creation of monuments and ceremonial remembrance rituals as well as destruction and transformation of monuments and memorial sites thus are an important sector of symbolic politics and the pluralistic culture of memory thus constituted" (33). Insofar he recurs to the differentiation between appearance and reality, which is implicit in the concept of symbolic politics. "Politics of history," then, does not refer to the creation of collectively binding decisions, but targets a similarly significant political construction of reality. In this viewpoint, "politics of history" is close to symbolic forms such as "rituals" and "political myths," even though both are under suspicion in political science as being intentionally created (Edelman). This judgment corresponds with the assumption that symbolic politics does not constitute a communicative frame for political action, but on the contrary is a deficient mode of reality. The focus of constructing reality through "politics of history" is the dimension of legitimacy. This could be the legitimacy of collective identity, the legitimacy of a new order, or the legitimacy of political actors in a pluralistic society. As to the addressees, the belief in legitimacy can be evoked by negative differentiation from, or by positive reference to, a historic point of reference. Therefore "politics of history" and "policy for the past" can be located within the context of the theory of cultural hegemony formulated by Gramsci.

With regard to the specific case of coming to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*), it is possible to identify "policy for the past" as well as "politics of history" as historical phases whose sequence Helmut König describes concisely with the phrase "from decision to communication." Quoting the example of Germany, it is therefore stated: "In the meantime, the emphasis has shifted from material policy, which is related to decision-making and resources, to discursive and symbolic dimensions of dealing with National Socialism" (König, Kohlstruck, and Wöll 11f.). And König specifies: "If collectively binding decisions with reference to politics for the past are made today and generate public interest, they try in most cases to regulate the political communication about the past" (458). To summarize, "politics of history" can be characterized as a specific type of political communication and symbolic politics and actually appears as "politics without policy." "That is to say, public debates do not refer to actions, nor do they announce actions or decisions, but in fact already constitute actions themselves" (König 463).

3. A Policy Studies Perspective on Cultures of Memory

From a cultural memory perspective, this diagnosis, however, can be thwarted: For instance, Jan Assmann distinguishes between communicative and cultural memory as—related to the event to remember—two successive "modi memorandi" (see J. Assmann, this volume). Insofar as communicative memory is shaped by the biographical horizon of the experiencing generation, Assmann presumes an epochal threshold, which is characterized by the fact that, due to the death of contemporary witnesses, vital remembrance can only be perpetuated if it is transferred into institutionalized forms. One can assume that, especially in pluralistic societies with diverging group memories, constructing tradition does not proceed without conflict. Instead, the transformation from communicative into cultural memory evokes an increased need for political decision-making.

Even though Kohlstruck, for example, conceptualizes "politics of memory" (*Erinnerungspolitik*) primarily as a communicative act, he also claims: "Without consideration of political responsibilities and decisions, institutions, and resources [...], politics of memory cannot be sufficiently investigated" (188). The contradiction between this postulate and the continuously differing concepts can be solved if one understands cultures of memory as a conventional political domain. We (Leggewie and Meyer) therefore suggest, complementary to existing conceptions of "politics of memory," a policy studies perspective. Although the scope of the subject in the pertinent literature is consistently qualified as a political field of activity, studies concentrate on the interpretation of public communication. "Politics of history," in this perspective, takes place when actors articulate interpretations of the history of a community in the political public sphere, competing for cultural hegemony. The theoretical and empirical studies in fact also broach the impact of politics on cultures of memory. But because of their concentration on the communicative dimensions of political acting, they primarily establish a vague connection: The hegemonic interpretive patterns materialize themselves in the sphere of public and official commemoration.

In slightly drastic terms, the epistemological interest of most approaches does not apply to memory culture itself: Assuming that the political character of cultures of memory in the end serves the purpose of legitimacy building, the identification of the actors' intrinsic interests is spotlighted. This central hypothesis shall not be contested. But it has to be argued that deficits result from this approach, specifically concerning the description of relevant political processes and their outcome. A change in perspective may generate insights in structuring the scope of the subject through policy-making requirements. To understand the concrete constitution of monuments, museums, or memorial sites one has to consider administrative aspects such as financial and legal preconditions as well as the interest of political systems to resolve conflicts. Therefore, we propose treating cultures of memory like other political domains and analyzing the public policy of memory.

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Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma

(or How I Learned to Love the Suffering of Others without the Help of Psychotherapy)

WULF KANSTEINER AND HARALD WEILNBÖCK

Handbooks celebrate the success stories of academic life. Handbook entries are supposed to be constructive and uplifting affairs which impart to future generations the academic insights of current generations, inform their readers in succinct fashion about important conceptual frameworks and methodologies, and demonstrate in what contexts and for what research agendas these intellectual tools can be applied most successfully. We will accomplish none of these objectives in the following text. Instead, we will inform you about a spectacular failure, the failure of scholars in the humanities and social sciences to develop a truly interdisciplinary trauma concept despite their many claims to the contrary. We will also present you with a culprit for this unfortunate development by blaming our colleagues for applying poststructuralist theory in rather unimaginative ways and, as a result, developing a strangely narrow and aestheticized concept of trauma.

After this announcement a short note may be in order. We hope very much that the following is not perceived as just another exercise in postmodern theory bashing. We are ourselves firmly committed to the venerable deconstructive project of questioning master narratives, exposing the ideological prejudices and blind spots of the discursive status quo, and pursuing cultural analysis in a radical self-reflexive fashion. In fact, we object to the postmodern trauma discourse, which is currently so popular in the humanities, precisely because it lacks self-reflexivity and has elevated the concept of cultural trauma into the status of a new master narrative. These negative effects are particularly pronounced in literature departments where trauma studies have contributed to the reestablishment of conventional procedures of textual exegesis as the be all and end all of the philological enterprise (Weilnböck). As a result, the very concepts that were originally developed in the context of a radical critique of traditional literary and cultural studies have been retooled and redeployed to serve these traditions. In the process, the trauma metaphor, initially adopted in a spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration, has helped reestablish literary and cultural studies as exclusive and anti-interdisciplinary academic fields.

Cathy Caruth's 1996 *Unclaimed Experience* represents the most influential, perhaps the foundational text of deconstructive trauma studies (see also Caruth, *Trauma*). All the key elements of the new trauma discourse are for the first time fully developed in this volume. Like many other scholars, Caruth defines trauma as an experience consisting of two components that the trauma victim never manages to reconcile with each other. A severe mental and maybe also physical injury which the victim seems to overcome remarkably well is followed by a belated onset of symptoms that sometimes appear to bear no causal relationship to the original injury. At first sight, Caruth thus appears to define trauma in ways that are quite compatible with psychological research on trauma and post-traumatic stress. However, unlike most of her contemporaries who study the vicissitudes of mental suffering in a clinical context, Caruth goes on to celebrate the experience and the concept of trauma as providing unprecedented insight into the human condition. Applying an interpretive strategy borrowed from Paul de Man, Caruth emphasizes that the failure of the trauma victim to come to terms with the origins and symptoms of his/her mental illness represents a rare and valuable moment of authenticity because human beings only get a chance to perceive reality directly whenever our cultural systems of signification temporarily disintegrate under their own weight. In this way, trauma is conceived as a revelation that teaches us about the limits and possibilities of human culture. Unfortunately, however, at that moment of cultural disintegration and exceptional wisdom we are unable to fully understand, let alone successfully represent our insights. Or, as Caruth states in rather apocalyptic terms, "history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (*Unclaimed Experience* 18). For Caruth, this principal failure of representation constitutes "the truth and force of reality that trauma survivors face and quite often try to transmit to us" (*Trauma* vii).

Caruth's compact model loses a lot of its appeal if one disagrees with its de Manian premise and believes that the limits of representation can be explored and overcome in some contexts and by way of a number of different representational strategies. But even if one shares Caruth's deconstructive ethos, her model still constitutes a formidable moral conundrum that its author has neither acknowledged nor solved. From the perspective of the trauma victim whose very survival might depend on his/her ability to repair his/her trust in human systems of signification as quickly as possible, Caruth's exuberant aesthetization and valorization of trauma appears ruthless, perhaps even cynical. This problem is exacerbated by Caruth's disinterest in the therapeutic process. As other proponents of the deconstructive trauma paradigm, Caruth includes in her book extensive references to psychological studies of trauma, but this interdisciplinary gesture is immediately undermined by a very selective and often de-contextualized appropriation of the empirical literature. Caruth believes, for example, that the trauma experience will and should remain inaccessible to representation. These conclusions nicely confirm Caruth's deconstructive axioms but they are not born out in the clinical literature. Many psychologists and therapists agree that traumatic experiences may be truthfully represented in everyday narrative language, for instance as the result of successful therapy (Leys).

Intellectual suspicions about the negative, self-destructive effects of Western culture and the Enlightenment, which are reflected in Caruth's interventions, have a long and impressive tradition reaching back at least to the end of the nineteenth century. The suspicions appeared even more credible after World War II because Nazi society and its experiments in social and genetic engineering represent particularly frightful examples of human self-destruction. But the intellectual project of thinking against the grain of Western culture which still presented itself as an arduous and radically self-critical process in the writings of Adorno, Lyotard, and others has in the meantime turned into a self-important and convenient academic pursuit, especially but not exclusively in the trendy celebrations of trauma (Kansteiner). Caruth is most certainly not responsible for this development but her model has been emphatically and apodictically embraced in a wide range of academic settings, uniting poststructuralist-inclined sociologists, political scientists, educators, and many cultural and literary studies experts under the sign of trauma.

In Germany, the deconstructive trauma paradigm has a particularly enthusiastic advocate in Manfred Weinberg, a literary anthropologist at the University of Konstanz. Like Caruth, Weinberg believes that trauma is "always already inscribed in memory" and has particular epistemological value, although, again following Caruth, he quickly adds that any conscious representation of trauma remains by definition "inadequate" (205) because "trauma is the inaccessible truth of remembering" (204). Weinberg regrets that many scholars have not properly understood or fail to respect the peculiar, contradictory logic of trauma according to which truth exists but cannot and may not be spelled out. In his assessment, academic writings on philosophy and history have the purpose to "make us forget about the traumatic flipside of all memory" and in this respect differ from literary texts which are capable of exploring the interdependency between trauma and memory in more honest and productive fashion (206).

Weinberg is refreshingly honest about his disinterest, even antagonism towards psychology and psychotherapy. He does not want to improve his knowledge about the suffering and clinical treatment of trauma victims and in this way help reduce the extent of traumatic injury occurring in the world. Weinberg states explicitly that "the clinical aspect is precisely what does not interest me—or only in a marginal way—about trauma" (173). Instead, he welcomes trauma as an indispensable conceptual tool and subscribes to a poststructuralist code of ethics by promising "to do anything he can to prove trauma's incurability" and fend off any improper "abolition of trauma" (173). Weinberg's confession highlights one of the most puzzling characteristics of deconstructive trauma theory. The proponents of the deconstructive trauma paradigm draw some of their key terms and concepts from psychoanalysis and psychology but they assume a radical anti-analytical and anti-empirical posture. Caruth, Weinberg, and their many intellectual fellow travelers like to speculate in an abstract manner about the philosophical meaning of trauma and apply these concepts in their study of culture and history, but they are not interested in the empirical phenomenon of trauma and the traumatic experiences of actual people. The advocates of the concept of cultural trauma do not simply emphasize that it is extremely difficult to access and understand trauma—an assessment shared by most clinicians—; they insist categorically that for conceptual reasons trauma "must remain inaccessible to memory" and cultural representation (Weinberg 204).

Weinberg is hardly the only representative of German cultural and literary studies who embraces the deconstructive trauma concept with quasi-religious fervor. There are many other scholars in the field ready to denounce any "sacrilege" that might be committed against what they perceive as the "integrity of trauma" (Baer 27). In the face of such threats, deconstructive trauma advocates issue stern warnings about "committing a betrayal that breaches the faithfulness towards the dead" although they tend to be rather vague about the precise meaning of these terms and their criteria of judgment (Sebald 121). But let's leave the terrain of German cultural and literary studies and move to a different discipline and a different continent and see how the concept of trauma is used as a didactic tool at the University of Toronto. Roger Simon, the director of the Testimony and Historical Memory Project, has studied extensively how human rights abuses and other crises are best represented in museum exhibits. He has looked in particular at cultural memories of the Ravensbrück concentration camp, the AIDS epidemic, racially motivated lynching in the U.S., and the forced resettlement of indigenous populations in Canada. Simon seems to have approached these topics with a deep suspicion of all narrative forms of remembrance because narratives are often used to justify extreme violence, both before and after the fact. He would like to preserve the culturally disruptive effect of trauma and advocates with great pathos the creation of memorial spaces which avoid the normalizing, sedative power of narrative and call into question "the frames of certitude that ground our understandings of existence" (186). For this purpose, he reads survivor testimony looking for traces of the "absent presence" and encourages students and museum visitors to respond to representations of trauma in non-narrative formats—all the while taking considerable pride in his "risk-laden" search for new "forms of non-indifference" (187).

For somebody who is convinced about the destructive, normalizing effects of narrative the representational strategies promoted by Simon might appear very reasonable. But if one is willing to keep an open mind about narrative, as a potential tool of repression and misinformation as well as enlightenment and therapy, the didactic status quo in Toronto appears rather doctrinaire. The metaphorical fireworks of Simon's text, an excellent example of deconstructive trauma philosophy, appear to be a rather obvious attempt to advance a very specific aesthetic program by tapping into the cultural-political capital of Holocaust memory.

The disdain for narrative and the fear of attempts to sublate trauma are a stock-in-trade of deconstructive trauma studies. Caruth herself warns that any efforts to verbalize and integrate traumatic experiences will inevitably destroy the valuable precision of trauma. Even the intellectual historian Michael Roth who has shown himself to be critical of what he calls "poststructuralist trauma ontology" encourages us not to give in to "narrative lust" and, in the process, normalize and trivialize trauma (168). These statements of caution are certainly important and worth considering. Our culture produces indeed many dubious representations of trauma that might have unwelcome or even negative effects on their audiences. But the indiscriminate rejection of narrative renders the deconstructive trauma paradigm incompatible with the results of clinical research which has shown consistently that integrating traumatic experiences within narrative frameworks is an indispensable tool of psychotherapy and that narrative forms of representation help groups and collective entities to come to terms with events of violence and its mental and social consequences. In fact, anybody who encourages people to access the more troubled areas of their personal memory while at the same time preventing narrative processes from taking place potentially retraumatizes them and risks inducing a state of psychic dependency (Fischer 205).

Let's visit another outpost of trauma studies at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth where Jenny Edkins teaches in the department of international politics. Her publications on trauma and politics, especially on the legacy of 9/11, provide a great case study for the way in which deconstructive trauma advocates move quickly from an understanding of trauma as injury to specific people to the abstract, metaphorical notion of trauma as a welcome disruption of existing frameworks of social and institutional incorporation without differentiating between these two levels of analysis in any meaningful way. At the beginning of one of her texts, Edkins emphasizes appropriately that "it is people, in their physicality and their vulnerability, that [sic] experience the trauma, both bodily and psychic [sic], and it should be to them that the memories belong" (100). Edkins then embarks on an impressive theoretical excursion. First, she teaches us by ways of Lacanian psychoanalysis that all perceptions of the subject and society are social fantasies based on master signifiers which cover up the existential lack at the core of human perceptions of self and other. Then, she invokes Derrida to remind us that all truly political decisions involve a radical moment of undecidability because they require the inventions of new criteria of judgment that cannot be derived from the previous political status quo. By way of a number of additional theoretical stops, including Caruth, Agamben, and Foucault, we finally arrive at the predictable conclusion that trauma calls into question the perceptions of the world that give us a sense of security, for instance, by undermining the conventional distinctions between subject and object upon which these perceptions are based. Or, as Edkins puts it rather bluntly, events like September 11 reveal, among other things, the "indistinguishability of flesh and metal" (110).

With little deconstructive finesse, Edkins spells out the upbeat political lesson of her intervention. Since "trauma is clearly disruptive of settled stories" it threatens centralized political authority based on such stories and opens up venues for political resistance (107). Therefore, Edkins denounces president Bush's insistence on conventional narratives of heroism and sacrifice and applauds artistic attempts that undermine such narratives and insist on the interpretive void created by trauma. After all this theoretical excess and political partisanship we have conveniently lost track of the victims and their physicality and mental vulnerability. What if the survivors, to whom the memories allegedly belong, would like to embrace stories of heroism and sacrifice and renew their belief in the fictitious, yet very helpful distinction between flesh and metal? What sense does it make to advocate extending the moment of trauma simply because on an abstract metaphorical level the experience of trauma aligns very nicely with the philosophical insights of Lacan, Derrida, and others? Can we responsibly ask people after events like 9/11 to embrace their mental injury and vulnerability and question linear notions of time and temporality despite the possibility that such recommendations, if actually implemented, might constitute severe psychological risks for some individuals and collectives?

We certainly do not want to imply that Edkins intends to do harm or has actually caused harm to anybody (nor do we assume this of Caruth, Weinberg, Simon, or the other authors whose texts we refer to in this essay). We are simply puzzled that academics who display considerable interdisciplinary ambition and dexterity—after all, Lacan's and Derrida's writings are not standard components of the graduate curriculum in international relations—do not feel comfortable with or compelled to tap into the empirical literature on trauma when they study the aftermath of concrete traumatic events such as 9/11. Finally, if one is really convinced that social crises are an opportune moment to question social fictions, one might want to begin closer to home and reflect self-critically about the academic fiction of cultural trauma which poststructuralist theorists might not have invented but certainly advocate vigorously.

The last stop on our international tour brings us back to U.S. academia, the heartland of cultural trauma studies, and, more specifically, to Yale University where deconstruction has a particularly long history. But we are not visiting the French or Comparative Literature departments where de Man taught in the 1970s and 1980s, and instead look up Ron Eyerman, a sociologist who has studied the collective memory of American slavery and was part of a international group of scholars who convened at Yale in 1998/99 to study cultural trauma and collective identity (Alexander et al). Eyerman has compiled an impressive array of data about the representation of slavery in U.S. culture. But he has also committed a conceptual error that calls into question his interpretation of the data. According to Eyerman, cultural traumata—in this case the cultural trauma of slavery—are produced and reproduced through media representations which cause "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric of a relatively coherent group," for instance a nation or the African-American community in the U.S. (3). This definition of cultural or collective trauma reflects very nicely the common understanding of trauma as a serious form of injury but Eyerman does not present any empirical evidence for this allegedly destructive effect of films, TV shows, novels, and other cultural products which deal with the topic of slavery. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that such evidence exists. As best as we know, media texts may have a wide range of effects on their audiences but traumatic effects appear to occur extremely rarely. Finally and most important, many media representations of traumatic historical events, for instance the TV series *Roots* and *Holocaust*, have shaped group identities in ways that helped social minorities gain public recognition for past suffering. One might object to such developments for political reasons but it is misleading to describe the reconstitution of African-American and Jewish-American identity that occurred in the aftermath of these media events as cultural traumata even if the term is only applied in a metaphorical sense. Unfortunately, Eyerman's error is hardly unique; many scholars in cultural trauma studies conceptualize the relationship between trauma, media, and collective identity in similarly simplistic terms and confuse representations of violence with the presence and reproduction of trauma. The work of Eyerman and others would profit tremendously from the development of sophisticated and variegated psychological tools that could replace the blunt concept of trauma and help us design much needed empirical studies of the effects of representations of war, genocide, and violence in contemporary media societies.

At the end of our short tour we do not want to allege a global conspiracy of trauma studies but we would like to emphasize that the many parallel paths taken during the institutionalization of postmodern thought in Western academia have produced remarkably similar results in different settings. It seems to be a general characteristic of this process of institutionalization, for example, that academics over a wide range of disciplines adamantly repeat a limited set of beliefs and stop asking, let alone try to answer, the really difficult theoretical and empirical questions about the ways in which human beings individually and collectively experience trauma and respond to the traumatic experiences of others. Obviously, there are important exceptions in the field of trauma studies and in this context we would like to highlight the work of Dominick LaCapra, who has very successfully applied psychological and psychoanalytical concepts in his analyses of Holocaust memory. LaCapra has also identified one of the fundamental conceptual errors at the core of the deconstructive trauma discourse. Many advocates of the concept of cultural trauma conflate the psychological challenges that all human beings face in their everyday life, especially in the process of maturation, with the extraordinary psychological ordeal encountered, for example, by victims of extreme violence (LaCapra). As a result of this mistake, they assume that in one way or another all people partake in the experience of trauma, for instance, when they grapple with the inexpungeable relativism of all forms of human culture and communication.

Empirically speaking, however, in most societies and under most historical circumstances only a small part of the population suffers from what clinical criteria define as post-traumatic stress. Empirical studies have shown that survivors of extreme violence are particularly likely to belong to this part of the population and experience severe symptoms of mental distress. At the same time, it is also true that post-traumatic symptoms of various sorts can be caused by many different factors, including seemingly ordinary and pedestrian experiences, but that fact makes it all the more important to differentiate empirically and conceptually between different forms of violence and their social and psychological consequences.

In our assessment, the deconstructive trauma paradigm suffers from five fundamental, interrelated problems that we have tried to illustrate in this text:

- A vague, metaphorical concept of trauma, which equates the concrete suffering of victims of violence with ontological questions concerning the fundamental ambivalence of human existence and communication, obliterates the important empirical differences between the various ways that people are affected by violence, and thus constitutes a grave insult toward people who actually suffer from post-traumatic stress.
- A surprising lack of interdisciplinary curiosity; the advocates of the deconstructive trauma paradigm selectively apply psychological and psychoanalytical terminology but they do so in a curiously anti-psychological manner and almost never systematically consult recent clinical literature which reports about the theory and practice of trauma therapy and raises serious questions about the concept of cultural trauma.
- A similarly disturbing disinterest in the empirical research on media effects; advocates of the deconstructive trauma paradigm assert that cultural traumata are produced and reproduced through the media but they have not tapped into the vast scholarly literature on media effects which contradicts such simplistic assumptions.
- An almost paranoid fear of narrative based on the axiom that all narration has distorting and normalizing effects and thus destroys the fundamental pre-narrative insights revealed by trauma. This anti-narrative reflex contradicts the consensus in psychotherapy studies that narration is an indispensable tool for healing.
- A valorization and aesthetization of trauma, high art, and philosophy as sites of intangible, ethereal authenticity; this stance fosters traditional perceptions of the humanities and academia, is inherently anti-empirical, and explains the ease with which scientific resources are ignored.

In conclusion, we would like to take you on a little metaphorical excursion of our own. In our assessment, the deconstructive trauma discourse seems to be compatible with the mindset and vantage point of a certain type of bystander who was not personally involved in any event of exceptional violence yet feels compelled to contemplate the meaning of such events in abstract philosophical terms. In fact, creating distance between oneself and moments of extreme human suffering might be the whole point of the exercise because the bystander apparently wants to mentally eliminate the empirical experience of trauma by way of ontological speculation.

We think that the only plausible way to account for such intellectual ambition is to assume that the bystander is actually evading or denying some significant area of personal memory which half-consciously resonates with the historical trauma issues at hand. These mental associations, which accompany the work of the trauma theoretician, might encompass past experiences of limited mental injury or memories of committing or condoning minor violations and may appear irrelevant with hindsight. But unless the fleeting moments of violence are recognized as formative experiences, they will continue to trigger psychological defense mechanisms and curb the subject's intellectual curiosity. These speculations explain how our bystander could be troubled by an inscrutable mix of unconscious anxiety, latent guilt feelings, numbing of cognitive differentiation, and aggressive theoretical ambition. As a result, s/he begins to see theoretical trauma everywhere while refraining from talking about violence and suffering in any concrete fashion.

Obviously, the simile of the intellectual trauma theorist qua contemplative Holocaust bystander is meant as a metaphorical expression, although we consider it a more accurate and helpful metaphor than the cultural trauma metaphor itself. A lot of deconstructive trauma theory appears to represent an unsuccessful attempt to come to terms with events like the "Final Solution" and, more specifically, to work through the failure of the bystanders to prevent man-made disasters and deal with their legacies in productive ways. Our metaphor illustrates that there is no such thing as neutral by-standing—politically, personally, or scientifically—and this insight should be reflected in our scholarly work. We need to overcome the unfortunate epistemological impasse caused by contemplative trauma attachment and theoretical acting-out and develop new qualitative-empirical research tools to study the psychological effects of violence and its cultural representation with precision and theoretical dexterity.

Authors' Note

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