

# Memory Studies

*by Karen E. Till*

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**Marc Augé, *Oblivion***, transl. Marjolijn de Jager, foreword James Young, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2004; \$18.95 paper, ISBN: 0-8166-3567-6.

**Annie E. Coombes, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa***, Duke University Press, Durham and London: 2003; \$27.95 paper, ISBN: 0-8223-3072-5.

**Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (ed.), *Contested Pasts: the Politics of Memory***, Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative, London, 2003; 264 pp. £60 cloth, ISBN: 0-415-28647-6.

**Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (ed.), *Regimes of Memory***, Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative, London, 2003; 224 pp., £60 cloth, ISBN: 0-415-28648-4.

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On the ninetieth anniversary of the Easter Rising in Ireland this year, a large and well-attended parade worked its way through the streets of Dublin. Commencing at the city castle, the procession ended at the General Post Office on O'Connell Street, where rebel leaders first declared Ireland a republic in 1916. Flags flew half-mast, soldiers stood at attention, officials laid wreaths, and historic proclamations were read. This was no ordinary

partnership'.<sup>1</sup> Yet claims to national belonging are always fragile, contested by those who seek to promote their own narratives of the past in the public realm. Ian Paisley Junior, of the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, derided President McAleese for stating that the rebels 'gave their lives for those who now enjoy the benefits of the Celtic Tiger economy'. For him, such a statement was 'utter folly and would not stand up to 'historical scrutiny'. Not only are claims to the past contested, citizens enact a range of relationships to the nation. At the day's events, young men shouted obscenities at government ministers, some families enjoyed the pageantry, locals attended political rallies, old-timers debated the future of Sinn Féin in pubs, and visiting British students were confused about the lack of media coverage of the day's events in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

As Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone note in the introduction to their edited volume *Contested Pasts*, memory, as invoked through such commemorations, communicates 'political agendas which serve particular ideas about the virtues of the nation, the family, or the current government' (p. 5). As a process and a way of knowing, memory raises questions about the complex interactions between individuals, psyches, social entities and cultures. Over the past decade, memory studies has emerged as an interdisciplinary field in its own right, with specialist journals and degree programmes. Conference sessions and special journal issues highlight particular themes, such as 'Gender and Cultural Memory' (*Signs* 2002) or 'Spectrogeographies' (Institute of British Geographers 2005 annual conference).<sup>3</sup> Within disciplines, 'memory' is also an entry for numerous dictionaries and state-of-the-art review anthologies.<sup>4</sup> The books examined in this essay highlight some of the field's most topical issues: the politics of public memory; individual and social memory; and embodiment and representation.

phases of commemoration for sites. The creative phase, defined by a trigger or impetus to remember, includes debates over appropriate forms and technologies of memory, for instance, a monument, the production of a memorial site, and the inaugural rituals associated with its public unveiling. The second, institutional, phase solidifies and routinizes a commemorative calendar through repetitive rituals and texts. The third phase of commemoration is one of transformation, when second and subsequent generations of mourners inherit sites. In this phase of ‘symbolic accretion’, post-memorial generations add their own interpretations, forms and rituals to existing sites and cultures of memory. A new impetus to remember may result in a new cycle of debates, new and old meanings may interact in unexpected ways to transform memorial-media cultures, and some sites may disappear altogether.<sup>6</sup>

Annie Coombes’s book about memorial, museum and artistic sites in South Africa during the 1990s works within this tradition. She writes that *History after Apartheid* is

neither a history of South Africa’s transition to democracy nor an exhaustive account of policy decisions regarding culture and history over this period. Instead I have deliberately selected a series of case studies that seemed to me to dramatize the most significant aspects of the debates around historical representation in the public sphere during the early phase of transition to democracy’ (pp. 10–11).

By tracing the origins and reception of particular projects, such as exhibitions about *Masekeng* (informal housing) in the new Museum Africa, Coombes analyses how the ideal of ‘community’ has been mobilized

about public memory at local, national and international levels.

Coombes does not systematically look at the ‘unfinished business’ of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC).<sup>7</sup> Rather, she notes how the TRC has transformed public cultures of memory in South Africa, including how violent histories are represented or how national histories are gendered, and she contrasts TRC testimonial cultures to more radical artistic strategies. In her analysis of a controversial experimental installation, *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of Khoi and San History and Material Culture*, by artist/lecturer Pippa Skotnes displayed at the National Gallery in 1996, Coombes explores how conceptual art encourages a critical engagement with the past. *Miscast* specifically explored how ‘the Khoisan were pathologized, dispossessed, and all but eradicated through colonialism and apartheid’ (p. 230). It sought to question the history of the museum, including how the act of viewing exhibitions was and continues to be complicit with the all-consuming colonial gaze. It also deliberately located visitors in uncomfortable positions in spaces that juxtaposed past and present display genres, classification schemes, artefacts and looking relations. In one room, for example, archival photographs of Khoisan at colonial exhibitions were set next to display cases filled with the personal effects of historical philologists who studied ‘natives’. In another, life-like casts of body parts were tagged with ‘texts relating incidents of violence against the Bushmen’ (p. 232). Visitors had to walk across a vinyl floor with enlarged, largely derogatory illustrations of Khoisan from historical medical journals, catalogues and newspapers to see the display of contemporary photos of Khoi and San families and communities hanging on the walls. Such unsettling encounters, Coombes notes, are dramatically different from watching TRC hearings on television.

While *Miscast* was innovative in its approach to representing the past, in other ways it was socially insensitive. As Coombes argues, ‘it is not enough

an 'unprecedented gathering of many Khoisan from all over southern Africa' (p. 242). Individuals not only expressed their concerns about *Miscast*, but also articulated the ongoing problems with their devalued social position resulting from being historically dispossessed of their lands.

By telling richly textured stories such as these, the biography-of-a-site approach describes the specific forms and locales of particular sites to examine how their meanings and settings were negotiated, received and interpreted by various publics. As Coombes argues, objects, places and performances become animated and visible in public venues as they are (re)interpreted and circulate through different media. Biographies of sites thus are distinct from studies that trace the histories of the nation-state, such as John Gillis's model of memorialization according to overlapping pre-national, national and post-national phases, or Nora's multi-volume project about numerous sites that, taken together, constitute a larger French historiography.<sup>9</sup> By paying attention to the circulation and transmission of memory in the present, the temporal frame of analysis concerns particular moments in time rather than the *longue durée*.

At its best, the biography-of-a-site approach examines how seemingly stable material forms are dynamic in space and time, and elucidates how contestations over the significance of past narratives are given meaning within particular socio-political contexts. Some studies, furthermore, drawing upon Foucault's notion of counter-memory as a form of resistance, explore how power relations are negotiated through sites. Following Halbwachs, some level of coherence and stability within social groups may be assumed, yet good studies remain sensitive to change as well as continuity in social visions as they relate to shifting political and cultural needs in the present. Yet despite these strengths, many studies adopting such an approach are predictable and simplistic. At their worst, biographies are narrow in their analyses of social exchange and power

through social spaces.

Sites of memory have meanings that exceed their forms as authored representations of the past because of the ways individuals experience them affectively and how their forms circulate through various media. As geographers, anthropologists, and cultural-studies scholars have demonstrated, the affective materialities of a place or even an object – a unique quality resulting from particular social histories, interconnections to other places, and lasting human imprints – may surpass instrumental efforts to make selective pasts speak through them.<sup>11</sup> Paying attention to the multiple space-times of particular sites therefore means considering the complex ways individual and social memory interact.

## INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL MEMORY

Most scholars assume that a qualitative difference exists between the memory of an individual and those memories shared by more than one person. Individual memory is often theorized as located inside a person (stored in the mind) and social memory as located externally in sites such as archives, memorials, objects, narratives, or cultural practices. Personal memory is described in terms of screens of images or fleeting sensations triggered unexpectedly by experience in the present or through dreams. It is considered less coherent in temporal structure and content than is social memory, which is structured by narrative (through myths, histories, and stories).

Yet as various authors in *Contested Pasts* and *Regimes of Memory* describe, the relationship between individual and social memory is now being revisited in ways that resonate with earlier debates at the turn of the last century. Drawing on the work of Charles Baudelaire, Henri Bergson, Walter Benjamin, Fernand Braudel, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf and

scholars in the fields of literature, film, performance studies and cultural studies argued that the relationships between an event, its representation and participants' experience of it are far from straightforward. Of particular interest was the role played by dreams, fantasy, repression and the unconscious in the processes of recall and creating knowledge about the past in the present. They also identified failures or gaps in the transmission of memory, examining, for example, when communication was not possible through narrative or how and why technologies of memory (memorials, visual cultures, storage systems) worked in distinct ways socially.<sup>12</sup> In these studies, models of the psyche became central to understanding how memory is mediated and transmitted, both individually and socially.

Methodologically, research about individual and social memory loosely followed this social-science and humanities split, with scholars in the former field drawing on oral, social and everyday histories and on the insights of ethnography and sociology, while in the latter they used psychoanalytic, literary and performance theories. Two good volumes that typify the differences between the social-science and humanities-based approaches are *Social Memory* (1992), edited by James Fentress and Chris Wickham, and *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (1998), edited by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer. In more recent years, the distinctions between these two approaches have become less clear, with the best studies drawing insights from both.<sup>13</sup>

The practice of theorizing individual memory in terms of social interaction draws heavily from French traditions in sociology, in particular through the work of Maurice Halbwachs, and from works in anthropology, including Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember*.<sup>14</sup> For Halbwachs, personal memory is always constructed and located in the social environments of the present. Individuals learn to 'remember' the past according to stories and rituals particular to the many groups to which

material landmarks.

Marc Augé's short book on *Oblivion* draws upon ethnological and narrative approaches to social memory in his philosophical exploration of the role of social memory by providing a philosophical exploration of the role of forgetting in structuring social memory. His 'three-lesson course' draws from works in psychoanalysis, anthropology, philosophy, and literature, as well as his personal memories, to explore how personal and social stories 'are always (even when they are not 'fabrications', 'products of the imagination', 'exaggerations' likely to arouse smiles from other witnesses) the fruit of memory and oblivion, of a work of composition and recomposition that translates the tension exerted by the expectation of the future upon the interpretation of the past' (p. 39). Regardless of how solitary an individual's life may be, Augé argues that each person is always 'at least haunted by the presence of the other in the form of a regret or a certain nostalgia' (p. 42). Thus all stories are in some way framed by the play between 'the *discord* of singular times and the expected *concordance* of their reconciliation in narratives with several voices' (p. 43).

Augé pairs life and death with memory and oblivion to pay attention to the ways that oblivion structures social life through the figures of return, suspense and starting over. He explores African rites of possession, role-reversals and initiations as social events that organize a passage from a before to an after. The return of someone possessed by either a spirit or an other within indicates a state of being in the pure present (I have come back). The role reversals tied to suspense allow one to find the present by temporarily cutting it off from past and future (I am come back). The radical inauguration of the (re)beginning is the complete opposite of a repetition, as the future is discovered by forgetting the past (I am here). These three figures of oblivion define the process of remembrance through their 'narrative virtue'. Thus while Augé explores how individual and social

By considering these forms of individual memory when analysing cultural memory, humanities scholars take issue with earlier work on social memory.<sup>16</sup> For example, Constantina Papoulias (*Regimes*) challenges understandings of social memory as ‘ritualized behaviours, belief systems and forces of habit that constitute the everyday experience of a cultural space’ (p. 115). Such an approach for Papoulias reduces the ‘inner world’ to a mere ‘sedimentation of social knowledges through skills, dispositions and patterns of action in the world’. The social thus substitutes for the individual; radical psychoanalytical accounts of subjectivity are ignored. Following French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche, Papoulias understands subjectivity as a ‘spatial disturbance’, whereby the unconscious is ‘an irreducible rift that both constitutes the subject and divides it from itself’, or, borrowing Laplanche’s words, a ‘*sort of waste-product of certain processes of memorisation*’ (p. 115; Laplanche’s italics). From this perspective, desire and sexuality may emerge through spatial encounters between subjects, but they are in no way reducible to the memory of intersubjective interactions.

Quite a different example of looking at the interface between individual and social memory is Stephan Feuchtwang’s essay (*Regimes*) about the controversies surrounding Benjamin Wilkomirski’s *Fragments* (1995), an acclaimed account of childhood survival during the Holocaust that was later revealed to be a fake. Using Freudian theory, Feuchtwang interprets Bruno Grosjean/Benjamin Wilkomirski’s fantasy of Holocaust survival as a way for the author/child to create objects of attachment for his real personal loss of having never had a childhood. Further, he looks at the complex power relations that frame this scandal, in particular the ‘recognition structure’ between personal demands for acknowledgement and the institutional conventions of social justice in situations of debasement and loss, in particular with respect to the Holocaust.

Debates about traumatic memory, then, raise difficult questions about how individual experience is mediated through the body, narration, and social facts. Further, the 'extra-memorial dimensions' of the psyche may include questions of witnessing. Papoulias (cited above), for example, is critical of those who argue that representations of tortured bodies can function as evidence of violence politically and become symbols of resistance and solidarity, thereby redeeming victims' humanity. For Papoulias, such a claim is not only unethical; it ignores the sexual excess in all forms of communication: 'bound within this redemptive translation of the scar as a mnemonic sign (the world feels outrage for the perpetrator and solidarity with the victim) is a certain enjoyment derived from the consumption of this spectacle (the audience may be thrilled and appalled, i.e. excited by the victim's plight)' (p. 127).

Recent work in the social-science tradition has begun to use the insights of humanities research in trauma to examine public cultures of memory in societies working through difficult pasts. Christopher Colvin analyses testimonial cultures in South Africa (*Contested Pasts*) through ethnographic research about ways that 'writing trauma into history' may resist the dominant post-TRC 'therapeutic framework' of public memory (p. 162), a culture he describes as 'part psychotherapy, part legal testimony and part historiography'. He illustrates the problems with the 'therapeutic mode of historiography' through an analysis of the ways in which tours at Robben Island promote a 'proper' way to remember personal memories through 'objective, thorough and unemotional' means. Yet some people had mixed feelings about assembling personal recollections of violence into a coherent public narrative of reconciliation or using former inmates as 'documents' to support the new national history. Colvin compares the therapeutic role of memory at Robben Island with the more pragmatic approach at Khulumani Victim Support Group. Khulumani narrates 'a story of the past centred on a

status of victim that makes it difficult to establish a record of historical fact. In such a climate, speaking out in the name of reconciliation can bring even more anguish and pain to those that suffered through ‘a sense of being haunted by a now public past’ (p. 149).

These examples point to the ways that social-science scholars now examine the shifting scales, political effects, and transmission of both individual and social memory. While the focus remains on contestation at national and international levels, social-science research offers insights to humanities scholars who are interested in networks of memory. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, for example, describe the political and moral economies of a ‘cosmopolitan’ form of Holocaust memory in terms of a post World-War-Two global moral order defined by absolute categories of good and evil.<sup>18</sup> Their arguments can be used to analyse contemporary and historical geopolitics – such as the current American-led ‘global War on Terror’<sup>19</sup> or Vietnamese-inflected memorializations in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia (Hughes in *Contested Pasts*)<sup>20</sup> – that legitimate military interventions and justify how lives are valued through the rhetorical deployment of such terms as ‘Hitler’, ‘genocide’, and ‘Never Again Auschwitz’. Other studies also look at how national commemorations of violent pasts can be analysed in terms of what Elazar Barkan describes as the neo-liberal ‘guilt of nations’, as demonstrated by France’s dedication to Slavery Remembrance Day this year. This commemorative day, the first of its kind in Europe, not only indicates Prime Minister Jacques Chirac’s call to never forget ‘this indelible stain on history’, but also positions France as a moral leader in a global order with ‘good’ nations acknowledging past actions. As tied to a neo-liberal agenda, acknowledging past crimes against humanity locates that legacy in the past, not the present, even in the face of stark anti-immigration laws and militant government responses to student and minority social unrest.<sup>21</sup>

approach to psychoanalysis distinguishes between declarative and procedural forms of memory. Declarative memory refers to the process whereby information about events, people, and objects is stored and recalled through symbols and representation, whereas procedural memory refers to the ways information from everyday habits, such as how to walk, are stored in the body. In procedural memory, experiences are encoded directly into neural programmes, bypassing symbolic or representational systems of storage or recall. According to Antze, neuro-psychoanalysis classifies emotional patterns and routine psychological processes as procedural memory, that is, as a form of body memory working outside the realms of language and representation.

Antze is critical of theorizing emotions in terms of procedural memory because what it means to be human is over-determined. Physical processes, such as neural encoding, cannot account for psychological processes, which, according to Freudian and post-Freudian theory, are structured by symbolic systems. For example, Antze asks, if childhood emotional patterns are encoded through processes of procedural memory, how can that neural data be 'translated' into adult contexts? To transfer information from one context to another, signs and metaphor are required, as when an adult envisions a boss as a father figure. For Antze, if habitual memory and routine psychological processes are simply encoded into neural systems, humans are no longer the complex and dynamic creatures we have previously thought, driven by desire, yet unable ever to know fully the unconscious from whence that desire stems.

While some authors theorize individual memory according to scientific research, others use organicist metaphors to describe the inheritance of memory across generations. Studies in archaeology are revisiting the notion of the evolution of a social brain or collective mind.<sup>23</sup> Yet spatial metaphors

categorical way of knowing is itself tied to historical discourses of colonialism.

In contrast to both scientific studies and discourse-based approaches to understanding body memory, visual and performing-arts theory locates memory in the body through affect. By developing the concept of sense memory, Jill Bennett (*Regimes*) suggests that the body is the realm through which we come to experience and know the world, a porous space that simultaneously connects us to others, yet maintains a sense of self and otherness through memories of affective experience. She argues that sense memory results from the ways our bodies experience feelings in the present by responding to visual images that trigger non-verbal-linguistic recall. This notion brings to mind Aristotle's distinction between *anamnesis*, or conscious and deliberate acts of recollection, and *mneme*, unconscious memory that comes unbidden to the surface – what Bergson and Proust later called 'involuntary memory'.<sup>26</sup> Yet Jill Bennett identifies bodily ways of knowing in terms of artistic practice. Sense memory 'operates through the body to produce a kind of "seeing truth" rather than "thinking truth", registering the pain of memory as it is directly experienced, and communicating a level of bodily affect' (p. 29). Bennett draws upon early work on trauma by Pierre Janet, observations by French poet and Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo, Holocaust testimony studies by Lawrence Langer, and the concept of the 'encountered sign' by Gilles Deleuze to develop her arguments about how trauma, and affect more generally, is 'thought through the body'.<sup>27</sup> She describes visitor responses to Dennis Del Favero and Justin Kramer's photo-media installations about sexual child abuse and to performance artist Marina Abramovic's self-mutilating works. Spectators have bodily sensations, or squirms, that let them

In their chapter on post-memory and generations of nostalgia (*Contested Pasts*), Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer describe how such silences between Holocaust survivors and their children can sometimes be broken. Hirsch and Spitzer recount their story of ‘returning’ to Czernowitz, the former home of Marianne’s mother and father, Lotte and Carl, who are Holocaust survivors.<sup>28</sup> Children of survivors, they argue, inherit understandings of a ‘home’ (that they often have never been to) in terms of their parents’ positive and negative pasts, as communicated through the nostalgia, longing, hostility, and ambivalence toward the places where they grew up, experienced loss and violence, and left. Thus to return to their former homes is a performance for the parents, as they create a space ‘that can hold both sides of the past [positive and negative] simultaneously in view, without necessarily reconciling them, or “healing” the rift’ (p. 84). For the second generation of exiles and refugees, who have internalized their parents’ ‘nostalgic yearning in combination with negative and traumatic memory – pleasure and affection, layered with bitterness, anger and aversion’, ‘returning’ to their parents’ homes can only offer promise and disappointment. It is a ‘home’ only known through negative postmemories of ‘the war’, or memories of pasts not personally experienced but mediated through stories, the media, museums, film, and history books. Making a material connection to a time and place ‘before’ the war, ‘when their parents had not yet suffered the threat of genocide’, means that children of survivors can ‘witness the sites of resistance and survival’ and participate in their parents’ transitory acts of memory when they sift through conflicting nostalgic and negative memories. Thus the intergenerational journey to (re)make contact with ‘home’, ‘bring[s] to the surface what the trauma of expulsion has submerged’, and offers the possibility of constructing ‘a deeper and more nuanced understanding of history and memory’ (p. 85).

should be an embarrassment to the academy.<sup>31</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

I wish to thank Barbara Taylor for her patience and Gerry Kearns for his insightful suggestions.

1 BBC News online, 'Easter Rising Parades Take Place', 16 April 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/4913392.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4913392.stm); and 'Rising 'Basis for Modern Ireland'' 14 April 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/4909762.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4909762.stm).

2 Gerry Kearns, personal correspondence about second-year University of Cambridge student responses to Dublin events.

3 *Memory Studies* will be launched in 2008 (Sage) with a profile distinct from earlier journals in the field, such as *History and Memory* (Indiana University Press). McGill University offers an interdisciplinary degree and research program in Memory Studies (<http://www.memory.mcgill.ca/index.html>). Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith guest edited the special issue on 'Gender and Cultural Memory', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28: 1, 2002; two sessions were organized on 'Spectrogeographies' at the Institute of British Geographers by Jo Madden and Peter Adey, London, 2005.

4 In geography, for example, see Nuala Johnson, 'Public Memory', in *Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. J. Duncan, N. Johnson, R. Schein, Oxford, 2004, pp. 316–27, and Karen Till, 'Places of Memory', in *Companion to Political Geography*, ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Gearoid O'Tuathail, Oxford, 2003, pp. 289–301.

5 Michel Foucault, 'Film and Popular Memory: an Interview with Michel Foucault' (transl. Martin Jordan), *Radical Philosophy*, 1975, p. 25; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mephram, and Kate Soper, New York, 1980; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 1–14; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Volumes I–III*, English edn ed. L. Kritzman, transl. Arthur Goldhammer, New York, 1996–1998; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (1952, 1941), ed. and transl. L. Coser, Chicago, 1992.

6 Jay Winter, 'Remembrance and Redemption: a Social Interpretation of War Memorials', *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall 1999, pp. 71–7; Owen Dwyer, 'Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration', *Social and Cultural Geography* 5: 3, 2004, pp. 419–35. See

*cultural geographies* 11, 3, 2004, pp. 291–312; Paul Gough, Sites in the Imagination: the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial on the Somme', *cultural geographies* 11, 2004, pp. 235–58; Elizabeth Spelman, *Repair: the Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World*, Boston, 2003.

12 For a discussion of technologies of memory, see Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York, 1995 and Sturken, *Tangled Memories*.

13 The terms 'social memory' and 'cultural memory' are often used to distinguish the approaches I sketch here. I have decided not to use that distinction here because these words are often used interchangeably. In addition, translating the concepts collective, social and cultural memory, as well as memory, forgetting, and oblivion more generally is not straightforward from one language to the next. Some authors also describe their work as analyses of cultural memory, even though they would be classified as studying social memory (see, for example, Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München, 1992; Aleida Assmann, and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit. Geschichtsversessenheit*, Stuttgart, 1999; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, 1989).

14 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

15 Mieke Bal, 'Introduction', in *Acts of Memory*, ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe and Leo Spitzer, Hanover, NJ, 1998, pp. vii–xiii.

16 Although he has been criticized for adopting a Durkheimian model of a collective conscious, a careful reading of Halbwach's work also indicates his engagement with such key philosophical and historical figures as Henri Bergson and Fernand Braudel.

17 An excellent collection of work in psychology, a field I do not cover in this review, is *Tense Past: Essays in Trauma and Memory*, ed. Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, London: Routledge, 1996.

18 Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Philadelphia, 2005.

19 American leaders have self-righteously, and often with religious zeal, defended illegal military invasions, resulting in thousands of deaths and the creation of extra-legal spaces and extra-territorial laws through a logic of protecting a civilized democratic 'us' and punishing a heathen 'them', even as civil liberties have been reduced.

20 Rachel Hughes examines how Holocaust discourses were used to gain legitimacy for the notorious 'S-21' Khmer Rouge secret police facility and the Choeng Ek 'killing field' tied to Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide Crimes.

21 Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices*, New York, 2000; BBC News Online, 'France Remembers Slavery Day', BBC on-line, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4756635.stm>, 5 May 2006.

with G. Politi in *Flash Art*, April-May 1984, p. 1.

28 Czernowitz, as Hirsch and Spitzer write, ceased to exist in 1918 and is now ‘nowhere’. Once located in the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire, the town is now called Chernivtsi and is in Ukraine, near the Romanian border. Their ‘short history and geography lesson’ relates to their arguments about the productive uses of nostalgia, as tied to postmemorial intergenerational practice.

29 In his excellent chapter, Bill Schwarz argues that historians should revisit works by Fernand Braudel, Louis Althusser and Virginia Woolf, all of whom conceive of time as working in multiple registers (‘“Already the Past”: Memory and Historical Time’, *Regimes*, pp. 135–51). Two excellent works on sexual memory drawing from the insights of Walter Benjamin are Diane Chisholm’s *Queer Constellations: Subcultural Space in the Wake of the City*, Minneapolis, 2005 and Robert Sember, ‘In the Shadow of the Object: Sexual Memory in the AIDS Epidemic’, *Space and Culture* 6: 3, 2003, pp. 214–34.

30 Recent translated work about South American memory includes Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, Minneapolis, 2003.

31 For an example of an engagement with scholars, organic intellectuals, artists and community activists, see *Recalling Community in Cape Town: Creating and Curating the District Six Museum*, ed. Ciraj Rassool and Sandra Prosalendis, Cape Town, District Six Museum, 2001.

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