SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of memory for virtually all research domains relating to emergent Christianity has been gaining at best only slow recognition. Social memory studies are less than a century old, having originated in the writings of Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), a disciple of Emile Durkheim. A recent state-of-the-question essay shows their wide diffusion into the social sciences and humanities (Olick and Robbins: 105–40). Bibliographic surveys of the relevant literature reveal that the vast majority of focused studies in social memory have been published within the last two decades. In many ways, then, social memory is a new and emerging field. However, while memory studies have burgeoned in the humanities and social sciences, no comparable effect can be noticed in New Testament scholarship (Kelber 2002:58–59). That this myopia is a problem almost uniquely of New Testament scholarship is due in large part to the continuing influence of classical form criticism, which in the wake of the failure of the nineteenth-century quests for the historical Jesus reconstructed the category "tradition" in such a way as to marginalize memory. Corresponding to this inattention to memory is the absence of analytical approaches able to conceptualize the operations of memory and assess its effects. We will defer further discussion of the roots of these analytical deficits to the companion essay (Kirk and Thatcher) in this volume. For now, a glance at a key text for early Christian memory, the *anamnesis* passage in 1 Cor 11:23–26, shows memorializing practices of early Christian communities implicated in ritual and ethics, in issues of oral tradition and transmission, and accordingly in historical Jesus questions as well.

This essay will outline analytical approaches that are emerging within memory studies and introduce the work of leading theorists.[1]

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1. "Social memory" is largely the term used in Anglo-American scholarship, while "cultural memory" predominates in German scholarship associated with Aleida and Jan

Contemporary memory studies are diffuse, spread across many disciplines, and so they resist simple systematization. Accordingly, the focus in what follows will be upon major elements from this diverse body of theory that appear to have direct implications for research problems in Christian origins, though for the most part the task of beginning to make those implications explicit has been left for the essays which follow in the volume.

SOCIAL FRAMEWORKS OF MEMORY

Maurice Halbwachs showed that memory is in determinative respects a social phenomenon. "He was interested in memory as a social reality, as a function of the individual's membership in various social groups" (J. Assmann 1988:47–48). Traditionally, memory has been taken to be the most "purely individual" of human faculties, the "product of an isolated mind," a view, however, that "overemphasizes the isolation of the individual in social life" (Prager: 59–60). Memory is in fact "intersubjectively constituted"; it is inseparable from "the social world ... in which remembering occurs" (213–14). Halbwachs argued that memory is constituted by *social frameworks*, which is to say he focused on the way the structure and inner workings of specific groups shape memory for the people belonging to those groups. Social frameworks of memory are indispensable for the very possibility of remembering, for they give coherence and legibility to memories, arranging them within dominant cultural systems of meaning (Halbwachs 1992:38–43; 1980:54; Namer 1987:37, 56–57; J. Assmann 1992:35; 2000:114). Halbwachs identified and analyzed a number of these group frameworks. Here we shall limit ourselves to spelling out, first, how the patterns impressed upon *space* and *time* by the social configurations of discrete groups act as mnemonic frameworks, and, second, the role *communicative* practices of groups plays in giving substance to memory.

Spatio-temporal frameworks are crucial, for it is not possible to remember apart from memories fastening to definite places and times (Halbwachs 1980:134–40, 157; Namer 2000:50–51; Casey 1987:189). Time and locale act as economizing, organizing principles that condense and render into emblematic composites the memories associated with them (Casey 1987:72–75; Halbwachs 1992:61; 1980:70). Memory attaches to places and landscapes, and likewise survives, erodes, or perishes along

Assmann. Though clearly embodying differences of approach and focus, "social memory" and "cultural memory" analyses have a great deal in common, and this essay will seek to bring out a number of these points of intersection.

with them (Farmer: 101–3, 199–205; Jing: 170–73). The space within which memory is plotted is a *social* framework because space is conceptualized, organized, and shaped by the group inhabiting it (Halbwachs 1980:156–57; Fentress and Wickham: 80; Namer 2000:230; Gillis 1994a:6). The same holds true of the framework of time. Calendar organizes duration, and so it is the essential scaffolding both for situating and reconstituting memories. However, there are as many calendars as there are groups. A community organizes its calendar in accordance with group-specific commemorative concerns and activities, and so freights it with religious, political, and social meanings (Halbwachs 1980:88–89, 111–12; see also Burkert: 225–26). In villages the rhythms and recurrences of the agricultural cycle (marked calendrically), bisected by the ritually marked biographical trajectory of the life cycle, specific to individual households and their constituent members, act as accretion points and organizing grids for memory, while reciprocity networks among households connect individual household memory into the communal memory of a village (Zonabend: 142, 197–200; Halbwachs 1992:63–73). Calendrical innovations in a community may, on the one hand, be driven by memorializing concerns and, on the other, obliterate memories accumulated upon the obsolescent calendar. With time as with space, memory is enframed within the social and cultural dynamics of groups. The mnemonic effects of social frameworks, however, do not entail cryogenic preservation of discrete memories. Rather, "all memory transmutes experience, distils the past rather than simply reflecting it" (Lowenthal 1985:204).

Communication is essential for the formation of memory. Memory emerges in coherent, durable form to the extent remembrances find articulation and reinforcement in communicative interaction within a group, and conversely, a person's remembrances fade to the extent they are not taken up in the groups with which he or she is affiliated (e.g., Halbwachs 1992:173). It is through communicative discourse that otherwise ephemeral, disconnected remembrances are given connection, stability, and coherence (Halbwachs 1992:53). Gérard Namer refers to this as "a *sociability of speech* [his emphasis] that permits the discontinuities of remembering [*souvenir*] to be woven into a living memory [*mémoire vécue*]" (1987:142–43). Concentration camp survivors (by way of a diagnostic example) constructed a coherent memory of their experiences, so horrible as to be *incommunicables*, only through the formation of survivor groups. In these groups was forged the collective discourse that integrated fragmented, individualized remembrances into a coherent, communicable memory of the camps (Namer 1987:140–57). Articulation of memories through discourse in a community is simultaneously the urgent articulation of the meaning of those memories, which if left in fragmentary form would be at best ambiguous as regards their significance

(Namer 1987:154–55; Fentress and Wickham: 73). Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen in a major survey of popular uses of memory report of their respondents that "with individuals they trusted ... they probed experiences and constructed the traditions they wanted to sustain. In these relationships they ... shaped and reshaped memories into trajectories ... and generally created the perceptual world they wanted to inhabit" (196). On the basis of her fieldwork in Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania, Liisa Malkki characterizes this face-to-face discussion of remembrances as "an intensively signifying context," whose effect is to weave memory into semantically dense narrative patterns (140).

MEMORY AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

"Memory is *embedded* ... the rememberer remembers in a contemporary world, peopled by others who collectively contribute to the construction of memory and help determine the importance that the past holds for an individual in the present" (Prager: 70–71). For its part, a community bears a complex of memories constitutive of its very existence (Olick 1999a:342). Accordingly, "genuine communities are communities of memory that constantly tell and retell their constitutive memories" (344; also E. Zerubavel 1996:289; Coser: 22; Schwartz 1998b:67; Zonabend: 203). Individuals come to participate in these memories by virtue of their incorporation into the group, a process Eviatar Zerubavel describes as the "existential fusion of our own personal biography with the history of the groups or communities to which we belong" (1996:290; see also Halbwachs 1980:51–53, 68; Schwartz 2000:294; Shils: 51, 212; Lowenthal 1985:196–97; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 198; Jing: 78–79). Indeed, "familiarizing new members with its past is an important part of a community's effort to incorporate them" (E. Zerubavel 1996:290; see also Schudson 1989:111; J. Assmann 2000:108). Ritual and other commemorative activities bring individuals into vital connection with that memory and its associated norms (J. Assmann 1992:16; 2000:22–23). The locus of the collective memory is the memory of individuals whose identity is bound up in the group (Assmann and Assmann 1988:27; J. Assmann 2000:19). "Memory is produced by an individual, but it is always produced in relation to the larger interpersonal and cultural world in which that individual lives" (Prager: 70).

Individual identity is "constituted by a train of events and experiences" (Schudson 1989:111), constantly being linked together in meaningful patterns by the work of memory (Casey 1987:290; Lowenthal 1985:41, 197; Olick and Robbins: 133–34; Prager: 91, 123–25; Shils: 50). This process never reaches stasis; rather, it is a matter of constantly correlating past, present, and the anticipated future to achieve a sense of

personal coherence and continuity. Social memory exercises a role analogous to that played by individual memory: "Social memory defines a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future" (Fentress and Wickham: 25; see also Lowenthal 1985:198; J. Assmann 1992:89; Halbwachs 1992:83; 1980:126; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 172).

A community *marks* certain elements of its past as being of constitutive significance. Both identity and continuity, in fact the very survival of a community, depend upon its constant revitalization of these memories (J. Assmann 1992:30, 132–33; Schwartz 1998b:67). These are memories of the community's origins—"the event that marks the group's emergence as an independent social entity"—and other landmark events in its history (Y. Zerubavel 1995:4–7; see also Zonabend: x; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 172). These memories are shaped into a community's "master commemorative narrative"; moreover, through recitation of its master narrative a group continually reconstitutes itself as a coherent community, and as it moves forward through its history it aligns its fresh experiences with this master narrative, as well as vice versa (Y. Zerubavel 1995:7).

COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY AND CULTURAL MEMORY

We can better grasp dynamics of social memory by focusing on emergent communities still close to their origins. Jan Assmann uses the term "communicative memory" (*kommunikative Gedächtnis*) for this period, characterized as it is by face-to-face circulation of foundational memories (1992:50–56). These memories are biographically vested in those who experienced originating events; it is the time of "eyewitness and living memory" (J. Assmann 1992:32; 2000:88). Lowenthal points out that the period after the American Revolutionary War was characterized by "the prolonged survival of the actual fathers, living memorials to their own splendid deeds for half a century beyond the Revolution" (Lowenthal 1985:118). The outer limit of "communicative memory" is the passing of those able to claim living contact with the original generation, hence three to four generations, that is, eighty to one hundred years (J. Assmann 1992:56; 1995b:127; 2000:37–38). Bodnar uses the term "vernacular memory" for this phenomenon and observes that "much of the power of vernacular memory [is] derived from the lived or shared experiences of small groups.... vernacular interests [lose] intensity with the death and demise of individuals who participated in historic events" (1992:247).

Thus, communicative memory cannot sustain group-constitutive remembrances beyond the three to four generations able to claim living

contact with the generation of origins (J. Assmann 1992:50). Assmann argues that the limitations of communicative memory force themselves upon an emergent community as a *crisis of memory* at approximately the forty-year threshold, the point at which it becomes apparent that the cohort of living carriers of memory is disappearing (1992:11; 2000:29; also Farmer: 197–213). It is at this threshold that the community, if it is not itself to dissolve along with its memory, must turn toward more enduring media capable of carrying memory in a vital manner across generations, that is, toward forms of "cultural memory" (*kulturelle Gedächtnis*) (J. Assmann 1992:218–21; 2000:53–54), though lineaments of such forms may begin to appear even during the high period of communicative memory (Farmer: 100–123).[2] "If we conceive of the typical three-generation time framework of communicative memory as a synchronic space of memory, then cultural memory forms a diachronic axis, by virtue of tradition which extends far into the past" (J. Assmann 2000:30).[3] Assmann isolates this phenomenon—transition from communicative to cultural memory—to secure an analytical standpoint from which he can gain a broad perspective upon the dynamics of culture, viewed as the constellation of the "means of collective mnemo-technique" (1992:218; 1995b:129; 2000:117).

Writing is "an extraordinarily efficient medium of symbolic objectification" (J. Assmann 2000:54). In societies with scribal technology, writing takes on particular importance in the event of a "breakdown in tradition" (*Traditionsbruch*). For emergent groups, this refers to the point of serious breakdown of communicative memory. Analogously, at the level of long-established societies, it indicates crisis times when historical disruptions and changes suddenly problematize the immanent, organic connections of a society with its past, as well as the smooth functioning of usual forms (including oral) of transmission. In such cases a society is confronted with loss of connection to memory and so turns more intensively to writing as a means of stabilizing group memory, of working out connections to the past in the midst of drastically altered circumstances (J. Assmann 2000:87–88; 1992:165).

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2. A case in point is the formation of "master commemorative narratives," which on the one hand are forged in group communicative contexts, and on the other operate as durable cultural artifacts.

3. Jan Assmann expressly draws here upon Aleida Assmann's *Zeit und Tradition: Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (Köln: Böulau, 1999).

COMMEMORATION

Discussion of the artifactual forms of cultural memory leads on to commemoration. Viable communities are at pains to commemorate their pasts. Commemoration in Savage's apt characterization, is the "effort to fix the meaning and purpose ... [of crucial memories] in an enduring form" (127). Commemoration renders constitutive memories into durable forms; it creates what Namer calls "the material basis of memory" (2000:157). In public monuments, for example, "the very hardness and hardiness of granite or marble" evidences the concern to fix and make constantly available constitutive memories (Casey 1987:227). Commemoration is a culture-formative impulse that ramifies into a wide range of artifacts, commemorative narratives, and ritual practices (Y. Zerubavel 1995:5; J. Assmann 2000:19–20; 1995b:130–31; Casey 1987:218). These densely sedimentize memory into various material and visible formats that function to make the past immanent in the present (Savage: 132; J. Assmann 2000:19; Casey: 218–19, 273; Farmer: 123). Commemorative practice of all sorts attempts to counteract the danger of rupture, the possibility of a fatal disconnect between a community and its past, the loss of memory that spells unraveling of identity in the present and future. It seeks to bridge the problematic, ever-widening gap that opens up between formative events and a community's ongoing historical existence (J. Assmann 1988:55; Coser: 25; Casey 1987:224–25, 237; Yerushalmi 1982:94; Connerton: 70). As a "making-present of the founding past" commemoration aims to ensure the continued vitality of collective memory. It "has the goal of rendering visible and stabilizing collective identity by presenting it in symbolic and dramatic form" (J. Assmann 2000:28).

Remembering together common *commemoranda*, present in mediating artifacts and practices, serves also to incorporate new members through communication of a group's constitutive memories and socialization into the corollary norms—what Assmann refers to as the "formative and normative" dimensions of cultural memory (2000:20; see also Schwartz 2000:10; Duchesne-Guillemin: 19; Georgoudi: 89; Casey: 247–51; Warner: 279, 305–6; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 45). In other words, the past is exemplary for the group that commemorates it. Schwartz states that "commemoration lifts from an ordinary historical sequence those extraordinary events which embody our deepest and most fundamental values" (Schwartz 1982:377). This in turn means that commemoration has a mobilizing effect, or stated differently, is oriented toward the future as well as the past (Namer 1987:211; Casey 1987:256; Duchesne-Guillemin: 13).

At its core commemoration is a hermeneutical activity: to return to Savage's definition, it is the "effort *to fix the meaning and purpose*" of the

past (emphasis added; see also Farmer: 78). Commemoration picks up "bedrock events experienced with powerful immediacy" but whose meaning and significance must be discerned, precisely through commemorative activities (Rosenzweig and Thelen: 67). This entails, though, that "commemoration is a way of forming its object in the process of representing it" (Schwartz 2000:306). By the same token, commemoration shapes memory, for a community impresses its present identity upon its "collective re-presentations" of its past (Burke: 101). To adapt Warner's characterization, in commemoration a community states symbolically what it believes and wants itself to be (Warner: 107; see also J. Assmann 1988:55–56). Social tensions erupt in struggles over defining and interpreting a salient past, which is to say that "commemorative efforts are often punctuated as much by conflict as consensus" (Farmer: 4; see also Peri: 121).

Commemorative ritual sustains memory by reenacting a community's "master narrative," itself the product of commemorative impulses (Connerton: 70; Casey 1987:224–25). Farmer notes in the case of the Oradour-sur-Glane massacre by the S.S. that "the events ... had to be removed from their historical context and dramatized, visually and in narrative, to be rendered suitable for telling the archetypal story of innocence and victimization" (Farmer: 55). Translation into ritual transfigures the way salient events are represented. Meaning and significance are distilled out and concentrated into sacralized, highly symbolic words, gestures, and objects (Halbwachs 1992:116). Historical detail recedes to the minimum required to support the symbolic appropriation, with this remainder conformed to the tight structure of the ritual (Yerushalmi 1982:40), and with historical recitation itself coming to be affected by the contours of the ritual. A complex history is thereby precipitated out into a stable ritual artifact, bearer of dense symbolic meaning, with enormous capacity to perdure in multiple enactments through time (Halbwachs 1992:116; Yerushalmi 1982:40, 51–52). In the creation of a commemorative calendar events deemed memorable are extracted from their historical context and replotted within a cyclical commemorative sequence that foregrounds the symbolic significance these events bear for the identity of the community. Calendrical transposition reflects the way group-formative events have come to be arranged within the master commemorative narrative, now traversed cyclically throughout the course of the year (Y. Zerubavel 1995:218–19). "Historical time is thus transformed into commemorative time" (Y. Zerubavel 1995:225; see also Yerushalmi 1982:11, 41–42; Valensi: 286).

The mnemonic effect of ritual resides not just in its concentration of meaning in material signs and gestures that stimulate recollection, but also in its incorporation of the kinetic, emotional, and sensory capacities

of the bodies of participants into the ritualized act of remembering (J. Assmann 2000:21). The community is literally incorporated—as it were, fused—with the constitutive past during the time frame of the ceremonialized action through participation in its re-presentations. Simultaneously the community as "conjoined participants acting together" is dramatically reconstituted and manifests its identity and solidarity (Casey: 227, 253–54; also J. Assmann, 1992:21, 143; Zerubavel 1996:294; Warner: 432).

"Memory flowed [in Judaism] ... through two channels: ritual and recital" (Yerushalmi 1982:11). Both along with and independent of rituals and material artifacts groups make use of the verbal arts, oral or written, for commemorative purposes. Commemorative ritual draws the community together on a regular basis, which in turn supplies the context for utterance of group memory through genres appropriate to a given setting (Assmann and Assmann 1983:274; Casey: 235; Warner: 114–16). Verbal elements may occur either correlated with the choreography of ritual, or else in genres less directly implicated in ritual enactment itself but nevertheless appropriate to the commemorative, incorporative objectives of the ritual setting. One example is the "logos épitaphaios," a genre that emerged in fourth-century B.C.E. Greece "to commemorate combatants who had died in battle and which was pronounced at their tombs in the course of public funerals" (Simondon: 99). Instruction, drawing upon the normative elements of the salient past, will be an essential dimension of rituals that initiate new members into a community (Ben Yehuda: 152–53).

It is only a step to the emergence of texts themselves as autonomous commemorative artifacts (Simondon: 105). Oral tradition has enormous tenacity, but written texts possess material ingrediency that enables diffusion and storage if not permanency and are accordingly less dependent upon oral ritual settings for their transmission, though they may initially have been produced for such settings (Casey 1987:227; Shils: 91). Connerton points out that "whatever is written, and more generally whatever is inscribed, demonstrates, by the fact of being inscribed, a will to be remembered" (Connerton: 102; also Assmann and Assmann 1988:48). Texts may be a response to the crisis of memory arising in the wake of a Traditionsbruch as described by Assmann, which leads to the articulation of memory in durable cultural artifacts and practices (1992:218–21). Biographical writing and historiography are obvious cases, but a community "arranges its social memory into different genres" (Fentress and Wickham: 78, 162–63; also Valensi; Simondon: 105; Namer 1987:157–58), and nonhistory genres may in fact be suffused with memory (Yerushalmi 1982:14–15, 31, 45–46). We see confirmed Halbwachs's point that memory takes coherent shape to the

extent that it finds articulation in typical social practices and aligned genres of discourse.

MEMORY AS CONSTRUCTION

That memory is *constructive* activity should now be clear, but it needs emphasis to counter what Casey labels the "passivist" model for memory, namely, "the view that all memories of necessity repeat the past in a strictly replicative manner [and that] the contribution of the remembering subject ... is nugatory" (1987:269). We have already seen that memories are products of coherence-bestowing activities such as conceptualization, schematization, and interpretive articulation in shared forms of discourse. Memory "acts to organize what might otherwise be a mere assemblage of contingently connected events" (291). Memory formations, however, do not thereby assume static, immobile forms. The activity of memory in articulating the past is dynamic, unceasing, *because it is wired into the ever-shifting present*. The remembering subject, from his or her situatedness in the present, interacts with a formative past to relate it meaningfully to contemporary exigencies and to the ongoing project of negotiating continuity and change in personal identity (292; Prager: 11–12, 214–15; Lowenthal 1985:206; Gillis 1994a:3; Zelizer: 218; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 196). In Prager's words, "it becomes nearly impossible to parse out memories of the past from the categories of experience available in the present" (5). Precisely the same holds true for collective memory of communities, where "to remember is to place a part of the past in the service of the needs and conceptions of the present" (Schwartz 1982:374). Halbwachs argued that to remember is not to *retrouver*, but to *reconstruire*, to align the image of the past with present social realities (1992:40).[4] A group will conform its past to shifts in its present realities, group morphology, and moral self-conceptions (Namer 1987:53; Prager: 82). Differential attribution of meaning to the past, a basic feature of memory, proceeds from and serves the conditions of the present. Present social realities and "les pensées dominantes de la société" act therefore as *semantic* frames of memory (J. Assmann 1995a:366; Halbwachs 1992:183; Handler and Linnekin: 288).

We have seen that a community situates its past, self-constitutively, in its present. Frameworks of memory are current social and ideological

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4. "Les cadres collectifs de la mémoire ... sont ... les instruments dont la mémoire collective se sert pour recomposer une image du passé qui s'accorde à chaque époque avec les pensées dominantes de la société" (cited from Namer 1987:34).

structures through which the past is retrieved and interpreted in a community's incessant activity of self-constitution. Current needs and preoccupations determine what elements of a community's past are awarded prominence, that is, commemorated, or, conversely, are "forgotten" in the unceasing construction of the past that is a community's social memory. The present itself is hardly static; memory frameworks are thus themselves constantly subject to renovation, gradual or radical, as external and internal factors in the group's existence change. Accordingly, the way a community "remembers" and "forgets" its past changes as well (Halbwachs 1992:114–15, 123–24, 172–73, 188–89; Namer 1987:41, 74–75; see also Fentress and Wickham: 73; Lowenthal 1985:362; J. Assmann 1992:224). Research in social memory "shows how beliefs about the past are shaped by the circumstances and problems of current society and how different elements of the past become more or less relevant as these circumstances and problems change. Memory thus becomes a social fact as it is made and remade to serve changing societal interests and needs" (Schwartz 1996a:909). Hence immutability in representation of the past is never achieved; rather, "the past is continually being reorganized by the constantly changing frames of reference of the ever-evolving present" (J. Assmann 1992:41–42). Stated differently, "a charismatic epoch is not a fixed entity which imposes itself on the present; it is a continuously evolving product of social definition" (Schwartz 1982:390). However, it is by constantly bringing its salient past into alignment with its open-ended series of "presents" that a community maintains continuity of identity across time, a sense of always being vitally connected to its past (J. Assmann 1992:40, 88; Namer 1987:224). In some cases we see the past rendered virtually isomorphic with a community's present social perspectives. Joan of Arc, for example, was viewed as an "unfortunate idiot" by Voltaire, by nineteenth-century French republicanism as prefiguring "the heroic rising of the Third Estate," and by French socialists as a protoproletarian "born into the poorest class of society," while Vichy France commemorated Joan's resistance to the English (see Winock). In John Thompson's words, traditions can "become increasingly remote from their contexts of origin and increasingly interwoven with symbolic contents derived from the new circumstances in which they are re-enacted" (103).

POLITICS OF MEMORY

The malleability of memory requires us to be more specific about the nature of the very powerful forces at work in the present to shape particular versions of the past. The past is appropriated to *legitimize* particular

sociopolitical goals and ideologies and to *mobilize* action in accord with these goals. Yael Zerubavel puts it bluntly: "The power of collective memory does not lie in its accurate, systematic, or sophisticated mapping of the past, but in establishing basic images that articulate and reinforce a particular ideological stance" (1995:8; also Connerton: 3; Lowenthal 1990:302; Bodnar 1992:134–37). Hence, "interpretations of the past ... are, in important respects, political acts" (Schwartz 2000:12). Zionist commemoration of ancient Jewish resistance movements such as the Zealots, for example, was aimed at legitimating the Zionist political program as well as activist countermodels for Jewish identity, while its breath-taking diminution of the exile to a point of virtually no magnitude signified its repudiation of the stereotypically passive, sighing Jew of the *Galut*. Zionist memory, in other words, was a matter of the "ideological classification of the past" (Y. Zerubavel 1995:32–33; also Ben Yehuda: 139).

A number of theorists go so far as to suggest that constructions of the past may in all important respects be understood as projections of the political struggles and ideological contests of the present. In this view, "public memory speaks primarily about the structure of power in society" (Bodnar 1992:15). Memory is shaped—and contested—by moral entrepreneurs, identified with particular interests, focused in a programmatic fashion upon shaping values and maintaining or achieving power (Gero and Root: 19). The task this kind of analysis sets itself is to deconstruct given versions of the past by exposing the ideological, hegemonic interests that inhere in them.

The ideological appropriation of the past becomes visible in commemorative activities and artifacts. As a hermeneutical act, commemoration attempts "to impose interpretations of the past, to shape memory" (Burke: 101), but from the perspective of the strong constructionist view, "the facts of history become symbolic products of present meanings" (Warner: 159). Halbwachs observed that monumental commemoration of constitutive Christian memories in the physical features of the Holy Land was always reflective of "the needs of the contemporary belief system" (1992:234). The same forces are influential in a community's creation of its master commemorative narrative—its "molding the past into certain types of symbolic texts"—that selectively assigns importance to certain parts of the past, while leaving others "unmarked" (Y. Zerubavel 1995:8, 216). This brings in its wake a corresponding set of commemorative projects that give these memories substance and visibility. The converse effect of this double movement, though, is to marginalize memories of groups allotted either no place or a negatively signed place in the master narrative (Savage: 143; Namer 2000:156; Mikolajczyk: 250; Michnic-Coren: 75).

The tendentious appropriation of the past by the social and political forces of the present has given Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's pungent coinage, "invention of tradition," particular salience in contemporary discussion. To say that tradition is invented is to claim that much if not most of what goes under the rubric of the venerable past, and thus authoritatively constitutive for the present, is in fact of recent origin and in many cases fabricated, either *de novo* or out of the detritus of the past, by hegemonic interests seeking legitimacy by appropriating the antique and "tradition" for new practices, structures, and values (Hobsbawm 5; also Halbwachs 1980:80). A society's continuity with its past, entailed in the notion of tradition, on this view is therefore "factitious" (Hobsbawm 2). In this vein Handler and Linnekin argue that "tradition" and "pastness" are symbolic entities constructed wholly in orientation to the present. Hence the pastness—genuine or spurious—of tradition is of little theoretical interest; the analysis of a given tradition is exhausted upon exposure of its social positioning and symbolic utilization in the present (285–86).

Though "invention of tradition" analysis and its close relative, the "radical social constructionist" (Schudson 1992:54–55) view of social memory, are to be sure indispensable tools for assessing appeals to the past, questions have been raised about whether they can be generalized into paradigmatic models for tradition and memory. Handler and Linnekin, representatives of this view, indiscriminately use with respect to the past the terms "invention," "reinvention," "reinterpretation," "interpretation," and "reconstruction" as though self-evidently conceptual equivalents, when in fact these terms pose a number of complex questions about the relation of past to present. Their discounting the importance of tracing the trajectory of the Quebecois and Hawaiian traditions they analyze backward into the past, focusing instead on the transformation of these traditions for contemporary nationalistic purposes, then concluding that tradition can be understood in all important respects as a symbolic creation of the present, is a textbook case of circular reasoning. It has been suggested that the radical constructionist approach at times seems less argued for than it is taken as an axiomatic point of departure. What have the appearance of corroborating results are products of a theoretical perspective fixated on the synchronic factors of the present, and that *a priori* excludes reciprocal inquiry into the diachronic question, namely, how the depth of the past might inform, shape, support, not to say constrain the dispositions, interests, and actions of those situated in the present (Schwartz 1996a:910, 2000:ix). This tendency to locate all decisive causal variables in social life in the present may owe something to a theoretical orientation in which "attitudes [are] seen as epiphenomenal, as mere expressions of (or at the very

least tools for) the more real—that is, *objective*—social structure" (Olick and Levy: 922).

MEMORY AS A SOCIAL FRAME

Schwartz argues that with their exclusive focus on *change*, radical constructionist theories of social memory have difficulties delivering a satisfactory account of how a society establishes the *continuity* indispensable to its cohesion and survival as it traverses time (2000:20; also Coser: 25–28; Connerton: 103). Constructionists would argue that the sense of continuity with the past is itself fabricated by the ideological and hegemonic interests that produce the constructed past (Handler and Linnekin: 286–87). Yael Zerubavel notes, however, that "invented tradition can be successful only as long as it passes as tradition" (1995:232). Hence this approach must assume that most members of society, save the elites, are incorporated into a false consciousness manifest in their naïve acceptance of a fabricated social memory, a view that if for no other reason falters on the fact that subordinated groups are demonstrably and robustly (if discreetly) capable of contesting elite constructions of the past and shaping alternatives (Schwartz 2000:204; 1998a:23; also Scott).

Accordingly we turn now to memory theories that—without falling back upon the indefensible view that "the past" refers to an objective something that exists apart from its perception and interpretation—take stock of the "presence of the past" in the midst of intensely constructive, ever-fluid, and open-ended social milieux. Strong constructionist theorists acknowledge that ideological interests work with debris from the past to fabricate their syntheses. So even in this modest respect the past supplies the materials and thus sets some limits and terms for its appropriation (Schudson 1989:107–8). But the past is not just "a limitless and plastic symbolic resource, infinitely susceptible to the whims of contemporary interest and the distortions of contemporary ideology" (Appadurai: 20). The fact that "no strict correspondence exists between the conditions of any era and the objects of its memory" suggests that the past cannot be reduced to a mythical projection of the present (Schwartz 2000:6, 297; see also Schudson 1992:218). "Tension, not easy compatibility, defines the relation between memory and [present] experience" (Schwartz 1996a:922). Moreover, "as the Holocaust makes evident" (Zelizer: 224)—a case that "levers us quickly back into a reality without quotation marks" (Wagner-Pacifici: 302; also Malkki: 239–40)—competing versions of the past are hardly to be placed on the same level, as though each is indifferently nothing more than a successful or less successful strategy for political advantage. Hegemonic memory falsifies, fabricates a past, whereas antihegemonic memory exposes this mendacity,

and it is antihegemonic precisely because it utters a true past. "Secret graves in Yugoslavia could not be lit by private candles without dimming the bright light of socialist optimism" (Schwarz: 9), and "spontaneously erected vernacular memorials labeling the Katyn massacre of Polish army officers in 1940 a Russian atrocity are regularly replaced by official plaques designating the Germans as villains, only to surface elsewhere" (Lowenthal 1990:307; also Hayden: 167–84; Jing: 73–74, 168–71).

Despite its fluidity and contingency, the present is always emerging from its own past. A number of memory theorists, therefore, reverse the variables and explore ways in which the past affects the present. It is true that present identity is the perspective from which individuals—and groups—view and shape the past. But present identity configurations are always emerging from the variegated experiences of ever-deepening pasts. Fentress and Wickham note that "if Welsh miners remember past struggle so clearly, it is because they define themselves through it" (126; also Rosenzweig and Thelen: 66). It is this identity, understood as a diachronic process, that orients to the experiences of the present, and that encompasses the *predispositions* for the continual reassessment of its own past. Memory, in other words, is itself a social frame (Schwartz 1996a:908; 1995:266).

We might express this state of affairs as follows: the past, itself constellated by the work of social memory, provides the framework for cognition, organization, and interpretation of the experiences of the present. The salient past,[5] immanent in the narrative patterns in which it has become engrained in social memory, provides the cognitive and linguistic habits by which a group perceives, orients itself, and has its "being in the world" (Fentress and Wickham: 51; Connerton: 2; Hjärpe: 333–34; Schwartz 2000:225–30; Y. Zerubavel 1995:229; Schudson 1992:2; 1989:112; Casey 1987:284–85; Burke: 103; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 68). Master commemorative narratives that have achieved secure status in the cultural memory are not inert, museum-piece representations of the past; rather, they vitally shape perception and organization of reality. They are cognitive schemata, "nuclear scripts" for interpreting and processing streams of experience (Bonanno: 177–82; also Prager: 200–209; Malkki: 53, 105). It is precisely because of the orienting, stabilizing effect of memory that free, innovative action in the present becomes possible (Casey 1987:150–53). However, if the past is not inert, neither is it impermeable:

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5. By "salient past" is meant the past as it has been marked by a community through the hermeneutical operations of commemoration.

present events and experiences have the capacity to affect decisively the configurations the salient past assumes in the cultural memory (Malkki: 241–42; Prager: 186–87).

"'Frame' . . . is a shorthand reference to the way invocations of the past confer meaning on present experience" (Schwartz 1998a:1; also Zonabend: 2). Social memory makes available the moral and symbolic resources for making sense of the present through "keying" present experiences and predicaments to archetypal images and narrative representations of the commemorated past. These semiotic connections "define the meaning of present events by linking them to great and defining events of the past" (Schwartz 2000:232). Further, "frame images are in this sense pictorial counterparts of 'emplotment,' defining the meaning of problematic events by depicting them as episodes in a narrative that precedes and transcends them" (Schwartz 1998a:8; also Malkki: 107, 134–43). This would entail, in contrast to the extreme constructionist position, that *both* present social realities *and* the salient past are potent variables in these semiotic constructions constantly occurring in social memory. A traumatic past in particular projects decisive influence into the present, acting as what Michael Schudson calls a "pre-emptive metaphor," that is, "a past, traumatic experience so compelling that it forces itself as the frame for understanding new experiences" (1992:167). Olick and Levy draw attention to the effect of traumatic memory upon postwar Germany: "Powerful images of the Nazi past have shaped West Germany. Virtually every institutional arrangement and substantive policy is a response, in some sense, to Germany's memory of those fateful years" (921).

Medieval Jewish chronicles resorted to an archetypal pattern in the cultural memory—the binding of Isaac—to interpret the mass suicides in the eleventh-century Rhineland (Yerushalmi 1982:38–39). In many cases the archetypal past so dominates perception of the present that social memory makes the latter virtually isomorphic with features of the former (Fentress and Wickham: 201). Yerushalmi points out that "on the whole, medieval Jewish chronicles tend to assimilate events to old and established conceptual frameworks. . . . there is a pronounced tendency to subsume even major new events to familiar archetypes, for even the most terrible events are somehow less terrifying when viewed within old patterns rather than in their bewildering specificity" (1982:36). Fentress and Wickham cite the case of "the inhabitants of the coalfields of South Wales and Durham [who] have a very clear sense of the past as struggle. . . . The General Strike of 1926 is a common touchstone, and for many miners the strikes of 1972, 1974, and 1984–85 simply replayed the experiences of 1926, with the same *dramatis personae* in each: the community, the employers, and the police" (115–16). Events of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran were assimilated in a recapitulative manner to the

archetypal Shiite narrative of the martyrdom of Husayn, Muhammad's grandson, at Karbala in 680 C.E., at the hand of Yazid, an evil Umayyad caliph (Hjärpe: 335–36). It is the reactualization of memory, of "master narratives," in commemorative rituals and artifacts that habituates this salient past and gives it power to affect a community's perceptions of its experiences (Hjärpe: 334; Yerushalmi 1982:49; Valensi: 298).

An important aspect of the past's frameworking function is its capacity to mobilize action in the present (Schudson 1989:111, 1992:3; J. Assmann 1992:296; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 75). Through incorporative activities and artifacts of commemoration the salient past is existentially sedimentized into the identities of persons who are simultaneously actors in the present (Yerushalmi 1982:44). Memorialization shapes dispositions and norms for action, in terms of both possibility and constraint (Olick and Levy: 923–25; Fentress and Wickham: 51). "Collective memory . . . shapes reality by providing people with a program in terms of which their present lines of conduct can be formulated and enacted" (Schwartz 2000:18; see also Malkki: 43). Constitutive events of origin, as well as memorialized landmark events in a group's subsequent history, possess an exemplary, monitory character that enables them to exert this kind of influence (Schudson 1989:111; Rosenzweig and Thelen: 174; Shils: 206).

Assmann points to the "Mythomotorik" effect of "founding narratives," meaning that constitutive memories are dynamos that drive a society's social and cultural development (1992:168–69, 296). Commemorations of significant pasts are able to generate political programs and mobilize action accordingly (Schudson 1992:217; Hjärpe: 334; Schwartz 2000:243–44). Subjugated groups cultivate memories of ideal pasts characterized by freedom, memories that have the capacity to inspire resistance to oppressive conditions. Theissen and Assmann designate these "kontrapräsentische" uses of memory (Theissen: 174–75; J. Assmann 1992:72–80, 294–97; also Fentress and Wickham: 108–9; Schwartz 1996a:924). Olick and Levy note that "claim-making by actors in political contexts is conditioned by significant pasts as well as by meaningful presents; it is always path-dependent, though not necessarily in obvious ways. This point calls our attention to historical events of definitive importance, to how broad parameters are fixed at particular moments, and to how those moments manifest themselves or are invoked differently in subsequent contexts" (923).

NORMATIVE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL MEMORY

We have referred several times to the exemplary, normative force of a community's salient past. Halbwachs called attention to the fact that

the memory of foundational persons and events bears the ethos distinctive to the group's identity: "But these memories ... consist not only of a series of individual images of the past. They are at the same time models, examples, and elements of teaching" (1992:59). In short, the social memory has an indelible ethical coloring; its images of archetypal persons and events embody a group's moral order (Schwartz and Miller: 96). Master commemorative narratives recast the past in "fundamentally moral terms"; they are "moral and cosmological ordering stories" (Malkki: 54).[6] The images that exist in the social memory are thus a mnemonic of the group-defining norms thereby embodied (Halbwachs 1992:59; Namer 1987:58; J. Assmann 1992:16–17; 2000:127– 28). It is by virtue of its normativity that the past makes programmatic, urgent moral claims upon a community (J. Assmann 1992:76–80). The salient past, with its corollary virtues, is a "model for society," which is to say that it "shap[es] the moral character [of its members] and orient[s] the way they interpret and engage the world" (Schwartz 2000:xi, 304). The normative critical mass of the past is central to the "mythomotorik" effect of the cultural memory—energizing and driving a community's continual articulation of itself along the lines of its constitutive norms, in the midst of changing realities and in the face of emerging crises (J. Assmann 1992:79–80, 168–69). But this is hardly uni-directional. Present social realities drive the enterprise of seeking moral guidance and legitimacy from the salient past. Political and social movements must claim authorization from the past; they must find and, as necessary, conform the normative profile of past events to current ideological and identity-formation goals (Y. Zerubavel 1995:68; Ben Yehuda: 264–65). Exploitation of the moral resources of the past is a project of moral entrepreneurship, though hardly, as we have seen, an unconstrained one.

Halbwachs went so far as to suggest that the social memory "retains only those events that are of a pedagogic character" (1992:223; also Fine: 1176). It is through inculcation of its distinctive norms that a community incorporates its members and forms, or as the case may be, transforms

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6. "The narratives of the camp [Hutu] refugees were centrally concerned with the ordering and reordering of sociopolitical and moral categories; with the construction of a collective self in opposition and enmity against an 'other'; and ultimately, with good and evil. Thus, the mythico–historical narratives ingested events, processes, and relationships from the past and from the lived conditions of the present and transformed them within a fundamentally moral scheme of good and evil. These were moral ordering stories on a cosmological level. In the mythico–history, all protagonists are categorical, and they are attributed essential, constitutive characteristics, much as in other classifying schemes" (Malkki: 244).

their identities (J. Assmann 2000:17; also Y. Zerubavel 1994:111; 1995:28, 44; Ben Yehuda: 238–39). The normative dimension of social memory is, accordingly, brought to bear in a community's instructional *Sitze im Leben*, distilled into various commemorative artifacts—the paraenetic genres and media appropriate to the socialization goals of those settings (Schwartz 2000:249; Y. Zerubavel 1995: 138–42; Simondon: 102–4; J. Assmann 1992:141–42; 2000:127).

Hence a synergistic connection exists between *commemorative* and *instructional* activities. Ceremonial holidays frequently are instituted precisely for purposes of inculcating values viewed as inhering in the heroic persons and events commemorated, and to mobilize people to act in accordance with those values (Bodnar 1992:121, 153, 173; Y. Zerubavel 1995:139; Hjärpe: 340). Monuments may bear exhortative inscriptions making their moral lessons explicit, for example, ancient funerary epigrams calling attention to the virtues of the departed (Simondon: 100). Ritual, as discussed earlier, brings about a close identification of the participants with the *commemoranda*. Participants absorb at the deepest existential level of personal identity the normative elements that are immanent in the commemoration.

Deaths of significant persons call forth commemorative activities focused in a particularly intense way upon the norms and virtues these individuals embodied in life and in their death. Halbwachs noted that society "pronounces judgment on people while they are alive and on the day of their death" (1992:175; see also Rosenzweig and Thelen: 147–48). Martyrs, by definition heroic persons who have displayed steadfast commitment—to the death—to a set of emblematic virtues, attract intense cults of commemoration. The martyr's death itself is instrumental in establishing the urgent normative claims of the virtues he or she embodied and died exemplifying, and in mobilizing a social movement cohering around those norms. A community's ritualized activities commemorating martyrs, accordingly, become occasions not just for narrative recitations of the martyr's life and death, but also for instructional activities aimed at inculcating and securing commitment to those emblematic norms (see Y. Zerubavel 1995:148, also 28–29, 41, 91, 108; Connerton: 43; Warner: 265–68). Recitational and instructional impulses that converge around cults of commemoration find expression in respectively differentiated genres. Assmann captures this phenomenon with his rubric *Formative* and *Normative Texte*. *Formative* texts refer to narrative genres of constitutive histories and myths, while *Normative* refer to instructional genres calibrated to inculcate the cognate norms (2000:53, 127; 1992:141–42, 1995b:132).

MEMORY AND CULTURE

Commemorative activities are central to formation of culture, the latter understood as "an organization of symbolic patterns on which people rely to make sense of their experience" (Schwartz 1996a:908–9, referencing Clifford Geertz). Social memory fashions a "Symbolsystem," which is to say that in commemorated persons, commemorative narratives, and related artifacts and practices, it objectifies a community's archetypal, axiomatic meanings and values (J. Assmann 1992:58–59, 139–40; Schwartz 2000:17–18, 252; Farmer: 78–83). Through commemorative transposition (we might say apotheosis) social memory elevates to symbolic, culture-constitutive status marked elements of a community's past. The "symbolische Figuren" of culture are in effect "Erinnerungs-figuren" (memory configurations) (J. Assmann 1992:52, 168; also Assmann and Assmann 1983:266–67; Schwartz 2000:x–xi; 1998a:25–26; Olick 1999b:400; Fentress and Wickham: 59; Warner: 4; Halbwachs 1992:188–89). Lincoln and Washington, for example, "have become national symbols which embody the values, virtues, and ideals of American democracy" (Warner: 268). What Zerubavel refers to as "master commemorative narrative" is a case of the transfiguration of the past into "certain kinds of symbolic texts" (Y. Zerubavel 1995:8–9, 216; see also Connerton: 42; J. Assmann 1992:52; Burke: 103–4). Rituals reenacting and recitations recounting these events, for example the Passover Seder, affect the entire stance of a culture (Yerushalmi 1982:44). These symbolic patterns are connected meaningfully to the experiences of the present through the unceasing operations of "framing" and "keying" discussed above (Schwartz 1996a:910–11).

The semiotizing dynamic of memory is energized by the present realities and crises of the commemorating community. As deep reservoirs of meaning (Connerton: 56), commemorative symbols seem inexhaustibly responsive hermeneutically to complexity and change in a community's social realities (Schwartz 1996b). The revisionist and socialist camps within early Zionism, for example, debated fiercely whether the martyrdom of the settler Trumpeldor authorized the sword or the plough, armed resistance or settlement and agriculture, as a program for national revitalization, each group excavating the narrative to find support for its program, each laying claim to the image of Trumpeldor. "It was not the historical event per se, but rather the encoding of its symbolic meaning, that provided fuel to this controversy" (Y. Zerubavel 1995:157; see also Peri: 113–14, on Yitzak Rabin).

It is this hermeneutical responsiveness of commemorative symbols that gives rise to the sentiment that salient pasts are little more than ideological projections of the present. However, commemorative projects are

dependent upon the core realities they take up, though the nature of this dependence from case to case cannot be prescribed ahead of time. Robin Wagner-Pacifici points out that it is "ordering" persons and events, "fraught with conflict and significance" on the larger social scale, that is, crisis persons and events that have broken into "'normal time' by stopping the flow of the everyday," that ignite memorializing activities (301–9). Persons and events of this sort form the "adamantine core" of commemorative interpretation, generating and shaping the interpretations that can be produced upon them across time (Schwartz 2000:309; 1995:270; 1990:103–4; 1982:396; Casey 1987:286; Peri: 113). As the history of the memory of Confucius shows, these salient persons and events are to a significant extent resistant to whimsical make-overs into the image of shifting ideological forces (Zhang and Schwartz: 1997). Wagner-Pacifici argues that the operations of social memory may be understood as the interaction among three factors: "the social realities of empirical events, the cultural realities of modes of generic encodings, and the political and aesthetic realities of the work of translators," the latter being those who effect the transformation of empirical realities into the various forms of cultural memory (Wagner-Pacifici: 308–9). Schwartz points out that "Lincoln was a credible model for the [Progressive] era because his life, as it was imagined, was rooted in his life as it was actually lived" (2000: 174, 254).[7] Further, the complexity of the *commemorandum* itself is a factor in the emergence of multiple meanings in commemoration. "Lincoln himself was ambiguous, complex, and many-sided, and ... different communities, according to their experiences and their interests, saw one side more clearly than others" (Schwartz 2000:223; see also Connerton: 55–57). In short: "the real Lincoln could not determine, but did limit, the range and quality of his representations" (Schwartz 2000:187; also 1996a:922; 1990:104; Ben Yehuda: 278–306).

Social memory, therefore, to borrow Arjun Appadurai's phrase, is the "symbolic negotiation between 'ritual' pasts and the contingencies of the present" (218; also Valensi: 291). Olick and Levy express this principle as follows: "Collective memory *is* this negotiation, rather than pure constraint by, or contemporary strategic manipulation of, the past.... The relationship between remembered pasts and constructed presents is one of perpetual but differentiated constraint and renegotiation over time, rather than pure strategic invention in the present or fidelity to (or inability to escape from) a monolithic legacy" (934; also Prager: 186–87). Schwartz

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7. Casey notes that memory "is enmeshed in its origins even when it seems to be functioning independently of them" (1987:280).

uses the imagery of "mirror" and "lamp" to encompass the work of social memory: "As a model *of* society, collective memory reflects past events in terms of the needs, interests, fears, and aspirations of the present. As a model *for* society, collective memory ... embodies a *template* that organizes and animates behavior and a *frame* within which people locate and find meaning for their present experience" (2000:18). Moreover,

> the distinction between memory as a "model of" and "model for" society is an analytic, not empirical distinction; both aspects of it are realized in every act of remembrance. Memories must express current problems before they can program ways to deal with them. We cannot be oriented by a past in which we fail to see ourselves. On the other hand, it is memory's programmatic relevance that makes its expressive function significant: We have no reason to look for ourselves in a past that does not already orient our lives. Still, that analytic distinction is important because it underscores memory's intrinsic dualism. In its reflective (model *of*) aspect, memory is an expressive symbol—a language, as it were, for articulating present predicaments; in its second (model *for*) aspect, memory is an orienting symbol—a map that gets us through these predicaments by relating where we are to where we have been. (Schwartz 1996a:910)

Jeffrey Olick points out that this interaction between the salient past and the present stands in vital, though not necessarily slavish, relation to the ever-lengthening tradition, we might say regress, of prior hermeneutical transactions of this nature under differing circumstances, that is, the community's "history of representations over time.... [I]mages of the past depend not only on the relationship between past and present but also on the accumulation of previous such relationships and their ongoing constitution and reconstitution" (Olick 1999b:382). Thus the past, both generating and absorbed into resilient commemorative images, narratives, rituals, and texts, flows with its own *energeia* into the ongoing, creative formation of the life of the community.

MEMORY, GOSPEL TRADITIONS, AND EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

Memory theory establishes multiple points of departure for fresh examination of a wide range of research problems in the field of New Testament studies and Christian origins. The essays in this volume each follow one or more of these trajectories of exploration, and taken in aggregate they outline a research agenda for memory-oriented analysis of the beginnings of Christianity and its literature.

In "Jesus Tradition as Social Memory," Tom Thatcher and I suggest that memory theory entails a reassessment of the models of tradition

inherited from the classical form critics and still influential in Gospels research. This reassessment, in turn, has significant historiographical implications for reconstructions of Christian origins and for historical Jesus research. Thatcher's essay, "Why John Wrote a Gospel," further applies memory theory to the dynamics of tradition in order to describe the transition from oral tradition to written Gospels, arguing that the Fourth Gospel was written to exploit the inherent changes in the shift from group memory to written history book. By moving from fluid memory to written narrative, Thatcher argues, John could freeze one particular image of Jesus and appeal to the mystique of written documents to add authority to that presentation. Holly Hearon's "The Story of 'the Woman Who Anointed Jesus' as Social Memory" likewise engages the interface between memory and tradition, exploring through this case study how social memory dynamics help account for transformations within Jesus traditions.

Two essays in this volume explore the intersection of social memory and social identity. Philip Esler's "Collective Memory and Hebrews 11" approaches Heb 11 as an attempt to enhance group identity by formulating a new collective memory that draws upon, yet at the same time contests, Israelite tradition. Esler argues that the author succeeds in substantially detextualizing the Israelite works he cites as a way of detaching them from Israel and applying them to the Christ-movement, a strategy aided by the fact that the ambient social context was largely oral. In a similar vein, Antoinette Wire's contribution, "Early Jewish Birth Prophecy Stories and Women's Social Memory," examines how early Jewish women grounded their social identity by bringing their important stories into essential connection with birth prophecy stories, a narrative pattern deeply embedded in the cultural memory of early Judaism. Wire argues that the circle of women at birth became a "framework of memory" both for recalling birth prophecies fulfilled by great liberators of the past and for shaping prophecies of liberators now being born. Wire thus brings into clear view the *future*-oriented, programmatic functions of memory.

Arthur Dewey, in his essay "The Locus for Death," initiates a long overdue exploration of the possible relevance of the *ars memoriae*, in this case, to the formation of the Passion Narrative, and just as significantly opens up the all-important question of how the social dynamics of memory may come to be manifested in the rhetorical deployment of the technical "art of memory." Ritual, viewed as a commemorative practice that functions to incorporate others into salient pasts, is applied to the problem of the sources of Paul's knowledge of Jesus in Georgia Keightley's "Christian Collective Memory and Paul's Knowledge of Jesus." Keightley argues that this memory/knowledge was mediated to Paul by,

among other things, his ongoing participation in Christian ritual. This experiential, affective knowing of Christ as apprehended in and through ritual proved to be foundational for Paul's theologizing.

An important debate in contemporary memory studies is the nature of the relationship between salient pasts and present social realities in the constructive activities of memory. In "The Memory of Violence and the Death of Jesus in Q," I argue that Q is an artifact of commemoration generated in response to Jesus' death in a ritualized act of political violence. Through commemorative "keying," the community mastered this traumatic event by linking it to images and narrative scripts that had achieved archetypal status in the cultural memory of ancient Judaism. This inquiry is brought to bear upon the problem of Q's genre by demonstrating the essential connection that exists between commemoration and moral exhortation. April DeConick's essay, "Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* as a Repository of Early Christian Communal Memory," likewise explores the impact a community's present crises have upon its memory, as deposited in its tradition, and the emergence of new textual artifacts from this encounter of crisis with tradition. DeConick argues that the sayings material in *Thomas* has been secondarily developed in order to reformulate older apocalyptic traditions by shifting the ideology of the traditions away from an earlier eschatological emphasis to a mystical one, in order to mitigate the crisis in memory that the community had experienced when the end did not come.

The responses come from two of the most prominent scholars in their respective disciplines. Werner Kelber is a leading voice in New Testament scholarship for the application of cultural-memory approaches to biblical studies. His essay in this volume, "The Works of Memory: Christian Origins as MnemnoHistory," is both an important reflection upon memory and a call to New Testament scholarship to overcome its insularity with respect to developments in the humanities and social sciences. Barry Schwartz is a preeminent sociologist working in the field of social memory studies. His first essay, "Christian Origins: Historical Truth and Social Memory," is an adaptation of a keynote address to a special session on social memory at the 2003 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. His second essay, "Jesus in First-Century Memory," is a detailed and programmatic response by a leading expert in the field to the contributors to this volume.

This Semeia Studies volume is offered to reintroduce "memory" to research on intractable problems in our field. The contributors are convinced that the return of "memory" to New Testament and Christian origins scholarship as a serious analytical category will have consequences that will reverberate throughout the discipline.