

## HARVEST

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Memory's fallibility is well documented; its powers, less so. Acknowledging the evidential traces that all significant events leave behind, the preceding essays in this volume make memory's credibility more evident. How ironic it is that so much ink has been spilled on social memory's incidental functions—the forgetting or ignoring of wrongdoing, legitimating and challenging power, exaggerating and underestimating beneficent acts, giving voice to the marginalized—while its major function, to bring us into more direct contact with the past, the very capacity that gives memory its survival value, has led to nothing significant in the way of theoretical explication. Social memory's contribution to humanity's survival is not its malleability; memory enhances our ability to survive because it permits us to retain and retrieve so much of the past. Memory does not and cannot work perfectly, but if it does not work well enough for the practical purposes that make *Homo sapiens* unique, then human *society* becomes impossible.

In this chapter I say nothing about the substance of the preceding essays in this volume but read them solely for the light they throw on ancient and first-century memory, as well as twenty-first-century social memory theory. My discussion will follow the sequence of the earlier chapters, beginning with the essays on the Old Testament.

### I

The properties of narrative provide the basis of Carol Newsom's "Selective Recall and Ghost Memories." Narrative distills meaning from chronology; it also filters irrelevant information as it organizes what is pertinent. But the reader must be warned that "narrative" is a loaded concept because reality's leavings affect different authors differently. The early Hayden White (1987), for example, captured many intellectual hearts by declaring that the reality behind a narrative and the narrative itself are identical. But what are we to make of "ghost narratives," which are meaningless unless certain realities are assumed?

Psalms 105 and 106, Newsom shows, transmit contrasting messages: the former a story of God's protection; the latter of the people's sins against him. For Newsom, the juxtapositioning of these psalms clarifies the nature of the master narrative: "it is not a single, fixed story but a set of cultural memories that offers both constraint and the possibility to tell and retell the tale in an inexhaustible variety of ways" (pp. 45-46). By "inexhaustible," Newsom refers not to an inexhaustible number of themes but to inexhaustible variations on a theme. Or so it seems. As linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1986) might put it, the master narrative is roughly analogous to *langue* (language); its variations, to *parole* (speech), such that different versions of the narrative transmit the same underlying story in different ways—just as an infinite variety of sentences may be assembled within the same language. If Newsom's master narrative (an analog of Kroeber's [1957] concept of *basic pattern*) is actually plural, composed of memories that combine into an infinite variety of stories, then one must wonder about the stable *langue* or "basic pattern" beneath this variation.

Newsom's topic concerns the role of "ghost memories" in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. The controversial Babylonian king Nabonidus in this regard figures into multiple narratives without being mentioned in any one of them. The practice is universal among fiction writers who immortalize enemies, friends, acquaintances, family members, and themselves in their novels, plays, and stories. Political orators, too, introduce historical persons who cannot be expressly identified but are clearly stand-ins for unmentionable contemporaries. How these "ghost memories" work, how they articulate the story of Nabonidus through that of Nebuchadnezzar, is problematic, yet what people believe they contain is expressed in the social memory. Why some historical characters can only be remembered when disguised in the form of another is the problem.

In making her argument, Newsom draws on Aleida Assmann's conviction that "stored" (archived) memory lacks meaning until removed and structured by the genius of the investigator. This is necessarily true. An unread document differs from a document already read and interpreted. But many unread documents must be partially meaningful, for many are eager to learn what they contain. Did the significance of the captured Nazi archives depend on the reader's constructive act? Are archives not revelatory as well as constructed? And what if different investigators construct different meanings from the same document? Are we then faced with multiple truths, unreliability, or a rank order of validity? If Ezekiel, in this regard, deliberately invented an alternative history, as Newsom believes,

would "his deliberate distortion" not cause his own audience to at least hesitate before accepting it?

Although Newsom asks why Ezekiel's history differed markedly from Israel's master narrative, she never defines the latter's content, which may or may not be related to her belief in plural master narratives. Instead, she draws on Collingswood's dictum that "every present has a past of its own," with Ezekiel invoking both the former and the latter in order to make sense of both.

Newsom's main point concerns selective recall and deployment of Nebuchadnezzar as a screen on which memories of Nabonidus's reign are projected. As to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the First Temple: whether a foreign conqueror saves or destroys the temple is less important than his personifying and realizing God's will in doing so. Such is the mnemonic jujitsu Newsom discerns. Her chapter, too fascinating for words, gives us plenty to brood over.

## II

"Old Memories, New Identities" shifts focus from ghost memories to "postmemories." Tim Langille begins with the discovery of the Damascus Document and Peshar Habakkuk, produced within the Qumran community sometime between the end of the first century BCE and the early decades of the first century CE. His argument, in barest outline, is that the First Temple's destruction and the subsequent exile left a strain of mourning that endured into and beyond the Second Temple period. The First Temple fell because of its iniquity and corruption. Qumran rejectionists considered the Kittim's (Romans') control over Jerusalem a reenactment of the Chaldeans' conquest half a millennium earlier. Only in a desert diaspora could an elect properly interpret the Scriptures and distinguish their peers from spiritual traitors. Once accomplished, the virtuous could return to cleanse a polluted Jerusalem and its temple and prepare the people for the end of days. The preexilic community and identity could then be found and restored.

Traumatic memories, according to Langille's informant, Marianne Hirsch, endure the longest and affect identity most powerfully because they mutate into "postmemories," which include the memory of traumas that precede the birth of an individual but are "transmitted so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right." Because this statement is generally true, I take the liberty of offering a variation on the rule of



parsimony: concepts must not be multiplied beyond necessity. Hirsch's concept of postmemory refers to no more than what people *know* about the past, what they *believe* and *feel* about it, how they *judge* it morally, and how closely they *identify* with it. To revisit my comments in the introduction to this volume, to a large degree what Hirsch says of postmemories is true of any past event, whether it occurred during or before the lifetime of the individual who thinks about it. Because the vividness with which such a "remembered" event is variable, instances of traumatic memory are cases of memory in general.

The point is worth stressing. "Social memory" refers not to the direct experiences that individuals store in their brains but how they think, feel about, and judge the knowledge they acquire—which means that *memory* is a metaphor, a way of thinking about complex, collective facts by reference to a familiar, individual faculty. To dismiss social memory as no more than a metaphor, however, does not tell us what social memory is, what it does and how it relates to individual memory. Hirsch's concept of postmemory is not only metaphorical but also performs less work than the present volume's definition of social memory. As far as her idea of social memory *sources* is concerned, no one denies that "imagination," "projection," and "creation" affect what we know, but memories are also established by the objects' reality.

That preexilic remorse remained after the rebuilding of the temple is an idea worth clarification. "New collective identities," Langille observes, "emerge out of ruptures or cultural crises... , more specifically through memories and *representations of ruptures or cultural crises*" (p. 62, emphasis added). I do not infer from this pivotal statement, nor do I think the author expects any reader to infer, that collective identities resulting from critical events are independent of the properties of the events themselves.

Langille does the reader a favor by attending to the relation between traumatic and originating events. Many writers have discussed the importance of founding eras because they powerfully affect all events that follow. Yet these founding eras need not necessarily entail trauma. The (1949) Basic Law in Germany, with its overwhelming emphasis on human rights, is commemorated annually, as is the case in many of the new states emerging from colonialism. In contrast, the assertion of another Langille informant Bruno Latour, in whose view "pure beginnings and original unity are illusory," must be put in context. The context is Latour himself. He finds everything illusory, including the scientific practices he and Steve Woolgar (1974) "unmasked" in the Salk Laboratory. That such practices earn

Roger Guillemin a Nobel Prize in Medicine is simply part of a process to be "demythified." Accordingly, if Latour means by "pure beginnings" that all events have precedents and consequences, he is right; however, originating events, as understood by Mircea Eliade (1961), Edward Shils (1981), and Plato (Tudor 1972), refer to real turning points—the dismantling of existing laws and social structures and the creation of new ones.

Langille's argument raises another fascinating question, one that involves a kind of "latency period" between an event and its memory. He declares that traumas are remembered across generations and reshaped *after a long passage of time*. But is there always a waiting period for post-trauma damage assessments to be made? Such are the social memory issues raised by this ambitious and well-wrought essay.

### III

Tim Langille's "Old Memories, New Identities" and Gabrielle Gelardini's "Cult's Death in Scripture" overlap partially in their pursuit of responsibility for the Second Temple's destruction. Appearing in proximity to 70 CE, Mark's Gospel tells of Jesus' predicting the Second Temple's fall, with the moral decline of the people and their leaders prompting Jesus' prophecy. Josephus, writing at about the same time, offers a different account, one that attributes responsibility for the temple's fall to the Jewish Zealots. Gelardini makes a direct comparison of Josephus and Mark, then assesses the differences between them.

When one compares Mark and Josephus in terms of "entrepreneurship," the capacity to sell one version of history over another, the winner must be Josephus. Three elements, according to Gary Fine (1996), determine one's ability to establish favored claims about historical events and persons: the claimant must be highly motivated and find it to be in her interest to attribute a certain reputation to another; she must know how to do so; finally, she must occupy a position in the social structure that makes her opinions matter beyond her inner circle of friends and acquaintances. Applied to the case at hand, Josephus was motivated to give a biased, pro-Roman view of the Jewish War—he was, after all, an officer in charge of the defense of the Galilee when Roman arms overran his unit. It is well known that Josephus saved himself after inducing his men to commit suicide. Turning himself over to the Romans, he became one of their most effective agents. He condemned the Jews for initiating hostilities against one another, against his Roman patrons, and for defiling the temple by

ned's assassination and funeral to those of Abraham Lincoln, on the one hand (with the latter simultaneously framing the former) and, on the other hand, the keying of the temple's fall to Jesus' words. The difference is that, at least in Mark's memory, Jesus' words seal the temple's fate, while no causal connection of any kind is attributed to the Lincoln-Kennedy parallel. The latter connection is purely semiotic, showing social memory to be less a force that makes things happen than a scaffold that shapes the meaning of events.

## IV

As Langille's and Gelardini's chapters concern the causes of the Second Temple's fall, Steven Fraade's "Memory and Loss in Early Rabbinic Text and Ritual" concerns the adaptation of Jewish institutions to the temple's destruction. As soon as Fraade's topic became apparent to me, I expected to see a reference to "trauma and memory." No one has stated the premise of trauma research better than Jeffrey Alexander (2004). Trauma, he tells us, is a way of seeing things. It involves a sense of shock and fear, but "it is the meanings that provide the sense of shock and fear, not the events in themselves." Unfortunately, Alexander never gets around to asking whether these meanings have anything to do with traumatic *reality*. If meanings were in fact independent of reality, if reality were dependent on the meanings attributed to it, then we would live in a world in which one person's account of any situation is no better than anyone else's—an anarchical world in which nothing decisive can be said about anything.

Fraade fortunately has little in common with his constructionist Yale colleague. He believes that the Jewish people mourned the loss of the temple, deemed it traumatic because the holy place was pillaged, desecrated, and demolished. His question, however, is pivotal: What do we do when the object to be remembered is loss itself? The question is fascinating but unanswerable. One cannot remember a "loss," only a loss of *something*, and that lost something must be adapted to. How memory and commemoration facilitate or, more precisely, constitute adaptation is Fraade's actual issue. He discovered its irony: the destruction and loss of the temple caused it to play a stronger and more central role in Jewish culture. How so? Mundane commemoration made the temple's memory a conspicuous part of everyday life. The altering of familiar objects—allowing part of the ceiling of a house to remain unplastered in order to bring to mind the temple whenever one looked up, setting aside some food before beginning

a meal, or removing part of a personal ornament as signs of reverence for the temple—by self-deprivation or omission the temple can be mourned properly while life goes on.

In addition, new beliefs about God's preferences emerged, especially that God is pleased more by prayer and Torah study than by the sacrifice of animals, which had been a major temple practice. Novel conceptions of proper worship are readily traced to Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, leader of the Jewish recovery movement. He energetically formulated scores of new rules to get around the temple's loss, rules that God favored. Nevertheless, the fate of Jerusalem and the temple left him personally adrift in a sea of deep and ceaseless mourning. Such is the nature of posttemple remembrance: sentiments of despair accompanied by the covenant's preservation through new practices relating the faithful to God.

To dismiss ben Zakkai's revisions as "rationalizations," "expedients," or "inventions" would be indolent, for such discrediting concepts are silent about *why* certain practices were selected and established and *how* they transformed Judaism. The transition from a temple-based Judaism to a Judaism based on decentralized synagogues required inestimable zeal and was the core of a literal cultural revolution. But Fraade is right to say that Jewish memory expresses continuity and rupture alike, although neither is ever complete. The radically new always contains within it a residue of the old order and the basis of its own replacement.

Fraade's essay provides a perfect transition from the Old Testament chapters in the present volume to those focused on early Christianity. Yohanan ben Zakkai was, after all, the youngest of the students of Hillel, one of Judea's most revered first-century holy men. Tension between the liberal, relatively open-minded house of Hillel and the dogmatic rigidity of the house of Shammai was the fundamental schism within Judaism during Jesus' lifetime. That Jesus was unaware of this division, did not knowingly identify with Hillel, is improbable. The opposite must be said for the Sanhedrin, which condemned Jesus. Its majority, although no longer represented by Shammai himself, contained his followers. To propose that Jesus identified with Judaism through his attachment to the Hillel tradition is a reasonable speculation.

#### V

Alan Kirk's theoretical statement on "The Memory-Tradition Nexus in the Synoptic Tradition" is relevant to the role of memory in all traditions. He is

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concerned to know where, and precisely how, memory and tradition intersect—a problem stemming from the scholarly tendency to analyze memory and tradition separately or, at best, to define tradition as a product of memory. Kirk's first step is to see what seven prominent biblical scholars—Richard Bauckham, Robert McIver, Alexander Wedderburn, Dale Allison, Samuel Byrskog, James Dunn, and Markus Bockmuehl—have to say about the problem. He finds them all instructive but deficient. All recognize the relation between memory and tradition to be problematic, but none can properly state, let alone explain, this relationship.

Kirk defines "tradition" as "an aggregate of cultural genres publicly cultivated in various media and apt to follow its own autonomous, often highly kinetic course of development" (p. 145). Comprising information and practices transmitted from the past, tradition is a manifestation of memory and always realized in one medium or another. Memory, on the other hand, "amounts to the abstraction of salient elements and patterns of meaning from the flux of experience and the configuration of these elements and patterns in mnemonically efficient, symbolically concentrated memory scripts that are mediated in various genres and schemas" (p. 151). Memory is not a vessel of *passive* recall but an active *faculty* that organizes experience into irreducible "engrams," which reorganize themselves into representations based on culture-specific schemata, cognitive frames enabling one to condense complicated events into a meaningfully simple representation.

Kirk gives us much to consider and admire; however, some of his assertions cover too much ground. First, consider a distinction that Kirk ignores. Some agents, like chroniclers, archivists, students preparing for a test, or machine operators memorizing complicated instructions, are not abstracting "salient elements and patterns of meaning"; they are concerned to memorize exactly. They are motivated tacticians, in contrast to cognitive misers who are content merely to remember a sequence of selected high-points (Fiske and Taylor 1991). Thus, to say that memory is articulated in "culturally preformed genres and narrative scripts" (Kirk, p. 147) may be true, but some genres and scripts are based on more detailed and accurate information than others.

Personal memories, as Kirk correctly puts it, are shaped and processed into reminiscences—elementary units of oral traditions that rapidly stabilize before being transmitted. That which is transmitted is, to repeat, embedded in schematic forms. That these forms are preexisting, Kirk seems to be saying, makes them traditional.

The relation between memory and tradition is so vitally important that I would like to try to contribute to Kirk's conception. In this regard, something can be gained from Edward Shils's magisterial *Tradition* (1981). Tradition is any thing or way of doing things handed down from one generation to another; this includes books, images of people and events, machines, tools, monuments, instructional manuals, bank management practices, military strategies and tactics, regimental flags, and so on. In every case that which is handed down is something that existed before recipients used or even contemplated it. As a beneficiary of tradition, the individual inherits this thing; he does not invent it from scratch.

Every tradition, moreover, has custodians and exemplars. "As a temporal chain," Shils says, "a tradition is a sequence of variations on received and transmitted themes." Synonyms of "theme" include "basic pattern," "master narrative," "langue," and "schema." Shils calls these sequences "traditional" because observers find their essential elements to be recognizable and approximately similar in successive generations. The George Washington that we find in a biography written in 1800, for example, is easily recognizable in a book published in 2000, for expert custodians prevent the Washington biography from being unduly modified. Here we face a paradox: traditions are collective representations, but only individuals can protect and/or modify them. When traditions evolve, it is because their adherents wish to know more about them—make them more rational, truer, richer, broader. Or these same custodians may find other beliefs and practices more acceptable, causing the old tradition to diminish or even vanish. On the one hand, if "scripts" and "schemata" are *latent* concepts, meaningful to theoreticians but unknown to everyone else, including those who lived before the concepts were formulated, who are their custodians? The question is awkward because these twentieth- and twenty-first-century concepts are observers' tools, not subjects' self-conscious strategies of remembrance. On the other hand, memories are evanescent if there is no one to interpret them before transmitting them to a new generation. The schemata that guide these interpretations, however, are not consciously realized or deliberately transmitted *as tradition*; they are inferred from the interpretations themselves.

This is the issue I submit for discussion: Is tradition the source of social memory, as Kirk concludes? Is memory the source of tradition? Are they constituents of one another? Or are tradition and memory independent? I may define my own standpoint: without tradition, memories and their schematic infrastructure are isolated and meaningless; without memory,

tradition lacks the content from which cultural scripts and schemata are apprehended in the first place.

## VI

Although Chris Keith's "Prolegomena on the Textualization of Mark's Gospel" concerns itself with the First Evangelist's chosen medium, writing, it touches on the themes laid down by Kirk. Keith's question is why Mark abandoned an oral tradition in favor of converting his knowledge into a written Gospel and what were the consequences of his doing so.

The massive effects of writing and print cannot be ignored. As Keith puts it, "Writing opens cultural texts to a virtually limitless history of reception" (p. 176). But he is alive to the fact that the written tradition never replaced the oral but rather superimposed itself upon it. Given this premise, Keith takes on Werner Kelber. He starts with the observation that Kelber privileged the oral aspects of Mark's written Gospel. Kelber himself sees the written and oral traditions to be utterly different means of communication, the former permanent and fixed, the latter performative and, therefore, impermanent. Keith, too, recognizes the difference between the written and the spoken word, but he believes that Kelber overstates it.

Since the early 1980s, biblical scholars have placed new emphasis on the role of memory in the recording of historical events, but they have not satisfactorily described the relation between memory, literacy, and orality. As an instrument of cultural as opposed to communicative memory, Mark's text forms "the cement or connective backbone of a society that ensures its identity and coherence through the sequence of generations" (p. 171, quoting J. Assmann 2006, 78). Oral societies, by contrast, cannot survive their own origin. When a founding generation passes away, the only way its religious narrative can survive is for someone to record it in writing. Societies in which writing is unknown thus face a *Traditionsbruch*. Such is Jan Assmann's claim, which Keith deems inconclusive but nonetheless pivotal.

Keith lets Assmann off too easily, for one may ask whether any Middle Eastern society in the first century lacked a literate elite that recorded information about itself and its people. This is not to deny the existence of a *Tradition Krise* that directs the living generation's attention to the dying. For instance, the complete disappearance of America's founding leaders by 1830 was noted by many Americans, including intellectuals who condemned the mediocre obsession with commerce that had followed the

heroic years of the Revolution. In the late twentieth century, the erection of the World War II and Korean War memorials in Washington, DC, was accelerated to allow surviving veterans to visit them. Indirectly related to Jan Assmann's claim, however, is Steven Fraade's suggestion that the Jewish community that survived the Second Temple's fall was no more nor less literate than the communities existing while the temple was intact. Jews maintained themselves not by the sudden diffusion of the written word but by the adopting of a decentralized synagogue system.

Assmann's notion of the *zerdehnte Situation*, in the current jargon, is "reified." Every generation produces variations—some slight, some significant—on the narratives it inherits, whether written or oral. Our present generation, which has perfected the mechanics of suspicion, goes even further by dissecting that pattern in order to "unmask" the hidden interests and ideological sources associated with it. As far as *la longue durée* is concerned, one need only read Gary Taylor's (1989) account of Shakespeare across generations or Jaroslav Pelikan's *Jesus through the Centuries* (1985). The text as such may be fixed, but its interpretation is not; however, that interpretation is itself restrained by the text's credibility. A statement's credibility, on the other hand, is not typically determined by its medium.

Nevertheless, Keith tells us that Mark's contemporaries expressly asked him to set down the Savior's life in writing so as to perpetuate it. Why Mark submitted to their pleadings is beside the point of the significance of his doing so. The transition from oral to written medium was not inevitable: before one writes, one must decide to write, and Mark deliberated in the context of the pressures and currents of the day—which were certainly more numerous than the *Traditionsbruch* theory asserts. As to the *Traditionsbruch* itself, which in Keith's opinion could have been activated by any number of pressures and currents, it is difficult to understand why it drew Mark to a written medium. True, the crucifixion, destruction of the temple, and persecution of Christians in Rome and elsewhere were all part of the world in which Mark wrote, but context must not be mistaken for cause. More convincing is Keith's last conclusion, that writing constituted a new source of power and of personal and collective identity. And who can doubt his conclusion that Mark's setting down Jesus' life in permanent script set in motion a Christian cultural revolution, one that appeared in many ways, including the eruption of a literature that was to surround the Gospels from the first to the twenty-first century?

## VII

Jeffrey Brickle's "The Memory of the Beloved Disciple" challenges the conventional view that John's is an outlier Gospel based on idiosyncratic traditions. Living under conditions similar to those of the earlier Evangelists, John recognized the lengthening time gap separating the life of Jesus from the faithful of his own time, the death of most participants in Jesus' ministry, Rome's annihilation of many of the material symbols of Judaism, the failure of Jesus' apocalyptic prophecy, continuation of the conflict between Jews and Christians, competition among Christian communities for hegemony, and pressure to find an authoritative doctrine to unify the growing and rapidly diversifying Christian population. John's response to these conditions was unconventional, but he never alienated himself from the Tanak (Hebrew Bible), let alone the first three Gospels; rather, he deployed these as frames within which to interpret Jesus' ministry. The "foreknowledge" afforded by these writings resulted from John's keying his present predicament to antiquity. Brickle can therefore compare the Fourth Gospel to a symphony in which Jewish Scripture is harmony to John's new melody. "The interchange between the narrative and the keyed frames below the text resonated with the rich counterpoint and generated a profoundly creative tension" (p. 197). Simply put, John's Jesus personifies the whole of the Old Testament.

John's Gospel starts out with a bang: "In the beginning was the Word," which reflects a new conception of the creation of the universe that Jesus as God superintends. Having made this claim, John is compelled to compare his narrative to those of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Instead of challenging them, he retains their *underlying* themes, to which his Book of Signs, Book of Glory, and Epilogue conform.

To my mind, the most salient part of the Book of Glory and Epilogue is John's handling of the delayed parousia, which constituted a critical challenge to those who took for granted Jesus' prophecy of an imminent apocalypse. Brickle's is the only chapter in the present volume to address this crisis, a crisis of belief and faith. In my view, the greatest crisis of the first century was not the imminent death of eyewitnesses to Jesus' life and death, the destruction of the temple, or Nero's massacres; it was the failure of Jesus' prophecy of a coming kingdom of God. That such a colossal event failed to occur must have had the deepest and most painful effect on his followers. Far from trying to explain away the failure of prophecy, Mark emphasizes Jesus' declaration of its imminence. With or without a written

tradition, he must have known that failure of the expected apocalypse to materialize would be central to Christian consciousness. Moreover, even when we limit our attention to changes within the Christian culture of writing, we find a regular decline from Mark to John in references to an impending end of days. Based on a prophecy that failed, this crisis of belief tormented late first-century Christianity, and writing in itself did nothing to comfort the faithful.

In place of the prepassion eschatological discourse of the Synoptics, John emphasizes the saturation of the present with Jesus' spirit. Present and future are collapsed, "so that believers in Jesus are able to experience end-time blessings already in the here and now" (p. 199, quoting Köstenberger 2009, 297). John thus reinforces his claim that Jesus' teachings, death, and resurrection constitute only the first stage in God's coming kingdom. To overestimate what this discovery meant to the Christian world is impossible. Brickle's last paragraph begins with the observation that John's Gospel is sometimes dismissed as an illegitimate stepchild of the Synoptic tradition; he then reiterates John's strong attachment to and knowledge of history, which raises an important point. One must acknowledge that John deviates from his three predecessors in significant ways, but if the Fourth Gospel derived exclusively from the recesses of John's imagination, no one would understand what he was saying—perhaps not even recognize it to be an authentic story about Jesus. Indeed, no one's mind is so free that one can construe a story unprecedented in all detail. Here is one of the reasons why the grip of the past is so powerful: not only does it allow one to move along lines anticipated by past experience; it also incorporates new experience, including that of the Fourth Evangelist, into that which is so familiar as to seem traditional.

#### VIII

Tom Thatcher's "The Shape of John's Story" also recognizes the idiosyncrasies of the Fourth Gospel, and he goes about its analysis in a way that complements Brickle's. Thatcher, too, is alive to the symphonic character of John's Gospel; like Brickle, he appreciates its poetic character and the spiraling of themes around one another. He reaffirms John's attachment to tradition while recognizing his Gospel's unique qualities.

For Thatcher, the plot of John's story "is not grounded in its theological claims but rather in Jesus' movements through space and time" (p. 237). Modern observers recognize the utility of John's methodical emplotment.

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"The religious group," Halbwachs observed (1980), "more than any other, needs the support of some object, of some enduring part of reality, because it claims to be unchanging while every other institution and custom is being modified." The very permanence of the *physical* location, assuming the group is attached to it, carries the guarantee of *social* continuity. Distances among physical places also shape and fix religious narratives. The Synoptics, too, recognize Halbwachs's "localizations," but John emphasizes these more than any predecessor.

One can think about the problem from a different perspective. In the "extrinsic theory of cognition" (Geertz 1973), thinking is more than an occurrence in the individual mind; it is a matching of symbolic models to the makeup of the empirical world. The pilgrim is thinking when he runs his finger across a map: the finger representing himself, the map, a model of the way. Frederic Jameson's (1984) account of the Bonaventura Hotel and Kevin Lynch's (1960) theory of cognitive maps demonstrate that people cannot orient themselves in space and time without physical reference points. Such "localizations" enable people to know where they are and prevent themselves from getting lost.

Every memory, Thatcher seems to be telling us, involves two independent series, a series of external objects and a series of internal thoughts. This distinction is important because it bears on the question of whether John's places are fictional or real. Does he choose arbitrarily the places with which he associates Jesus' actions, or is he determined to identify place and time orderings because they stand for external information about when and where Jesus acted and of what he did?

I would like to put Thatcher's characterization into different words. All know that John's culture differed from that of his predecessors and that he interpreted it perceptively. He was sensitive to the persecution of Christian communities everywhere—including Rome. In the last decades of the century, persecutions continued under Domitian, while the Jewish-Christian split widened. The principal problem, however, was dissension within Christianity itself. John intended to subdue the many variant forms of Christian belief, including the heresies of Docetism and Gnosticism, whose "antichrist" leaders threatened the churches under his care. John's world was fragmented, but *fragmented commemoration* of Jesus must be distinguished from its *multivocal* forms (see Vinitzky-Seroussi 2009). Men and women who share the same beliefs but interpret them in different ways commemorate multivocally. For example, some Americans regard Abraham Lincoln primarily as savior of the Union; others, as a great emancipator; still others as

man of the people and self-made man. But few Americans dispute Lincoln's being all these things. In contrast, fragmented commemoration includes multiple beliefs and the conduct of ritual in separate places where unique interpretations are expressed by dissociated communities of believers.

As John's religious world fragmented, he endeavored to reveal to Christendom the one true Jesus. He did so not by theological disquisition but by a concrete recounting of the Savior's life, compulsively following him from one place to another and putting his movements in chronological order. In Thatcher's words, "John uses Jesus' real world as his memory theater, [suggesting] that his presentation of the scope and movement of Christ's career at least reflects the world as it was and would have been" (p. 237). Hence the structure of Thatcher's own argument: almost a third of his chapter is devoted to John's articulating his Gospel by mapping the locations and the temporal order of Jesus' acts. His purpose: to win back the heretics and apostates by giving them an authentically concrete narrative of the Messiah's life.

## IX

Rafael Rodriguez's "According to Scriptures" demonstrates the interdependency of tradition and memory in its discussion of Psalms. Rodriguez shows how established and publicly available patterns of Jewish discourse reveal what is behind the notion of the "suffering Messiah." The chapter is profoundly insightful, but its points about the simultaneity of perception and interpretation get us off to an unnecessarily rough start.

Rodriguez presents us with a variation on an old theme. Many decades ago Walter Lippmann (1922) declared that the average person defines an event before he sees it. Interpretation, he thought, precedes perception. For Lippmann to know this, he must have been one of the lucky few able to see an event *before* defining it. A venerable body of social psychological research, some described in this volume's introductory chapter, shows the truth of Lippmann's statement but in doing so reveals how limited that truth is. Imagine interpretation following and being influenced by perception, which is in turn affected by reality. Imagine, by contrast, perception and interpretation occurring concurrently. In the latter case, historical analysis, typology, keying, and framing are literally impossible—so impossible that Rodriguez never applies or returns to the point.

Luke's references to Jesus' suffering and the book of Psalms in the Acts of the Apostles are the real cases in point. Jesus' place in the world, his rela-



tion to God, the Jews, the coming kingdom—all these things, and others, make for a complicated picture worthy of Rodriguez's analytic skills. Luke tries to simplify the picture of Jesus' suffering by keying it to selected parts of the Old Testament. The psalmist, as Rodriguez sees Luke reading him, refers to God's protection of the righteous, their delight in following his ways, the coming triumph of the meek, God's announcing Jesus to be his only Son, the world's conspiring against God and his Chosen One. The section is as fascinating as it is instructive, showing as it does how thickly the web of the Old Testament surrounds Jesus' crucifixion and suffering. Luke knits Jesus' torment into the very fabric of Jewish history. Doing so, he makes plausible a scenario that would otherwise contradict itself, namely, a messiah being mocked, scourged, and executed among thieves. Few expected such a demise, but when prefigured in the ancient Testament it becomes at once comprehensible and inevitable.

The general problem, in Rodriguez's view, is to identify how Luke drew his parallels. Why is Jesus' suffering keyed to certain psalms and not others? If we only knew about Jesus' final hours before the four Gospels appeared, would we be able to predict from which psalms, and the verses within those psalms, Luke would draw? Could we do the same for every Gospel reference to the Old Testament?

Consider a scribe whose job is to set down in writing his own witnessing of Jesus' betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion. How would he go about doing so? Assume that he is looking at his task not as a reporter but as one who seeks to make Jesus' death meaningful. Cognitive psychologists would refer to the scribe's task as one of "pattern recognition," the mapping of a specific sequence of events in the present (including the passion) to a more general pattern seemingly prefigured in the Old Testament. An animal will react to an event by mapping it to an inborn schema (a bull will attack a red cloth); a human may do the same by mapping a familiar narrative, such as Jesus' prediction of the coming kingdom of God, to Noah saving God's virtuous from the flood (as portrayed iconically in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher). The Noah story would exist in the scribe's mind as a stored schematic pattern, and he would generalize this pattern to Jesus' saving the world.

Many Old Testament stories can be thus structured and stored. The scribe's recognition of the story pattern enables his readers and listeners to grasp the meaning of Jesus' suffering. Salvation as a reward for obedience to God, however inconvenient or even painful, is the pattern that links recent to old events.

These statements about pattern recognition are simplistic, but Rodriguez's essay explores the issue, sensitizing us to "keying" and "framing" as special cases of "pattern recognition." Doing so, he addresses one of the deepest problems of Jesus scholarship. Matthew 27:12 serves as a representative case. Jesus says nothing in response to the Sanhedrin's accusations against him, "in order to fulfill prophecy" (Isa 53:7). Given the hundreds of events in Jesus' life keyed to Old Testament prophecy, often in such peculiar grammatical constructions as his doing this or that "in fulfillment of scripture" or "to fulfill" what some prophet or other had said, Rodriguez implicitly questions the precise nature of keying and framing in the first century. Because "fulfilling prophecy" and similar constructions are rarely if ever found in the Old Testament itself, we ask (1) whether Jesus himself believed he was fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy by remaining silent; (2) whether Jews had reason to expect that the words and actions of their Messiah, whoever he might be, would conform to Scripture; (3) whether this expectation occurred mainly to the four Gospel writers; and (4) why Scripture *frames* the events of Jesus' life mainly by *predicting* them.

## X

Frederick Tappenden's "On the Difficulty of Molding a Rock" describes the negotiation of Peter's reputation in the process of revealing problems that attended Christianity's institutionalization. Peter was first to see the risen Christ, but he was also condemned by Paul for his determination to Judaize the Gentiles. That Paul, a latecomer who never knew Jesus, had the effrontery to criticize the Messiah's own apostle tells how rapidly the Christian cultural and social landscape had changed. Paul's letter to the Galatians therefore affected Luke's portrayal of Peter in Acts. After reviewing the debate on this issue, Tappenden states: "[W]hat we are facing may not be a problem of textual paucity but rather of narrowly constructed theoretical predispositions" (p. 265). The latter exclude the relation between a text's production and reception, which is the very issue Tappenden seeks to address.

Among the most useful approaches to the relationship between authors, reader reactions, and authors' reactions to their readers is that of German literary critic Hans Robert Jauss (1982). When the reader opens a book, Jauss explains, he or she locates it along a "horizon of expectations" affected by previous experience. How far a text affirms or challenges

readers' expectations affects the way they react to it. Tappenden, however, asserts that writers are not free to depict the past any way they please, while the range of readers' interpretations is equally limited. Writers and readers therefore "interact" with and influence one another. Accordingly, the substance of Tappenden's argument is that Luke's portrayal of Peter reflects Luke's own reading of Paul's letter to the Galatians. Galatians does not determine but rather imposes limits on what Luke can say about Peter, while Luke's portrayal of Peter affects the interpretation of Paul.

Bringing Mark as well as Luke into the picture, Tappenden takes a comparative approach reminiscent of Wendy Griswold's (1987) work on reviewer reactions to a single novel in different nations. Mark's Peter is one with whom his audience can identify: Peter demonstrates virtue, understanding, and faith, but he is also rebuked by Jesus, falls asleep in the garden during his time of watch, and, in the end, denies his Savior. Peter is an imperfect "every-person" whose image can be at once rejected and embraced. In Luke's Gospel we see an unmistakable residue of Mark's Peter; however, Peter is memorable here not because of his human imperfections but his determination to rise above them. Although restrained by Mark's prior conception of an imperfect disciple, Luke's portrayal is doubtlessly the more positive. Thus, as we move from Paul through Mark to Luke's Acts, we move from a relatively negative figure to a two-dimensional one, then to a positive figure worthy of reverence.

What, then, is one to make of Luke's reaction to Paul's bitter criticism of Peter's aversion to Galatian Gentiles? Luke could not ignore Paul any more than he could ignore Mark; therefore, he managed his readers' "horizon of expectations" by downplaying Peter's connection to Antioch, where his wrongdoing against Gentiles was most evident. In Acts, he declares that Peter actually subordinated his own views to Paul's. Describing Peter as a loyal and moderate inclusionist, Luke rehabilitates him.

An element of cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957), which demonstrates and explains why the mind tends toward the maintenance of consonant or "balanced" states (Heider 1958), imposes itself on Tappenden's chapter. Unbalanced situations, including reputations involving positive and negative elements, are always unstable and susceptible to the mind's tendency toward certainty and conviction, which it achieves by re-evaluating a given reputation's individual elements. Tappenden's concept of reputational "rehabilitation" is a special case of cognitive dissonance theory. That Luke admires Paul and Peter alike makes Paul's condemnation of Peter a source of dissonance that Luke cannot abide; accordingly,

his narrative subtracts weight from Paul's negative statements while adding weight to Mark's positive ones.

Tappender's account of Luke's reframing of Galatians is an important addition to New Testament studies. He also puts his finger on cognitive balance, the "mechanism," as it were, which makes social memory work.

## XI

The final New Testament essay in our collection, Dennis Duling's "Social Memory and Commemoration of the Death of 'the Lord,'" concerns a crisis for Christianity revolving around banquet practices. It is generally known that Jewish law prohibited the partaking of a meal with Gentiles and that, among Jews themselves, elites and commoners dined differently and separately. This same division appeared within the early Christian churches, including those with which Paul had contact, but some churches were more polarized than others. In his letter to the Corinthians, for instance, Paul expresses displeasure with affluent members' excluding the hungry poor as they feasted.

Banquets, even more than regular meals, reflect a community's status differences and attending tensions. Duling's analytic reference points therefore include social boundaries (who dines with whom), bonding (reflecting social networks), obligation (meal etiquette and the ideals on which they are based), social stratification (seating of guests according to their social rank), and social equality (equal treatment of guests). To conform to the last two norms at one and the same time is impossible and therefore a prescription for trouble.

Duling's theoretical model is semiotic: the ritual aspects of an ancient banquet, including the Lord's Supper, give a Christian reading of Christian society, expressing its moral values and predicaments. Banquets are not only good places to eat; they are good places with which to think—and to remember. The banquet, after all, is a constituent of commemoration and, as such, prominent among what Maurice Halbwachs called the "social frames of memory." This last statement is central to Duling's essay. "If food is treated as a code," Mary Douglas (1972) once remarked, "the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries, and transactions across the boundaries." The closeness of the match between the banquet's boundaries and the social structure is a good measure of its message's validity. Such is the implicit premise of Dul-

ing's analysis of Paul's response to the Corinthian factions—a project that bears on the intertwining of social memory and social status.

Jewish tradition submerges its adherents in history. The relentless readings of Psalms, the performances of ritual, the wearing of fringes, phylacteries, and mezuzahs, the blowing of the ram's horn—all these are reminders of the sacred past, as is the Passover obligation for all men and women to believe that they themselves came forth from Egypt. Among Christians, too, "The first obligation of the apostle vis-à-vis a community is to make the faithful remember what they have received and already know or should know" (p. 298, quoting Dahl 1976, 15).

For Paul, sharing meals and remembering together is essential to overcoming social discord. The act of sharing frames the banquet by keying it to the covenant-forming event itself, namely, the Lord's Supper, wherein each participant partakes symbolically and equally of the blood and body of Jesus. When wine and bread are taken by the affluent and the poor together, social differences become irrelevant. As Jesus' Passover death foreshadowed the Passover banquet, his Last Supper became an encompassing frame within which all people from all social niches gathered to eat and drink "in remembrance of me." To eat and drink "in remembrance of me" was impossible in a church where an elite celebrated itself. What Corinthian men and women believed in common, however, regularly subordinated their distinctions. Commemorative meals symbolized and reinforced the church's inclusiveness and unity.

## XII

In this closing chapter, I have emphasized the use of social memory concepts in the expansion of biblical knowledge and, reciprocally, biblical knowledge's contribution to the more general problems of social memory. In the process, I detected a number of fresh themes and questions, which I briefly summarize here in closing.

- ▶ When memory is structured as a narrative, it takes the form of a core story and its variations. Ferdinand de Saussure comes analogically to mind. *Langue* is to *parole* what the story's "basic pattern" is to its variations. To bring Saussure into the picture gives us a fresh way to articulate the content of biblical narratives, one that *makes imperative* the recognition of agreement and variation, permanence and change.

- ▶ The phenomenon of the "ghost narrative," which is found not only in the biblical literature but also in novels, short stories, and political rhetoric, raises the question of why some historical persons and events are memorable only in the guise of others.
- ▶ Social memory is a metaphor, a way of thinking about a complex phenomenon by reference to a simpler and more familiar one. Many critics conclude with this assertion. To define social memory as a metaphor, however, tells nothing about the distribution of individual ideas and commemorative sentiments about the past or how these work through selection, exaggeration and muting, keying and framing. Above all, the consequence of ignoring the realities to which the metaphor of social memory refers, notwithstanding those who believe that the metaphoric character of thought determines what we make of reality, are critical but unexplored problems.
- ▶ References to religious origins are rarely arbitrary. Origins refer to distinct and intrinsically memorable turning points that consist of the rejection of existing religious modes and creation of new ones. Origins are also memorable because they contain the precedents of succeeding practices and events. This definition is contradicted by the discovery of an origin's source. Whether the discovery of a founding period's causes negate its being conceived as an *origin* is a theoretical problem, but the reality and consequences of founding eras is an empirical one.
- ▶ Serious questions about the keying/framing process are raised by claims that Jesus performed or refrained from performing certain actions "in order to fulfill" a prophecy of some kind. To do something in order to make a prediction come true makes the prediction itself meaningless. The invocation of a past event to frame a present situation, a common commemorative tactic, differs from biblical typologies, which relate Jesus' actions (and, apparently, Jesus' actions alone) to prophecies recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- ▶ Hillel's and Jesus' lives partially overlapped, and the extraordinary similarity of their liberal interpretation of the law is well known. Hillel and his students were prominent in Jesus' days, and it is difficult to imagine his not knowing them. In what

sense, then, might Hillel be a "ghost memory" in the four Gospels?

- ▶ The relationship between memory and tradition is here extenuated for the first time. At question is whether one is a cause of the other, whether they are independent or interdependent, or whether one is a constituent of the other.
- ▶ Among the key questions for social memory scholarship is how to formulate the temporal sequence of perception, memory, and interpretation. The issue, framed as it is by Kantian rationalism and Lockean empiricism, is perennial. The research task is now to distinguish events that are inherently memorable from those remembered mainly in terms of the foreknowledge presumed by typology and framing.
- ▶ *Traditionsbruch* is a crutch concept allowing those who invoke it to avoid the bother of ruling out alternatives to a theory that aligns certain events to the passing of generations. So far as it applies to social memory, *Traditionsbruch* presumes what it must demonstrate, namely, that no other factor accounts for what it purports to explain.
- ▶ The analysis of prophecy is essential to an understanding of first-century memory. How a community adapts to prophecy's failure is, to this end, equally essential.
- ▶ Subsumed under "the extrinsic theory of cognition," remembering is a matching of past events and current symbolic models. Matching event and model defines all thinking, religious and secular, and requires us to know precisely what we are doing when analyzing the contrasting cognitive dynamics shaping *typology*, on the one hand, and *keys and frames* on the other.
- ▶ Every memory is organized according to the principles of pattern recognition and cognitive dissonance.
- ▶ When historical works fall outside one's "horizon of expectations," their claims are often rejected in favor of new historical propositions. New propositions, however, are often less valid than the ones they replace. Biblical and social memory scholarship must therefore distinguish (1) the contexts within which historical claims are justifiably refuted yet remain unchanged, from (2) those within which such claims are amended to satisfy unjustified challenges.

- ▶ Analysis of first-century Christian banquets must draw attention to traditional Jewish dietary law, with its fierce distinctions between Jews and Gentiles. Banquets also mark the significant anniversaries they dramatize; accordingly, the ritual meal encodes social memory as well as social boundaries.

I have tried to exclude from the above summary all significant issues in social memory studies and the existing biblical literature. The result is a sharper focus on what our authors have added to their fields. For me, the preceding chapters bring existing theories of memory down to earth, modifying them with new precision, clearer concepts, and fresh perspective. In turn, the application of social memory models to specific biblical cases, including those addressed in the present volume, cannot have left the body of biblical knowledge unchanged.

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