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REVIEW ARTICLE

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MEMORY STUDIES: LEBANON AND ISRAEL/PALESTINE

EFRAT BEN-ZE'EV, *Remembering Palestine in 1948: Beyond National Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

ROCHELLE DAVIS, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010).

CRAIG LARKIN, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon: Remembering and Forgetting the Past* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

ASEEL SAWALHA, *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2011).

YFAAT WEISS, *A Confiscated Memory: Wadi Salib and Haifa's Lost Heritage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Why are humans fated to remember and forget? For Plato, it is because we are wounded by our memory of a previous existence, namely the Platonic "realm of ideas," to which we forever long to return. In the social sciences, especially history and anthropology, burgeoning cross-disciplinary methodologies and approaches have emerged to study the ways in which humanity remembers and forgets; "cultural memory studies" and the "anthropology of memory" constitute a contemporary realm of ideas concerned with discursive contestations over memory and history.[1] The books under review here, all of which relate to the study of collective memory in Lebanon or Israel/Palestine, have recourse to French theories, despite time lags due to delayed English translation. Foundational writers of a field loosely grouped under the rubric "memory studies" include French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, whose *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) and posthumously published *La mémoire collective* (1950) both appeared in English in 1980, under confusingly similar titles.[2] The English-language publication of Halbwachs' corpus on the individual in relation to "collective memory" coincidentally corresponded with the American Psychiatric Association's 1980 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition*, in which categories of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) extended collective memory into collective *traumatic* memory, through the notion that "Post-traumatic disorder is fundamentally a disorder of memory."[3] Another seminal thinker in this field is Pierre Nora, especially the multivolume, multiauthored essays produced under his direction entitled *Les Lieux de mémoire,* which appeared in French between 1984 and 1992.[4]

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Other theoretical approaches that have influenced the study of collective memory in Lebanon and Israel/Palestine are critical feminist and postmodernist literary readings, such as the work of miriam cooke, that question dominant, often nationalist narratives. To unpack imposed coherencies shaping the "war story" in the Middle East, cooke calls for engaging with a plurality of individual voices:

> There is no history, no one story about war, that has greater claim to truth but that history is made up of multiple stories, many of them herstories, which emanate from and then reconstruct events. Each story told by someone who experienced a war, or by someone who read about someone who saw someone who experienced a war, becomes part of a mosaic the many colors and shapes of which make up the totality of that war. Yet however exhaustive my research and reach, I cannot encompass this totality: I can always only tell an individual story.[5]

According to this view, memory may be counterhegemonic and contestatory in the form of "counter-memories" by hitherto silenced, often gendered, voices speaking out against powerful state or institutional narratives.[6] These stories emerge based on methodologies deploying orality, interviews, folklore, and storytelling, while researchers mediate, and perhaps mute, their interlocutors' voices through scholarly transcriptions and analyses. It is worth recalling that Plato, speaking as Socrates, expressed his preference for speech because the practice of writing compromised living memory:

> If men learn this [writing], it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder.[7]

Writing was deemed less worthy than oral sparring in Platonic dialogues during which the philosopher could ask and ascertain what mattered most to Plato: is this statement true? Plato's concerns about verifying speech, when in the form of oral interviews and testimonies transformed into writing, are reproduced in contemporary social sciences. A cascading series of worrisome transformations occur—from the ways memory is manifest in speech to the alterations of speech into writing as these changes are mediated by anthropologists and historians.

Expansive definitions of memory and counter-memory overlap confusingly with anthropology's equally vast understandings of what constitutes culture and identity, such that some researchers have compounded the concepts through the term "memory cultures."[8] The notion of a "memory crisis," coined by cultural theorist Richard Terdiman,[9] is an apt phrase for idealized, constructed, or traumatized memories emerging from Israel/Palestine and Lebanon, places that have sustained long-term uprooting and dispersal of populations through war, persecution, and the redrawing of national frontiers. Another relevant concept is "memoricide" used by historian Ilan Pappé to characterize massive Israeli state projects to erase Palestinian history and presence on the land; a similar concept, "killing memory," attributed to historian Mrko D. Grimek, emerged after the deliberate destruction of Sarajevo's famed Oriental Institute and the Bosnian National Library in 1992.[10]

In the anthropologically inflected books under review here, approaches to the anthropology of memory analyze cultural products, artifacts, and objects in various forms. Museums, monuments, films, novels, village histories, archives, celebrations,

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architecture, posters, and especially oral histories and interviews are among the social and cultural opportunities these scholars use to make claims about the past, perhaps even achieve repair and redress. In so doing, they draw on Pierre Nora's analysis of how sites of memory (his *lieux de mémoire*) are physical topographies given over to place memories and acts of commemoration. To document the public history of a "difficult heritage" (a term used by art historians and heritage management and museum professionals) is to participate in the growing body of research around notions of transitional justice in which communal reparations in the form of cultural productions trace an alternate, sometimes parallel, path to that of conventional, courtroom-centered, criminal-justice solutions.[11] These former remedies include processes of truth gathering and assume that the acts of recognizing and acknowledging victims and historical truths are themselves a form of justice. The anthropology of memory claims that these performances and artifacts of memory are in dynamic relation to individual autobiographical memory, collective social memory processes, and even historical archival memory; scholars thus describe and analyze selective aspects of a specific past currently transmitted into the present, which inextricably shape and are shaped by both individual and social experiences.

Sociocultural anthropologists do archival research, explore folk traditions, and conduct oral history in addition to fieldwork. Historians indebted to anthropologists apply the insights of ethnography to social biographies and family histories when using written sources to understand the testimony of long dead, nameless "native" informants.[12] Yet differences emerge between the disciplines of anthropology and history, such as in regards to the former's romance with pseudonymous or composite characters and unnamed interlocutors who are still living. Anonymity of speakers contravenes many protocols of oral history that rely on individual narrators—literate or illiterate, young or old, male or female—underwritten by the academic structure of footnotes, rich biographical and specific geographical details, and genuine family genealogies. Questions arise when anthropology's need to protect interlocutor identities is weighed against its disadvantages: composite characters with assigned fake names or truncated initials to represent those interviewed, and rich literary fictions of personages still living, unverifiable by subsequent researchers. The arguments and counter-arguments between anthropology and history unfold in several ways. Anthropology insists on ethical protocols to protect the interlocutor's identity, but this may produce less substantial fieldwork, even compromised results, to audiences of oral historians. At the same time, an absence of genuine individual names serves to further a goal of memory studies by foregrounding discursive fields about memory produced collectively through multiple actors and elements. Indeed, if memory itself is a collective social fiction, then ethnographic fictions of individual identity are appropriate for relating individual experiences.[13] In turn, oral history and anthropology underscore differently the facticity of names and biographies when weighed against contemporary political atmospheres attentive to "mnemopolitical" agendas, otherwise known as the politics of memory. In other words, should oral narratives—as historical record and forms of recording, however variegated and contradictory—be attested, verifiable, built on over decades, and based on the memories of named, living, breathing human beings? Or, as historian James Gelvin notes, do "discussions of collective memory tend to be, more often than not, exercises in storytelling?"[14] In what follows, the books under review are considered primarily in relation to their differing, multiple strategies for approaching salient issues in memory studies.

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LEBANON

Anthropological and historical interest in memory owes much to the 20th century, when the confluence of experiences of genocide and horror encountered sophisticated representational technologies.[15] The topics of historiography, history, and memory in Lebanon have been the focus of a number of recent studies, not all of which are examined here.[16] The books under review by Aseel Sawalha and Craig Larkin both concentrate on the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War of 1975–90. Sawalha's *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City* focuses on state and private rebuilding programs in postwar Beirut through attention to the intersection of memory and space. She demonstrates the power of urban elites to exclude from the newly reconstructed city significant sectors of the population, including residents who stayed in Beirut throughout the war years. She begins by analyzing dominant narratives and company documents related to Solidère, the private real-estate consortium charged with rebuilding Beirut's city center, and the project's capacities to impose effective, top-down spatial and architectural mandates to sustain what she persuasively argues is a continued "state of emergency" in architectural and social spaces. This engenders not only perpetual individual and social uncertainty but also countervailing negotiations and alignments around memorializing and memories by Beirutis.

A significant part of Sawalha's ethnographic study engages with the people of ʿAyn el-Mreisse, a multi-ethnoreligious neighborhood. Inhabitants who lived in the neighborhood throughout the war years and those who moved there after the war ended vie for control over war-scarred and destroyed spaces, a struggle she traces to the prewar era, when residents confronted developers, government institutions, and investors. The stories of Sawalha's interlocutors invoke memories of prior habitation and habitus that transcended sectarian rifts: "In contrast to groups generally documented in social-science writing about Lebanon, these collectives were nonsectarian in nature. Members of these collectives fought to maintain their spaces and to protect specific aspects of the neighborhood heritage by relying on their recollection of places they cherished" (p. 69). Loyalties were to the neighborhood, they told the ethnographer, and wartime affiliations were "temporary tactics and survival strategies" (p. 63).

Subsequent chapters of Sawalha's book document failed or partly successful collective efforts. For example, the neighborhood port, once the livelihood for fishermen (mainly Sunni and Druze), is doomed by the construction of a corniche; in another case, despite opposition by the longstanding local Mosque Committee, a global franchise of themed restaurants located an outpost of the Hard Rock Café in the neighborhood. Sawalha indicates the ways in which cultural memory may be restored through case studies such as the establishment of a local heritage museum, the persistence of café socializing, and the revitalization of the Beirut Theater. Nonetheless, what is hard to document, and perhaps lends itself to conclusions other than suggested by this book, are the ways in which the urge to memorialize through museums and artifacts or to create and recreate the past according to the ephemeral, performative practices of theater productions and café sociability serves instead to signal the weakness, if not the redirecting, of collective memory, especially when residents are unable to rebuild neighborhoods according to local interests and visions of a specific era.

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Similar processes have been the subject of a vast comparative cross-cultural literature. No less than 80 percent of Germany's urban architecture was bombed to extinction during World War II, yet most postwar German neighborhood associations famously lobbied for the preservation of old towns through rebuilt facsimiles. As in Beirut, modernist architects and urban planners in Germany produced sweeping reconstruction plans that largely overrode local wishes. Rare exceptions are the town centers of Freiburg, Freudenstadt, and Münster rebuilt immediately after the war, sometimes in simplified architectural form, but based on the principle of replicating the *status quo ante bellum*, "the state in which things were before the war."[17]

Craig Larkin's *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon: Remembering and Forgetting the Past*, which studies Lebanese youth who come to consciousness after the war, employs the recent turn in memory studies, especially work by the literary critic Marianne Hirsch. Her concept of "postmemory" refers to the memory of children, like herself, and grandchildren of Jewish Holocaust survivors:

> Postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a very powerful and particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation . . . Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated. I have developed this notion in relation to children of Holocaust survivors . . .[18]

Larkin's interlocutors must rely on inherited narratives about traumatic events that they themselves have not experienced. Similarly, the anthropological necessity for researchers to become attentive listeners to memories once or twice removed accounts for many ethnographers who position their own backgrounds in relation to their subjects. The term "memory work" (from the French *travail de memoire*) characterizes a method of social-science research in which interlocutors' memories are collected through oral histories and interviews and filtered through the autoethnographic voice of anthropological reflexivity and dialogue.[19] As philosopher Paul Ricoeur explains, "memory is a present representation of an absent thing," and memory work partakes of Aristotelian distinctions between *mnene-memoria* (images that represent the past) and *anamnesis* (the moment of actively remembering and discovering).[20] For example, Larkin places postmemory accounts in historical context and discusses what has been read back into the Lebanese past based on what is transmitted and learned later, often through popular culture.

The subjects of Larkin's fieldwork in 2006 were Lebanese youth (*shabāb)* between the ages of fifteen and twenty-two who possess no direct, personal experiences of the Lebanese Civil War. This postwar generation, no less than the nation itself, faces a "mnemonic dilemma" that guides him to formulate his research questions about:

> the limitations and potentiality of traumatic memory and its impact on identity formation, historical consciousness and social interaction. How do Lebanese youth integrate and rework such memory tropes and traces within their own everyday encounters? To what extent are postmemory narratives shaped by public silences, competing war memory discourses and the threat of recurring violence? Finally does Lebanese postmemory present a significant obstacle to future reconciliation and

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national recovery or are Lebanese youth able to assimilate, redeem and transform their tragic historical legacy? (pp. 2–3)

By addressing the ways in which history is taught to the "postmemory" generation in high schools and colleges, Larkin tracks pedagogical tools and texts that inculcate versions of nationalism and social unity. Teaching Lebanon's history, he reports, is a complex tale of confusion, contestations about the past, deliberate omissions, and crippling silences that mirror the country's stasis. Larkin argues that since Lebanon lacks mechanisms of acknowledgment and acceptance, conflicting memories may be the best representations in pedagogical texts of a plural society. Thus, he also considers architectural and visual symptoms of Lebanon's "mnemonic topography" or "memoryscapes," which are characterized by "fragmentation, segregation, and reconstruction" (p. 98). Larkin is attentive to contradictory, mediated, and overdetermined roles for storytelling in the creation of narratives, monuments, signage, graffiti, and much more.[21] His argument resonates with Sawalha's description of diminishing neighborhood oversight over local public spaces, in that he ultimately locates the loss of state control over public civic spaces as a root cause of sectarian takeovers of Beirut's residential and communal spaces by communities seeking to consolidate sectarian space.[22]

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Approaches involving memory and representation, especially in the anthropological literature on Israel/Palestine, have been booming since the 1980s. A large body of research relates to 1948, the year that saw the establishment of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) with the loss of the Palestinian homeland through Israel's forcible expulsion of the majority Palestinian Arab native population. Palestinian dispossessions and the anthropology of memory are dynamically intertwined, according to Khaled Furani and Dan Rabinowitz:

Admitting Palestinians to anthropology's purview in turn facilitated recognition of their dispossession. An important instance of this enabling vocabulary is memory . . . Memory as a dwelling for precarious yet persevering truths of the Palestinian condition is evident more recently in an anthology of memories of the Nakba [in Sa'di and Abu-Lughod 2007], in which five out of the ten contributors are anthropologists. This ethnographic focus on memory affirms Said's . . . observation that Palestine no longer exists except as memory. In vindicating Palestinian memories (or counter-memories), ethnographers thereby respond to Foucault's appraisal of Nietzsche, in which Foucault . . . advocates the tools of "genealogy" to overcome historians' traditional disregard of "unpromising places . . . without history."[23]

The books reviewed here by Yfaat Weiss and Efrat Ben-Ze'ev both present possibilities for researching the 1948 past in the greater Haifa region. Weiss's *A Confiscated Memory: Wadi Salib and Haifa's Lost Heritage* focuses on tracking "transformations of memory" in the Haifa neighborhood of Wadi Salib, which she views as a ruined architectural scar in the heart of the city and a metaphor for Israeli politics and history. Her timeline is primarily 1948 to 1959, when the majority Palestinian population was expelled and replaced first by Jewish refugees from Europe and then by Jews from Arab countries, who became Mizrahi "evacuees" resettled to the city's outskirts after the intra-Jewish

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Wadi Salib riots of 1959. Weiss characterizes her elegant, multilayered account as a nonchronological, circular "spiral."

> From the small circle of time extending from 1948 to 1959, the book enlarges its circles, extending its reach to the initial settlement of Wadi Salib within the framework of the Ottoman Hejaz railway initiative up to failed attempts at urban gentrification over the past two decades. The circular movement through time facilitates narration of the hundred years of Wadi Salib's rise and fall and its transformation into a ruin in the heart of the city of Haifa, while taking care not to succumb to the teleological pitfall of portraying a foregone conclusion. Had I followed the simple chronological path and related the annals of Wadi Salib from its beginning to its bitter end, this would have generated expectations of revealing a direct relationship of cause and effect, an automatic congruence between chronology and causality. Yet the book does not assert a necessary causality that led to the destruction of Wadi Salib. Like the city of Haifa, Wadi Salib was destined for a bright future. There existed many visions of a possible; the shelving of most of them, however, was by no means inevitable. (pp. x–xi)

Weiss links the history of Wadi Salib to that of Wadi Nisnas, another Haifa neighborhood in which the city's remaining post-1948 Palestinian Arab population was forcibly concentrated. At the same time, she describes the multiple ways in which Haifa effaced both these histories and memories of inter- and intracommunal relations, thereby facilitating the wholesale confiscation of associated rights to the city and property ownership—first from Arab to Jew and then between "ethnic" Jewish communities in conflict. Weiss draws on documentary history and sources (archives, property laws, municipal records, minutes of government commissions and inquiries, contemporary memoirs, newspaper accounts, statistics) in order to rethink existing urban narratives and discourses. She ends on a literary note with her analysis of Ghassan Kanafani's powerful short story, "Return to Haifa," in which she highlights the theme of transfers of Palestinian Arab refugee property to Jewish Holocaust refugees. Although this work is both fine-grained history and critical counterhistory, Weiss's conceptual structure is more clearly set forth in her earlier 2007 article, which embeds narratives of successive and multiple Palestinian Arab and Mizrahi Jewish dispossessions within frameworks of colonialism:

> If we accept the fact that the Palestinian refugees are victims of the Israeli internal colonization of the country, and that Jews from Arab countries in Israel are actually refugees of the de-colonization processes in newly established Arab countries, then the compensation claims of the two groups, despite all their differences, all result from the same evil: colonialism.[24]

Efrat Ben-Ze'ev's *Remembering Palestine in 1948: Beyond National Narratives* is firmly situated in anthropological fieldwork, highlighting personal narratives and intimate oral histories. She pays attention to "microsocial remembrances" that "cannot and should not establish the veracity of one or another account of events in 1948" (p. 3). Ben-Ze'ev questions memory as reliable, factual history because it is contingent, contextual, and subject to the vagaries of passing time; yet she values and valorizes processes of remembering, rituals and performances of recounting, and acts of narrating. It is not so much what is said or even who said it, but questions about how things are said and why that speaks to the worlds and contemporary shared beliefs of narrators, whether Palestinians, Jewish Israelis, or members of the British colonial police force in Mandatory Palestine. For the history of 1948, conventional wisdom in relation to memory and the conflict is that Palestinians rely on oral history (biased, distorted),

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while Israelis depend on documentary history (reliable, true), a mistaken dichotomy foregrounded most prominently in the work of Israeli historian Benny Morris.[25] In this approach, Israeli documentary history is read as accurate and Palestinian oral histories are accorded secondary status, adjudged true only insofar as they provide additional oral verification of written accounts. Ben-Ze'ev's claims are conciliatory in tone: the memories of those she interviewed, whether Palestinian Arab rural refugees originally from the Carmel region or Jewish Israeli Palmach military veterans, are all worthwhile. She compares their divergent accounts to the film *Rashomon* in which witness accounts to a murder and rape are equally valid in terms of subjectivity and plausibility. Consequently, except for naming the British police and the mapmakers whose identities are on record, Ben-Ze'ev uses pseudonyms:

> I have chosen to use pseudonyms because interviews touched on delicate issues. The mere decision of Palestinians (especially in Jordan and the Occupied Territories) to speak to an Israeli researcher could be criticized. More important, there were memories that embarrassed my interlocutors, such as those dealing with misconduct, collaboration, or feuds. Moreover, interviewees were not eager to publicize private memories imbued with grief, disorientation, or frustration. Therefore, although at times interviewees would have liked to have their names appear, I adhered to pseudonyms, unless stated otherwise. (p. 213, n. 6)

Unfortunately the presence of images in Ben-Ze'ev's book infringes on interlocutor anonymity, especially since only Palestinian interviewees are photographed in full frontal portraits that render them easily identifiable (pp. 97, 114, 115, 121), while captions for the historical images of the Palmach section caution readers that "the men/women in the picture are not related to the ones discussed in this book" (pp. 144, 166). Both photographs and filmed testimonies are capable of visually expressing anonymity to protect interviewees. They do so by deploying obvious conventions such as blurring the speaker's face, filming the person's back, placing a black bar across the face (which is the visual analog to redacting a human face like a document). The results are images that may be less vivid but avoid contravening ethnographic fictions of identity. As Edward Said notes in relation to the power of images and photographic portraits: "There can be no unilateral withdrawal from ideology. Surely it is quixotic to expect photographic interpretation to serve such a purpose," and he alerts us to the need for "a proper schooling in the visual faculties."[26]

Ben-Ze'ev's book is framed by an opening section on cartography, which introduces the author's use of interviews and oral history to analyze Israel/Palestine's British, Jewish, and Arab mapmakers: the maps they produced reflect subjective, politicized, and discursive (Foucauldian) struggles over power and knowledge evident in every aspect of the physical map, both in what is erased and what is named and depicted. Part II of the book, "Palestinian Arab Memories in the Making," focuses on three villages in the Haifa region: Ijzim, Tirat Haifa, and Ein Hawd. The first two are among more than 400 Palestinian villages depopulated and destroyed since the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel, while the third, overlapping with the subject of my ethnography, was partly preserved architecturally, its Palestinian inhabitants expelled, and the village of Ein Hawd transformed into the Jewish Israeli artists' colony of Ein Hod.[27] In the Ijzim case study, Ben-Ze'ev sets up the familiar historiographical pairing of 1948, drawing on Palestinian oral histories that she collected in the late 1990s and contrasting them

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with Jewish Israel archival documents. Her anthropologically informed conclusions run counter to those of historian Benny Morris, who emphasizes the historical unreliability of Palestinian interviews conducted fifty years later because memory, he avers, is what remains, merely as a weapon of the weak for illiterate peasants, to borrow James Scott's notion.[28] By contrast, Ben-Ze'ev recuperates the importance of orality because:

> the villagers' oral accounts and the army documents often complement each other, and sometimes converge. Unlike *Rashomon*, the testimonies of the witnesses do not tell a different story. Knowing that the army documents were written shortly after the events (within a few hours or days), for internal use (usually being classified "secret"), it may perhaps be expected that they carry relatively little imprint of the intervention and reconstruction of official state representations. It is more perplexing that the villagers' narratives are not highly inventive. We should bear in mind that these autobiographical accounts are records of a dramatic (and traumatic) period and that the incidents have left an imprint on those who have lived through them. Many of these events have been reexamined repeatedly after their occurrence, discussed in family settings, and circulated among the dispersed community. At the same time, the oral sources and the written accounts differ in their "spirit." The army documents lack a description of distinct people and their characteristics, especially those of the "enemy." This is due not only to the specific interests of the Israeli army but to the nature and needs of military documentation in general. In contrast, the oral narrative revolves around certain people. (p. 83)

Ben-Ze'ev's pseudonymous oral histories run parallel to a long history of Palestinian audio- and videotaped oral testimonies by living, named interviewees about the events of 1948. These projects are produced by activists, artists, and academics in a wide variety of forms, including videos and films (many posted on Youtube), archives of audiotapes and transcriptions, exhibitions, and scholarly analyses, drawn primarily from Palestinian citizens of Israel and diasporic refugees. Pioneering Palestinian oral history projects, available in English and dating from the 1970s, include those by Nafez Nazzal, Walid Khalidi, Salman Abu Sitta, and Rosemary Sayigh, as well as the Birzeit University projects led by Kamal Abdel Fattah, Sharif Kanaaneh, Salah Abdel Jawwad, and their research teams.[29] Two examples among many current websites are the Jordan-based "Palestine Remembered Oral History Project" and the Lebanon-based "Nakba Archive,"[30] while those about Palmach fighters have been recently supplemented by "Towards a Common Archive / Video Testimonies by Zionist Fighters in 1948," a project of historian Ilan Pappé and filmmaker Eyal Sivan in collaboration with the Israeli NGO Zochrot. About one hundred Jewish Israeli testimonies were collected and excerpts screened in Tel Aviv over the winter of 2012/13. During this exhibition Sivan distinguished the project through his critique of *Rashomon*-like approaches to 1948:

> I have two goals. One is to tackle, or to argue against this liberal take that says to have two narratives is a progressive thing. There is the Zionist narrative and there is the Palestinian narrative as if those two narratives can co-habit. In order to get out of the conflict—conflict of memory, conflict over history—the only way is, in fact, to come and find a joint narration. I say a "common" narration in a double meaning of that word—common as in the same and common as in banal, which is just simply what happened. Not, "How do I analyse it", "What is my regime of justification", but actually, what happened. One group—the Zionist Israelis—committed a crime against the other group, the Palestinians.[31]

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Rochelle Davis's *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced*, winner of the 2011 Albert Hourani Book Award of the Middle East Studies Association, explores memory and representation by analyzing the production, creation, and dissemination of over 120 Palestinian "village memorial books" devoted to describing, depicting, and recreating Palestinian villages depopulated and destroyed since 1948: "Compiled as documentary histories and based on accounts of those who remember their villages, they [village memorial books] are presented as dossiers of evidence that these villages existed and were more than just 'a place once on a map'" (p. xvii). With the exception of the village history series by anthropologists and historians trained through the Birzeit University Centre for Research and Documentation,[32] most village history authors are from the local, educated male elite and, drawing on Larkin's framework, belong to the "postmemory" generation of displaced Palestinian villagers born after 1948. Davis provides an ethnographically rich discussion and nuanced analyses of who produces village histories, their content, where they are published, when and why they appeared around the mid-1980s, their intended and actual readerships, and what memory work they accomplish. Her conclusions align memory studies with anthropology's conceptualizations about the individual, and through individuals to the group in the creation of social identity:

> [H]istoric Palestine—its villages and cities, homes and orchards, schools, herds, weddings, mosques, churches, mills, shops, and crops—remains important to who Palestinians are today. Chronicling the stories of Palestinian farmers, teachers, fighters, poets, midwives, merchants, Bedouin, landowners, and shepherds, provides Palestinians in the diaspora with communal stories to which to anchor themselves. As Palestinians document their histories of land and struggle, they reconfigure their contemporary expressions of Palestinian identity, of self-identification with the transformational events in the past, and of the forces pushing them toward particular forms of national identification in the future. Thus, while Palestinians maintain knowledge of their villages, recreate spaces and social structures that build on known aspects of village life, and write books documenting the past, they also think of themselves within national, global, and universal definitions of what it means to be Palestinian in the twenty-first century. (p. 231)

Davis's well-written and moving book leads me to a few conclusions: the first is the need for an English-language anthology of texts from this remarkable corpus, for which Davis's work stands as an introduction and preparation. Second, and related to the primacy of texts and sources, although Davis situates Palestinian village books within local, Arabic, and Islamic history-writing traditions, there are also contemporary cross-cultural, textual comparisons worth exploring. The widespread dissemination of this powerful and productive 20th-century genre has resulted in the Armenian village *hishatakaran* (commemorative text) since the 1915–20 genocide, the Eastern European Jewish *yizkor-bikher* (memorial books) memorializing Jewish life before the Holocaust, village histories created by Bosnians for their communities destroyed during the Bosnian Wars, and a large archive of *livres d'or* (literally "golden book," meaning a book of testimony) possessed by French former settler colonists of Algeria (*pieds-noirs*).[33] Whatever dispossessed authors and groups choose to call these works (and recently websites), they exhibit a remarkably similar grammar and rhetoric of literary, folkloristic, and ethnographic themes and motifs that call for comparative literary and structural analyses. A random inventory of their shared repertories include maps (outdated or hand

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drawn), genealogies, vocabulary lists of words no longer in use, lists of martyrs, lists of notables and famous former inhabitants, copies of identity cards, proofs of property ownership, historical photographs and contemporary images, accounts of folk beliefs, poems and songs, local naming practices, etiological folktales, nonconflicted, nostalgia-riddled, smoothed over accounts of village life, overlapping communities of passionate authors and readers, and much more.

As another example of cross-cultural comparative genres, how does one account for the "Cinderella" folktale or other enduring tale types and sets of motifs found in unrelated cultures and far-flung speech communities? Folklorists have recourse to parthenogenesis, the spontaneous eruption of tales that are morphologically and typologically either closely related or even the same, yet no cultural contact or transmission is provable. The fact that Davis "found no evidence, however, that Palestinians ever knew or had any contact with these other books or read the languages in which they were written (Armenian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, English and so on)" actually points to the opposite conclusion of parthenogenesis in which unrelated folk groups produce cognate cultural artifacts such as folktales and village histories (p. 21). This is perhaps counterintuitive for the anthropologist mired in emic knowledge derived from her informants but not for the literary critic with the etic overview. In fact, what Davis has portrayed so well in her case study of Palestinian village histories confirms the supposition that if there is such a genre with overlapping literary, historical, and ethnographic connections found in disparate parts of the world and that is uniquely expressive of "memory studies" in its collective traumatic mode, this is the one.

The books under review are absorbing and readable contributions to memory studies. They focus on vivid, local, ground-up approaches and are critical additions to anthropology, history, and micro-histories through and about memory, while highlighting the progress and pitfalls of memory representations in relation to the Middle East region.

NOTES

[1]For reviews of anthropological and historical literatures of memory, see Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, "Anthropologies of Arab-Majority Societies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 537–58; Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, "Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History, Anthropological Perspectives," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Climo and Cattell (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002), 1–38; and Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40.

[2]Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* was originally published in 1925 and reissued posthumously in 1952; for the English translation, see *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) was translated from *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950).

[3]The quote is from Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 2. See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1980); and the critique of traumatic memory by Alan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 129.

[4]*Les Lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols., under the direction of Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992). In English translation: *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols, under the direction of Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). A translated excerpt published in 1989 in the American journal

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Representations remains influential; see Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–25.

[5]miriam cooke, *Women and the War Story* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1996), 4.

[6]On countermemory and Palestine, see Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmed H. Sa'di, "Introduction: The Claims of Memory," in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmed H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 1–24.

[7]Plato, "Phaedrus," in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon, 1966), 520.

[8]David Berliner, "Social Thought & Commentary: The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (2005): 197–211.

[9]Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[10]See, for example, Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); and Vesna Blazina, "Mémoricide ou la purification culturelle: la guerre contre les bibliothèques de Croatie et de Bosnie-Herzégovine," *Documentation et bibliothèques* 42, no. 4 (1996): 149–63.

[11]For a survey and discussion of the term "dissonant heritage," see J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: Wiley, 1996). Pioneering works on "difficult heritage" at sites of memory such as museums and monuments owe much to debates around representing the Holocaust. See Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995) and *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[12]Beshara Doumani, ed., *Family History in the Middle East: Household, Property, and Gender* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2003).

[13]Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, eds., *Tense Past: Cultural Essays on Trauma and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[14]James Gelvin, "Collective Memory and Nationalist Narrative: Recounting the Syrian Experience of the First World War," unpublished article. See also the 2011 MESA presidential address of Suad Joseph, "History and Its Histories: Story-Making and the Present," *Review of Middle East Studies* 46 (2012): 6–23; and the special issue "Introduction: Mourning and Memory," including articles by Rebecca Saunders and Kamran Aghaie, in *Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25 (2005): 16–29.

[15]An influential earlier work in Jewish Studies is Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1982). Architecturally informed memory studies of former Jewish communities in Muslim-majority countries include Joelle Bahloul, *La maison de mémoire: ethnologie d'une demeure judéo- arabe en Algérie, 1937–1961* (Paris: Editions Métailié, 1992), translated into English as *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Susan Gilson Miller and Mauro Bertagnin, eds., *The Architecture and Memory of the Minority Quarter in the Muslim Mediterranean City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[16]Some recent examples are Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Aïda Kanafani-Zahar, *Liban: La guerre et la mémoire* (Rennes, France: Presse universitaire de Rennes, 2011); and Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[17]Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); for an urban case study, see Gavriel David Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000).

[18]Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.

[19]See the overview by Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonne S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2000), 733–68.

[20]Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 474 et passim, which is the English translation of his *Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2000).

[21]According to one study, 63 percent of American respondents believe that human memory resembles a video camera that records information accurately for later review and half believe that experiences once

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encoded in memory are memories that do not change. See Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris, "What People Believe about How Memory Works: A Representative Survey of the U.S. Population," *PLoS ONE* 6 (2011), http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0022757.

[22]Craig Larkin, "Beyond the War: The Lebanese Postmemory Experience," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42 (2010): 615–35.

[23]Khaled Furani and Dan Rabinowitz, "The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 475–91.

[24]Yfaat Weiss, "Conflicting Memories, Unrestituted: Wadi Salib as an Israeli Political Metaphor," in *Restitution and Memory: Material Restoration in Europe*, ed. Dan Diner and Gotthart Wunberg (New York: Bergahn Books, 2007), 315.

[25]See Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[26]Edward Said, "Bursts of Meaning," *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 152.

[27]Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

[28]James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985). For a critique of Morris's views on oral interviews, see Susan Slyomovics, "The Rape of Qula, a Destroyed Palestinian Village," in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 27–51.

[29]Ted Swedenburg, "Popular Memory and the Palestinian National Past," in *Golden Ages, Dark Ages: Imagining the Past in History and Anthropology*, ed. Jay O'Brien and William Roseberry (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991), 152–79. For selected overviews of Palestinian oral history, see Sherna Berger Gluck, "Oral History and *Al-Nakbah*," *The Oral History Review* 35 (2008): 68–80; Sherna Berger Gluck, "New Directions in Palestinian Oral History," *Oral History Review* 39 (2012): 100–111; Rosemary Sayigh, "The Significance of Oral Narratives and Life Histories," in *Al-Jana: The Harvest: File on Palestinian Oral History*, ed. Rosemary Sayigh (Beirut: Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts, 2002), 24–27; and Nur Masalha, "Remembering the Palestinian Nakba: Commemoration, Oral History and Narratives of Memory," *Holy Land Studies* 7 (2008): 123–56.

[30]On the "Palestine Remembered Oral History Project," see http://www.palestineremembered.com/MissionStatement.htm; articles by Fawwaz Salameh at http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/ht/display/ContentDetails/i/2622/pid/897; and Salah Mansour, "Lessons Learned from PalestineRemembered.com's Oral History Experience," http://www.badil.org/en/al-majdal/item/978-lessons'-learned-from-palestineremembered com's-oral-history-experience. On the "Nakba Archive," codirected by Diana Allan and Mahmoud Zaidan, see http://www.nakba-archive.org (all accessed 5 January 2013).

[31]Charlotte Silver, "An Interview with Eyal Sivan: Against Forgetting," *Al-Jazeera*, available at http://zochrot.org/en/content/against-forgetting-interview-eyal-sivan (accessed 6 January 2013).

[32]See my review of the first six volumes of the "Destroyed Palestinian Village" Series, in *Journal of American Folklore* 104 (1991): 385–87.

[33]See my comparative studies of Palestinian "memorial books": Susan Slyomovics, "The Memory of Place: Rebuilding the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3 (1994): 157–68; and idem, *The Object of Memory*, chap. 1.

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