Journal of the Canadian Historical Association
Revue de la Société historique du Canada

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Volume 2, numéro 1, 1991

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/031038ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/031038ar

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Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (imprimé)
1712-6274 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Woolf, D. (1991). Memory and Historical Culture in Early Modern England. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, *2*(1), 283–308. https://doi.org/10.7202/031038ar

Résumé de l'article

Les nombreuses études sur la place de la mémoire au sein de la pensée et de la culture de l'Angleterre des débuts de l'époque moderne se sont limitées, le plus souvent, aux aspects les plus ésotériques de la culture de la Renaissance, tels que les « théâtres de la mémoire ». Cet essai se base sur des sources imprimées et manuscrites pour recenser plutôt les multiples usages de la mémoire et examiner les attitudes des contemporains vis-à-vis de son importance. Il porte une attention particulière au phénomène de l'utilisation de la mémoire en vue de préserver le passé. Trois niveaux de mémoire sont examinés tour à tour : le personnel, le communautaire et le social, pour suggérer que la formation d'une culture historique nationale dans l'Angleterre moderne provient en partie d'un changement d'équilibre entre deux attitudes : le fait de compter sur la mémoire pour commémorer le passé et en communiquer le souvenir et celui de compter sur l'écrit ou sur l'imprimé.

Memory and Historical Culture in Early Modern England

DANIEL WOOLF

Résumé

The place of memory in the thought and culture of early modern England has been often discussed, but usually in the context of the more esoteric aspects of Renaissance culture, such as "memory theatres." Using printed and manuscript sources, this essay reviews the uses of memory and contemporary attitudes toward its importance, with particular attention to its use in the preservation of the past. A distinction is posited between three levels of memory: personal, community, and social, each of which is studied in turn. It is suggested that the formation of a national historical culture in early modern England derives in part from the changing balance between dependence on memory and the use of the written/printed word to commemorate and communicate the past.

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Les nombreuses études sur la place de la mémoire au sein de la pensée et de la culture de l'Angleterre des débuts de l'époque moderne se sont limitées, le plus souvent, aux aspects les plus ésotériques de la culture de la Renaissance, tels que les "théatres de la mémoire". Cet essai se base sur des sources imprimées et manuscrites pour recenser plutôt les multiples usages de la mémoire et examiner les attitudes des contemporains vis-à-vis de son importance. Il porte une attention particulière au phénomène de l'utilisation de la mémoire en vue de préserver le passé. Trois niveaux de mémoire sont examinés tour à tour: le personnel, le communautaire et le social, pour suggérer que la formation d'une culture historique nationale dans l'Angleterre moderne provient en partie d'un changement d'équilibre entre deux attitudes: le fait de compter sur la mémoire pour commémorer le passé et en communiquer le souvenir et celui de compter sur l'écrit ou sur l'imprimé.

I wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which awarded me a release-time stipend in 1990-91, during the tenure of which this essay was researched and written. Earlier versions of this essay were presented to the Department of History Seminar at Dalhousie University and to the Department of History of the University of British Columbia, and at the 1991 annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association. I am indebted to the audiences at all three occasions for their comments. In particular, I should like to thank for their helpful suggestions my colleague John Crowley, the anonymous referees of the journal, and my copanelists at the 1991 CHA meeting, Professors Louis Knafla, Paul Christianson, and Michael Finlayson.

Much research has been done on the classical and Renaissance "arts of memory," those systems inherited from ancient writings like the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, revived in the later Middle Ages by sages such as Ramon Lull and central to the work of English magi such as John Dee and Robert Fludd. Important studies by Paolo Rossi and the late Frances Yates have demonstrated some interesting implications of the artificial memory of the Renaissance for the development of later philosophical and scientific interests, while Jonathan D. Spence has shown how such schemes could be put to practical pedagogical use in his study of the Jesuit Matteo Ricci's mission to China.[1] Most recently, Mary Carruthers has offered a thorough analysis of the place of memory in medieval culture.[2] As Carruthers herself points out, however, there is a danger that, in dwelling on the more exotic aspects of memory — imaginary theatres, artificial methods, and Lullist schemes — we may turn the whole subject into something unnecessarily complex and esoteric. For every historical instance of occult or artificial memory, it is possible to find dozens of examples of and statements concerning its practical, everyday use. This essay will explore the place of memory in early modern English life and its relationship to the structures of social authority, to the changing technology of communication, and to the emergence of a national historical tradition beginning in the seventeenth century.

As David Lowenthal has recently observed, "our sense of the historical past comes less from history books than from the everyday things we see and do from childhood on." In the light of this and similar comments by Paul Connerton,[3] the purposes of this essay are several. The first priority is to examine the ways in which memory played a part in everyday life and discourse in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This can be done by referring to a wide variety of contemporary texts, including (but not limited to) the relatively small number specifically related to mnemonic matters. Secondly, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between human memory and writing and how alternatives or supplements to writing, such as mnemonic schemes, retained or even enhanced their pedagogical value, in effect allowing for a continuing and symbiotic relationship between the written/printed text and the power of recall. Consideration of the dialectic between writing and memory, in turn, leads directly to discussion of a broader problem in the third section: whether the increasing impact of literacy, enhanced by print, modified the individual's sense of the past simply by restructuring the ways in which people recalled and ordered historical data. The fourth section extends this discussion to deal with a few of the ways in which local communities developed a collective memory, conveyed in rumour, news, and tradition and punctuated by national and local events ranging from politics to such mundane matters as

1. Paolo Rossi, *Clavis universalis: Arti mnemoniche e logica combinatoria de Lullo a Liebniz* (Milan, 1960); F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966), 320-89; Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1984); Patrick H. Hutton, "The Art of Memory Reconceived: from Rhetoric to Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 371-92.
2. Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: a Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990).
3. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), 211. Most recently, see the brief treatment of "social memory" in Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge, 1989), 6-40.

changes in the weather. The fifth and final section offers some conjectures as to ways in which literacy and print modified the relationship of these personal and community memories to a broader "social" memory.

Since they are important to the argument, it would be as well to identify and define from the outset three discrete but connected types of memory. *Personal* memory is the immediate memories, recollections, and learned behaviours of individuals, sometimes selectively written down but, for the most part, remembered and transmitted orally. *Community* memory consists of the aggregate of individual memories, conveyed in oral discourse about the immediate or remote past and often given permanency in communal customs, rituals, and written documents or texts. This type of memory is generally restricted to a local context or to self-conscious and well-defined segments of the population with an extended historical duration, such as guilds, colleges, craft companies, or the Church. Finally, *social* memory is the mediated ordering of the past of an entire nation or political community, its political and social "life," into some sort of chronological account, often expressed in narrative form (as in "histories"), but also preserved and conveyed through more informal channels such as oral instruction, law, and national celebrations of great past events. This community "life" may include its relations with other, larger societies into which it fits — the Christian world or international Protestantism, for example.[4]

As will be suggested further on, the growth of a distinctive English "sense of the past" and of a modern national "historical" tradition of great events, deeds, and personalities — what is sometimes referred to there and in other countries as "our heritage" — commemorated by historians from the late-sixteenth century to the present, is inextricably bound up with the changing relationship between the three modes of memory outlined above and in particular with the growth in scope and influence of social memory.

THE PLACE OF MEMORY IN LEARNED CULTURE

It is unnecessary here to dwell on the much-discussed subject of artificial memory, nor to linger on the more traditional mnemonic techniques represented in western writing from Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscentia* through Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* to the early Tudor treatise *The Pastime of Pleasure* whose author, Stephen Hawes, deals with the place of memory among the orator's skills and as an instrument of virtue.[5] Although sixteenth-century English writers on memory such as William Fulwod, who translated Gulielmus Gratalorus's *The Castel of Memorie* in 1562, paid some attention to artificial or "local" memory, it was generally not the principal matter addressed in

4. Although Paul Connerton's formulation of a concept of social memory is in many ways helpful (Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, passim), its subdivision into "personal," "cognitive," and "habitual" (or "bodily") has not proven of great use in explaining how memory functions socially in the early modern English context. Accordingly, when the term social memory is used in the present work, it is intended to be compared with what will here be called "personal" and "community" memories.

5. For the medieval tradition of such treatises, see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 16, 41-42, 68-69, and 144-45; Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. W. E. Mead (London, 1928), lines 1246-70.

their works. Most of Fulwod's text is devoted to ordinary uses of memory and to exercises, medicines, and recipes designed to improve it by natural, not artificial, means.[6]

Tudor and Stuart writers generally agreed that the memory was an extremely important capacity. Without it, said Fulwod, merchants, preachers, sailors, judges, lawyers, and even husbandmen would be unable to practise their callings.[7] Contemporaries were familiar with examples of memories weakened through disease or misfortune, while such factors as fear, melancholy, over-excitement, and even "a pensive care of household busynesse" could diminish recall. The forgetfulness of the aged, in particular, was often hinted at. If failing memory was an inconvenience, its total loss was potentially disastrous: about 1684, the parson of a rural parish near Holderness suffered so bad a case of palsy that, as one observer commented, even though he recovered, he had "forgot every thing, and was become a perfect ignorant man again." The victim was unable to recall anything of his former life and acts and was even forced "to learn both to read and write after, and the other things that people learn when they are young."[8]

The nature of memory inspired some discussion throughout the early modern period, for example, over the question of where, within the human body, the memory could be located. Conventional Christian metaphysics made the memory an integral part of the soul, not dependent on a particular bodily organ — of necessity, within a religious environment that assumed the survival of a personal soul, together with earthly memories, after death. Another school of thought, derived from Aristotelian medicine, tried to locate the memory in a specific place: according to Fulwod's tract, it was to be found in "the hinder part of the head" and could accordingly be improved by rubbing the temples with ointments concocted from bear grease, partridge gall, and other substances.[9] The Jacobean physician and medical writer Edward Potter, whose medical

6. Gulielmus Gratalorus, *The Castel of Memorie*, trans. W. Fulwod (London, 1562), sig. Gvi^{v} ff. Other examples include John Shaw (d. 1625), *The Divine Art of Memory* (1st ed., London, 1683) and Thomas Watson, *Compendium memoriae localis* (London, 1585?). In his dedication, Watson states that he wants to avoid comparison with Giordano Bruno's recent English reprint of his *Ars reminiscendi: ad plurimas in triginta sigillis. . .artes introductoria* (London, 1583?), for which see Yates, *Art of Memory*, 205). He is thereby able to discuss both natural and artificial memory systems without hermetic overtones; for Watson, see J. W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds, 1990), 205-07. Bishop John Jewel also apparently used an artificial memory system based on the town of Cleeve, according to Laurence Humphrey's biography in *Ioannis Iuelli vita et mors* (London, 1573). For a later mnemonic tract, see Henry Herdman, *Ars mnemonica. The Art of Memory made Plaine* (London, 1651).

7. Fulwod, *The Castel of memorie*, epistle dedicatory.

8. Ibid., sig. Biv^{r}-Bv^{v}; *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme, the Yorkshire Antiquary*, ed. Charles Jackson, Surtees Society 54 (London, 1870), 186.

9. Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, sig. Bi^{v} and passim. In the seventeenth century, this notion received some support from materialists, many of whom held the mortalist view that the soul perishes or at least sleeps after death. The libertine John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, for example, discussed the issue with Bishop Burnet, who could not agree with his young friend that "all remembrance our souls had of past things [is] seated in some material figures lodged in the brain": Gilbert Burnet, *Some Passages of the Life and Death of. . .John Earl of Rochester* (London, 1680), 66-67.

treatise survives in the Northumberland Record Office, similarly recommended an elaborate recipe which could benefit the memory:

> Take the whitest frankensence mad in very fine powder and mingle some of it in wine and drink it; if it be could wether wine is best but if it be hot wether it is best in watter where in raisons hath bine sod. The best time to take this drinke is at the increase of the moone at the rising and setting of the sunne. This doth marvilously help and increase the memory and is profitable for the braine and the stomack.[10]

Traditionally, *memoria* was granted the status of a "faculty," together with *ratio* (reason) and *cogitatio* (imagination) or, as some others had it, with *mens* (understanding) and *voluntas* (will).[11] It was memory that allowed man to function in the world and, like reason, it was memory that helped keep human beings separate from the animal kingdom. Only man, it was widely acknowledged, had detailed knowledge of his own personal past and a strong sense of the collective past of his species. As Francis Junius put it in 1638, "man, whom many ancient authors call the little world, is not made after the image of God to resemble the wilde beasts in following of their lusts, but that the memory of his originall should lift his noble soule to the love of a vertuous desire of glory."[12] It was memory that permitted man a conscience, together with a sense of duty to his family, to his monarch, and to God.

> How needfull then is Memorye,
> to rule a publike weale;
> In things devyne & eke prophane,
> God graunt it never fayle.[13]

Memory enabled man to fulfil his duties by providing his powers of judgement with the relevant information. It stored examples and patterns from the past so that the mind could reflect and make appropriate judgements in the present. In George Puttenham's words, memories "serve as a glasse to looke upon and behold the events of time, and more exactly to skan the trueth of every case that shall happen in the affaires of man." The Jacobean political theorist Edward Forset, who was much given to extended analogies between the human body and the common weal, made memory into the record-keeper for its sovereign, reason: "the soveraigne is well stored with remembrancers, nothing passeth from him, or setleth in him but by record. All his seates of judgement entereth and preserveth the proceedings in causes; and to forge, corrupt, or embezill the recordes (whereof any good government hath a tender and strict regard) what is it else, than as if the memorie should be cleane taken from the mind, to the which it is insep-erable." John Fletcher similarly made the memory the "store-house of the mind," a

10. Edward Potter, "Heere beginneth a booke of phisicke, and chyrugery" (written c. 1610), property of Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Northumberland Record Office, ZAN M14/A4, fo. 142V.
11. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* in *Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (7 Vols., London, 1857-59), 3: 329; Henry King, *Two Sermons Preached at White-hall* (London, 1627), 3.
12. Francis Junius, *The Painting of the Ancients* (London, 1638), 3.
13. Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, epistle dedicatory.

register for the recording of "Mens Glories, or their Crimes."[14] Even painful memories had their place, as one Hampshire minister told his congregation: "the memorie of former troubles keepes the minde watchfull, and makes a man more warie, for *what hath beene may be againe*, and *there is nothing new under the sunne*." Memory also encouraged man to cope with new troubles by recalling old ones, and it made him feel compassion towards those afflicted by recalling similar circumstances in his own experience. Yet, because it stored up the past so thoroughly, memory could also cause difficulties. The conscience, the morally aware aspect of memory, could be a great cause of melancholy, thought Robert Burton, because it is "a great ledger book, wherein are written all our offences"; it "grinds our souls with the remembrance of some precedent sins."[15] It is memory that allows us to nurse grudges, to keep alive the experience of being transgressed against. The agrarian writer Thomas Tusser thought that the increasing litigiousness of his age might be ascribed to the "envious and naughtie" neighbour,

> His memorie pregnant, old evils to recite,
> His mind ever fixed each evill to requite.[16]

MEMORY AND WRITING

Despite Tusser's warning, one of memory's most important social functions was in fact to make of fallen man a pious, repentant being, cognizant of his past sins, personal and inherited, and attentive to his present religious duties. In making this point, contemporary commentators often also made an explicit analogy between memory and writing, the most widespread of the man-made tools designed for its preservation. Memory was a kind of mental text or document; a text or document was merely a graphic form of memory. "As in all well-governed states there are publike registers, and records, that the memory of judgements and acts may not perish," wrote Thomas Gataker, employing the same analogy between written record and memory used earlier by Forset. "So hath God in mans soule created a register, to wit, the facultie of remembrance, for the preservation of such occurrents, as are of weight, and may be of use for the direction of mans life." Preachers stressed man's duty to "remember" both his own sins and those of Adam. "Looke backe upon all thy sinnes past that ever thou committedst," urged Robert Bolton. "They are written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, not to be raced out: they are all upon record." In a sermon to the Long Parliament, Richard Kentish warned that "if men remember not whence they are fallen, God will remember," reminding MPs that "if we remember God forgets, but if we forget God remembers." Citing the scholastic view that the memory was the seat of all learning, John Donne asserted that, even without sermons or the Bible, the memory would permit

14. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. G. D. Willcock and A. Walker (Cambridge, 1936), 3: xxiii: 264; Edward Forset, *A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique* (London, 1606), 20; John Fletcher, *The Historie of the Perfect-cursed-blessed Man* (London, 1628), 13.
15. James Rowlandson, *Gods Blessing in Blasting, and his Mercy in Mildew* (London, 1623), 24 (italics in original); Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. F. Dell and P. Jordan-Smith (New York, 1951), 942-43.
16. Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1580, rep. Oxford, 1984), Chap. 53, 140.

man a religious life because every individual is born with revealed truth engraved or imprinted on his mind. Elsewhere, Donne voiced the ecumenical opinion that a common memory of God's mercies to mankind provided the universal heritage of all religions and sects, and that "howsoever the understanding be beclouded, or the will perverted . . . the issue of that faculty of their memory is alike in them all." God, he added, prefers to work on man's memory, and to this he has presented the Law and the Gospel, which belong to the past; weak, frail, human understanding belongs to the transitory present.[17]

Because memory was so important to social and religious life, and because the artificial means of replicating it were as yet confined to a small segment of society, it was given much more attention in schooling than in later times. Pedagogical convention regarded writing as secondary to, and derivative from, speech and much of the curriculum concentrated on matter to be learned by rote or by practice, so that pupils could get their subjects "without book." Renaissance educators such as Vives stressed the improvement of mnemonic abilities through exercise. One could not always read or write, but one could always remember:

> How shal the Marchant safely kepe
> his recknings from decay
> If his remembrance shuld him fayle,
> though writing beare great sway.[18]

The institutional expression of this emphasis on the need to memorise can be found in educational manuals, in tracts promising techniques for improving the memory, and in the work of tutors whose tasks included nurturing their students' mnemonic capacity.[19] Henry King believed that such tutors were necessary because of the failings of the untaught memory, and early-seventeenth-century London even had schools for the improvement of the "arts memorative." As the anonymous author of a Jacobean manual wrote, memory was nothing more than the simplest of archives: "So usefull so delightfull, that to it we walke as to some castle or tower of antiquity to view the records and registers of forepassed ages and accidents there hung up as monuments to our view." Memory was the "greatest *Custus Recordorum*, whereof every man is a keeper."[20]

The notion that memory and writing were closely connected was a topos with a long history. By 1500, it was already accepted that writing, despite its relative social

17. Thomas Gataker, *An Anniversarie Memoriall of Englands Delivery from the Spanish Invasion* (London, 1626), 1; Robert Bolton, *Helpes to Humiliation* (Oxford, 1631), 83-84; Richard Kentish, *A Sure Stay for a Sinking State* (London, 1648), 14; *Sermons of John Donne*, ed. G. R. Potter and E. M. Simpson (10 Vols., Berkeley and London, 1953-62), 2:2:74 and 2:11:237.

18. Juan-Luis Vives, *Vives' Introduction to Wisdom*, ed. M. L. Tobriner (New York, 1968), 103; Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, epistle dedicatory.

19. Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca and London, 1971), Chap. 6.

20. Henry King, *Two Sermons Preached at Whitehall* (London, 1627), 1: 5-6; George Buck, *The Third Universitie of England*, rep. in J. Stow, *Annales*, ed. E. Howes (London, 1631), facing 1063 and 1087; Anon., *A Helpe to Memorie and Discourse* (London, 1621), 4.

rarity, was an acceptable, even a desirable, substitute for sheer reliance on memory and that it marked an improvement over earlier methods of record-keeping. Contemporaries even had a convenient medieval legend which explained the increased dependence on writing by royal and ecclesiastical bureaucracies as one of the benefits of the Norman Conquest. Richard Fitz Neal's twelfth-century *Dialogue of the Exchequer* (attributed in the sixteenth century to the fictitious Gervase of Tilbury) presented Tudor and Stuart readers with the legend that William the Conqueror had brought the English from the uncertainty of reliance on memory to the use of written law. Throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century, one can find a general sense that writing had, if not superseded, at least improved and extended the limits of memory. "Every writing is said to be a faithfull keeper of the remembrance of things that are committed unto it," wrote Samuel Bird, the lecturer of Ipswich. One could turn to things written down after many years and find them as they had been written, "where as, if we trusted our memories with them, we should not finde the like fidelity in them." The mid-Tudor jurist Edmund Plowden, whose study of the law began in 1539 at the age of twenty, resolved early on to commit to writing anything important which he heard at the courts or in moots, "not trusting slypper [sic] memorye, which often deceiveth his master." Gataker conceived of memory as "a table booke to register acts passed" but, unlike a real book, it was "not able to comprehend all that is to be recorded therein; when new things of note come to be imprinted in it, the old are wip't out."[22]

Plato had once warned of the potential impact of writing on mnemonic ability and, for some early modern authors, it indeed appeared that the use of written prompts was cheating. Members of Parliament increasingly began to rely on notes to prepare for their own speeches and to record those of their colleagues. Though he modestly disavowed any talents as an orator, Lord Chancellor Ellesmere felt he had to apologise when making a speech for aiding his "weake memory with helpe of some scribbled papers, as others have done." Yet a few notes, expanded upon *ex tempore* from the storehouse of the mind, could make for a more forceful presentation, and those who advocated improvements to preaching in the sixteenth century were as critical of the sermon that was completely learned by rote as they were often opposed to mechanical rereadings of the texts of prescribed homilies.

As such objections suggest, writing could be conceded the status of a necessary evil, consequent on man's fallen nature. It was often remarked that man's memory had

21. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 12-13.

22. *The Lectures of Samuel Bird of Ipswich* (Cambridge, 1598), 125; "The prologe of the auctor," in Edmund Plowden, *Les commentaries, ou les reportes de Edmund Plowden un apprentice de le comen ley* (London, 1571), n. p.; Gataker, *An Anniversarie Memoriall*, preface. Gataker's statement suggests that contemporaries acknowledged the existence of what modern psychologists call the "recency effect" whereby, as Fulwod put it, "new or wonderfull things" impress themselves on the memory at the expense of those already stored.

23. J. Goody and I. Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1963): 304-45, reprinted in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. J. Goody (Cambridge, 1968), 27-68; Thomas Egerton, Baron Ellesmere, *The Speech of the Lord Chancellor . . . Touching the Post-nati* (London, 1609), 4, rep. in Louis A. Knafla, *Law and Politics in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, 1977).

been declining over the centuries as part of the general decay of nature. Many individuals, suggested Bishop John Fisher in 1509, had "so slypper a mynde" that they could not recall something learned an hour before. He conceded that others had greater capacity in this regard, praising Lady Margaret Beaufort and her son Henry VII for their "holdynge memorye" in their funeral sermons. In the innocent state, thought Thomas Morton of Berwick, man's memory had been perfect, capable through divine inspiration of remembering everything revealed by God and nature. Since then, it had grown progressively more corrupt, to the point that men now were unable to recall every important fact and had to think of all things serially, one at a time, and not all at once, as God did. Richard Hooker believed that the longevity of mankind in the age of the patriarchs had made individual memory so far reaching and so accurate as to make writing unnecessary: "by reason of the number of their daies their memories served in steed of bookes." William Pemble turned this into an argument for the undoubted veracity of the Old Testament account of the Creation and the origins of nations. It was inconceivable, thought Pemble, that Moses had invented all this, "seeing some memory thereof was then abroad among many, which in processe of time was extinguished." He reasoned, conversely, that if there had been a world and people before Adam, it would have left some trace in writing.[24]

The relationship among memory, reading, and writing was fluid and dynamic. The preceding comments illustrate the fact that most observers perceived writing and memory as ranked extensions of each other — with writing very much the servant, not the master — rather than as mutually exclusive or contradictory techniques of recording knowledge. Thus, a Jacobean stenographer such as John Willis could maintain an interest both in the teaching of note-taking and in the promotion of memory-training.[25] Nevertheless, it is also true that this master-servant relationship between memory and writing would be subverted and ultimately *inverted* as time wore on by increasing literacy, by the advancing ubiquity of the printed word, and by the evolution and expansion of what is here termed the social memory.

It is difficult for us in the modern industrial west, accustomed as we are to near-universal literacy achieved at an early age, to get inside the minds of people for whom reading — and, still more, writing — were marks of social privilege. We have many more facts and details to recall than did they, but we have more sophisticated aids to help us recall them and do not have to encumber our memories. An educated sixteenth-

24. John Fisher, *Treatyse Concernynge . . . the Seven Penytencyall Psalmes* (London, 1509), rep. in *English Works of John Fisher*, ed. J. E. B. Mayor (London, 1876), 240, 269, and 291; Thomas Morton, *A Treatise of the Threefolde State of Man* (London, 1596), 270-78; Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (4 Vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1977-82), I, 13.1 (1: 122); William Pemble, *A Treatise of the Providence of God*, rep. in his *Workes* (London, 1635), 265.

25. John Willis, *Mnemonica, sive reminiscendi ars . . . in tres libros digesta* (London, 1618); a revised translation of the third book was published in 1621 as *The Art of Memory, so Far Forth as it Dependeth upon Places and Ideas*, but Willis remains known principally for works on stenography, including his popular handbook *The Art of Stenographie, Teaching by Plaine and Certaine Rules, the Way of Compendious Writing*, at least twelve editions of which appeared before 1640.

century man was obliged to depend on memory for a far greater proportion of his personal knowledge because it could not, as the current expression goes, always be found "at his fingertips." Indeed, the ubiquity of writing and print meant that more and more was preserved: writing generates *memoranda*, "things to be remembered." It should not be surprising, therefore, to find contemporaries making a distinction between those things that ought to be either written or memorised and those which might be safely abandoned to oblivion. Lodowick Lloyd commented, for example, of the kings of Greece before 900 B. C. that "there is nothing to be written of these kings worth the memorie of man." Thomas Lupton, on the other hand, regarded the tale of the emperor Heliogabalus's chariot, which Lampridius had recorded as being pulled by dogs, harts, tigers, and lions, as "a thing worthy of memory."[26]

The easiest things to remember without recourse to writing are those actions and gestures repeated on a regular basis, or those facts knowledge of which is required daily and which have direct relevance to the individual. It is a trickier business remembering other things, particularly details of history — the past as experienced by people other than oneself. Still, various strategies could be used to reduce a variety of types of information to memory. One method was to convert it to meter, a reason why many ancient and medieval writings, especially narratives, were composed in verse rather than prose. This practice, frequently used in schools to aid students in the recalling of Biblical and classical texts, was also applied to secular works throughout the sixteenth century.[27] Thomas Tusser ensured that the reader or hearer of his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* would be able to recall them by presenting them in the form of doggerel, while Richard Verstegan correctly observed that many early English legal documents were written in meter "belyke to bee kept the better in memorie."[28] "Homonymy," the deliberate linking of homonyms in the reader's mind and therefore a sort of constructive punning, was a widespread technique inherited from medieval grammarians and given new life by such Renaissance educators as Guarino da Verona. Later, during the Reformation, theologians and polemicists such as the martyrologist John Foxe continued to present controversial issues in what one author has called "a quotation-reply manner that resembles debate according to the commonplace." The student would thereby be armed with an easily memorised *copia* (abundance) of phrases, examples, and arguments with which he could engage in oral or written controversy.[29]

26. Lodowick Lloyd, *The Consent of Time* (London, 1590), 316; Thomas Lupton, *A Thousand Notable Things* (London, 1579), 196.

27. The Henrician scholar John Shepery (Ca. 1509-42) drew up a mnemonic verse summary of the New Testament which was published in 1586 by Laurence Humphrey in his *Summa et synopsis Novi Testamenti* (Oxford, 1586); Roger Ascham noted the importance of the typical school exercise of versifying the Bible for memorisation in a letter to George Day, Bishop of Chichester; see Binns, *Intellectual Culture*, 13 and 83.

28. Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, passim; Richard Verstegan, *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (London and Antwerp, 1605), 146. Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, sig. Fviii^{v} also recommends the use of verse.

29. Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 12; idem., "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey read his Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30-78; John G. Rechlien, "John Foxe's Comprehensive Collection of Commonplaces: a Renaissance Memory System for Students and Theologians," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 9 (1978): 83-89.

Another strategy employed by writers who believed their texts should be committed to memory was to group memorable things into subsets or categories associated with numbers. Thus Tudor literature had its Nine Worthies of the World, its Seven Champions of Christendom, its Seven Wise Masters of Rome, and so on. The advent of printing merely increased the ways in which such mental categories circulated rather than removing their necessity, at least in the short term.[30] With little more prescience than any tradesman selling the public on his new mousetrap, William Caxton correctly predicted that printing would render much memorisation unnecessary. He nevertheless listed the Nine Worthies (subgrouped into three Pagans, three Jews, and three Christians), starting with Hector of Troy, "of whome thystorye is comen bothe in balade and in prose" at the start of his edition of the tale of King Arthur.[31]

Groupings of discrete individuals or related facts around a number were designed for no other purpose than to aid in their memorisation. Consequently, they tended to proliferate as writers added new mnemonics to old. The Caroline miscellanist Donald Lupton listed, in addition to the more well-known numerical associations, several others such as "the eight times that Rome hath beene taken," and "the twelve peeres of France." His predecessor, Thomas Lupton, first published his own immensely popular book of *A Thousand Notable Things* in 1579. Reprinted fourteen times by 1700, it was doubtless so successful because of its author's willingness to reduce all knowledge to some form of enumerated subgroup. It had several imitators, such as Walter Owsold's *The Varietie of Memorable and Worthy Matters* (1605), which listed sixteen numeric categories: four parts of the world, four monarchies, six ages, seven wonders, seven wise men of Greece, ten sibylls, twelve apostles, ten persecutions, eight occasions on which Rome was taken, seven electors of Germany, three crowns of the emperor, twelve peers of France, eight *parlements* of France, seven Saxon kingdoms, five orders of chivalry, and thirteen Swiss cantons.[32]

30. Numerical groupings survive today, of course — for example, the "top twenty" of the record list or the "one hundred recipes for rhubarb," but they are now much less often used for mnemonic purposes.

31. *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W. J. B. Church (London, 1928), 92-95. The nine worthies were Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Boulogne. They appeared in visual forms in pageants such as that which took place at Chester on 1 August 1620: *Records of Early English Drama: Chester*, ed. L. M. Clopper (Toronto, 1979), 339, where they were accompanied by nine corresponding female worthies. The fundamental paradigm for such groupings was the biblical mnemonic which drew a correspondence between the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

32. Donald Lupton, *Emblemes of Rarities* (London, 1636), 373; Thomas Lupton, *A Thousand Notable Things* (London, 1579 and later editions); Walter Owsold, *The Varietie of Memorable and Worthy Matters* (London, 1605). That such numeric associations were quite commonplace is suggested by the frequency with which they occur in casual comments. Gabriel Harvey, for example, lists Ramus, Melanchthon, Sebastian Fox-Morcillo, and Cornelius Valerius of Louvain together as "fower wurthi men of famus memori" in *Letter-book of Gabriel Harvey*, ed. E. J. Long Scott, Camden Society NS 33 (London, 1884), 10. Such simple systems remained popular in England long after the seventeenth century, and survive today in the oral culture of schoolchildren. The popular early-eighteenth-century manual by Richard Grey, *Memoria Technica, or Method of Artificial Memory* (Oxford, 1836), was first published in 1730 and reissued twenty-three times by the late-nineteenth century.

Many early modern readers followed the example of such works in their own private jottings and notes. In the unpublished chronology and world description which he drew up in 1644, apparently for his own use, George Turner appended a list of "other remembrances" which included the dates of great events in London and memorable facts about the Roman emperors, such as Marcus Aurelius, "the first emperor that used the diadem and costly aparell." In 1632, Hannibal Baskervile scrawled a list of "famous soldiers" in his commonplace book, marking off those such as Gustavus Adolphus who had recently died.[34] During the 1660s, one anonymous author penned a lengthy set of mnemonic verses, in Latin and English, covering such subjects as the difference between allegorical and literal interpretations of the Bible, the main heads of the civil law, the names of the saints who had converted the various parts of Britain, and the names of the popes.[35]

Such mnemonic aids were not necessarily effective promoters of an "accurate" historical consciousness, sensitive to change and development. Precisely because they were designed for easy memorisation, they "flattened" time, making characters like Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne rough contemporaries in a past that was virtually dateless and only vaguely distinguishable from the present. A further paradox: their proliferation may ultimately have led to a greater reliance upon written lists in order to preserve them, if the marginal annotations on texts and jottings in seventeenth-century commonplace books offer any indication. Nevertheless, the enumeration of memorable details provided one means of encoding the historical past and personal experience into easily retrievable forms. Another was through the polarisation of virtues and vices in medieval and early modern literature, especially in orally oriented forms like the romance and ballad: the very evil villain and the extremely pure hero would make far greater an impression on the mind than the much-nuanced, complex figures which begin to appear in sixteenth-century drama and in biographical writing. One of the reasons for the huge success of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was the very shallowness of his stereotyped saints and persecutors, which made their deeds — multiple variants on the same theme — widely memorable among the readers and listeners who consulted the book in their homes or in church.[36]

33. Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl.), MS Rawl., D. 203, fos. 156^{r}-158^{v}.

34. Bodl., MS Rawl., D. 859, fo. 86^{v}. Such notes did not necessarily help accuracy. In Baskerville's case, he failed to mark Count Tilly as dead (though he had predeceased Gustavus) and noted Edward, Viscount Conway (who had died in 1631) as still being President of the Privy Council.

35. "Mnemonica historica de moribus ecclesiasticae Romanae," and "Versus mnemonici de historia ecclesiastica," Bodl. MS Rawl., D. 962, fos. 1-25^{v}, 46^{r}-57^{r}, 84^{r}. The entire manuscript is over one hundred folios in length.

36. Yates, *Art of Memory*, passim. Another reason for Foxe's popularity was his success in fashioning an indelible association between certain proper names such as Mary's, Gardiner's and Bonner's, and the persecutions. Psychologically, the clustering of events in the memory around a proper name undoubtedly provided an aid to their easy recall. Mary herself provides a good instance: as Christopher Lever commented seven decades after her death, merely to refer to her by name was to conjure up images of persecution because it was "a name of blood, which being uttered, reduceth to memorie the stories of blood, and how the saints of God were slaughtered." *The History of the Defendors of the Catholique Faith* (London, 1627), 251.

In his now-classic study, F. C. Bartlett observed that memory depends upon perceptual "grids" or "schemata" in which an individual element is meaningful only within its proper sequence. "All the past operates *en masse*, and the series is of greater weight than its elements. Moreover in many of them the past retains its constraining capacity in the form of relatively fixed sequences which cannot be broken."[37] The reduction of historical data to numerical series or their simplification into binary sets of opposed, polarised entities would seem to bear this out. When memorised and repeated orally, the past could be endowed with meaning only *as a series of related data*. The series was more important than any element within it; without the chain, there could be no recall of the links.[38] This is true even of the oral traditions and folk tales which circulated both before and since then. These are invariably stories, or at least segments of stories, involving a historical subject and a predicate, however rudimentary, of actions attributed to or at least associated with that subject.

The effect of writing, amplified by print, would not be to make memory superfluous, but rather to expand the possible series within which a datum could easily be situated. Far from working against memory, at least in the short term, important printed books such as the Geneva Bible of 1560, which imposed a numerical "grid" on Scripture (the division into numbered chapters and verses) were designed in a manner which would aid in the recall of their contents, *ad res* if not *ad verbum*. The predominantly metaphorical, analogical orientation of early Renaissance historical thought, in which *exempla* had meaning only insofar as they reflected on contemporary actions or mores, was the product of a cast of mind still driven primarily by the demands of the spoken word. Print permitted the addition of more complex sequences, for example the antiquarian works and the lengthy prose narratives of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such visual representations of the past as genealogical trees, which show family relationships both across generations, diachronically, and synchronically within a generation, permit a multidimensional representation of the past in a way that a memorised genealogy can achieve only with great difficulty.[39]

37. F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: a Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1967), 301. As Bartlett has pointed out, the oral discourse of a preliterate or semiliterate society is most likely to be heavily weighted toward the memories of the collective community (what here is termed community memory) than of the individual. Writings on memory by psychologists, psychoanalysts, and philosophers are legion. In addition to older works such as Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York, 1914), which focuses primarily on the process of forgetting, the following are especially helpful: Alan D. Baddeley, *The Psychology of Memory* (New York, 1976), Chaps. 1, 9, and 10; I. M. L. Hunter, *Memory* (London, 1957); Donald A. Norman, *Learning and Memory* (San Francisco, 1982); D. Bartram and P. Smith, "Everyday Memory for Everyday Places," in *Everyday Memory, Actions and Absent-Mindedness*, eds. J. E. Harris and P. E. Morris (London, 1984), 35-52; Vernon H. Gregg, *Introduction to Human Memory* (London, 1986), esp. Chaps. 1 and 2, on auditory and visual memory respectively.

38. Larry L. Jacoby, "The Role of Mental Contiguity in Memory: Registration and Retrieval Effects," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour* 13 (1974): 483-96, esp. 493-94.

39. I have outlined this argument in greater detail in my "Rethinking Renaissance Historical Thought: Time, Narrative, and the Structure of History," in *Intellectual History: New Perspectives*, ed. D. R. Woolf (Lewiston, NY, 1989), 180-200; on the medieval use of grids and numerological mnemonics, see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 80-81, 120-30, and 144.

HISTORY AND PERSONAL MEMORY

Even if by 1600 a well-developed, accurate memory was no longer quite as essential to daily life among the literate as it had been a century or so before, mnemonic ability remained something that inspired admiration. John Manningham was impressed in 1603 when his sixty-two-year-old cousin "repeated *memoriter* almost the first booke of Virg[il's] Aeniads," a feat followed the next day by a rehearsal of most of the second book, "630 verses without missing one word." Nearly a century later, Abraham de la Pryme was equally taken with a half-hour sermon given completely from memory, though the minister in question made use of a book to record the names of those who felt themselves unworthy to take the sacrament, in order to recall them the following Sunday.[40]

Memory remained the first source to which men turned for information concerning what might be called the medium-term past, that past which was not in their own memories but might be in those of living contemporaries, especially of the aged. Old people played a crucial role here as preservers and purveyors of the past and were often consulted in court cases to establish past practice and custom, though it was conceded that their memories were not always reliable. In particular, the old were believed to have great capacity to recall remote facts from their childhood, but only a limited ability to retrieve more recent information. "Ancient men," Fulwod remarked, "will orderly recyte feates from the beginninge of their age; but present thinges they eyther doe not remember, or els doe confounde them in uttering." The elderly were forgetful partly because of failing health, but also because the aged mind was "overthrowen with the multitude of thynges." Distrust of the memory of the old grew slowly but steadily as records of the past proliferated and became more widely available through libraries and private archives, though even at the end of the period both "sources" were often used. Investigating the relationship between trade and prices at the end of the seventeenth century, Sir Josiah Child was "assured by many antient men whom I have queried" that land prices had increased seven-fold since 1621. He urged any nobles or gentlemen wanting confirmation of this to consult their stewards, who might be old enough to know and would at least be able to consult the estate records kept by their father or grandfather fifty years earlier. Yet while Child might use the recollections of other men as a resource, he plainly preferred the reliability of writing, urging his landowning readers "not to depend upon their memories alone" but to consult their estate accounts.[41]

In a similar fashion, memory was also specifically linked to the writing and reading of history, the record of the more remote past. In his prologue to Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, the first historical work to be printed in England, Caxton explained the commemorative purpose of history as being analogous to the memory of old men. It is a passage worth quoting at length, since it neatly sums up one prominent late-medieval line of thought about the purpose of history-reading:

40. *Diary of John Manningham*, ed. R. P. Sorlien (Hanover, NH, 1976), 202; *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, 17.

41. Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, sigs. Bvii^{v}, Hvii; Josiah Child, *A New Discourse of Trade* (London, 1693), 47 and 69; Keith Thomas, "Age and Authority in Early Modern England," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976): 206-48.

> Therfore the counseylles of Auncyent and whyte heeryd men in whome olde age hath engendryd wysedom ben gretely preysed of yonger men. And yet hystoryes soo moche more excelle them. As the dyuturnyte or length of tyme includeth moo ensamples of thynges and laudable actes than thage of one man may suffyse to see.
>
> Historyes ought not only to be iuged moost proffytable to yonge men whiche by the lecture redyng [and] understandyng made them semblable [and] equal to men of greter age and to old men to whome longe lyf hath mynystred experymentes of dyverse thynges. . . .

History, in Caxton's view, could excel human memory because it could reach back past the limits of living men's lives. Better still, it could sum up the memories of all ages, their *experientia*, and convey these in concise form to the young. Thus, says Caxton, history more than memory is "a perpetuel conservatryce of thoos thynges that have be doone before this presente tyme," in addition to its role as a daily "wytnesse" of present deeds great and wicked. So far, this appears to mean simply that history, like any form of writing, is preferable to the unaided human memory as a recorder of past events. Caxton, however, went further, arguing for the *specific* superiority of history to *all* other forms of recalling the past, including monuments, statues, and other artefacts, on the grounds that only history can *use* time rather than be consumed by her. "But the vertu of hystorye dyffused [and] spredd by the unyversal worlde hath tyme which consumeth all other thynges as conservatryce and kepar of her werke."[42] Here, at the very dawn of the age of print in England, we have a clear statement of the proper place of *written* history as the most trustworthy custodian of a culture's past. Without knowing it, Caxton had anticipated both the supremacy of history in the hierarchy of modes of knowing the past and the reproductive mechanism by which history would, over the ensuing three centuries, spread itself like a blanket across the national sense of the past.

Right from the beginning of its career in England, therefore, history as a printed genre was conceived of, at one level, as an artificial mnemonic. Humanist authors from Erasmus to Bacon and beyond picked up on this theme and the oft-repeated Ciceronian definition of history refers to it as the *vita memoriae*. Brian Melbancke, virtually paraphrasing Caxton, urged youthful readers to "turne over the volumes of auncient histories; for so you being yong without experience, your knowledge shall stretche further then your fathers remembraunce." The continental pedagogue J. T. Freigius, whose *Historiae synopsis* was among those *artes historicae* read by early-seventeenth-century scholars, defined history simply as *memoria rerum in hoc mundo gestarum*.[43] It is unnecessary to add further examples of this view, but we should certainly avoid leaping

42. William Caxton, prologue to Higden's *Polychronicon* (1482), rep. in *Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. Crotch, 64-66. Caxton's formulation of the relationship between memory and history is not remarkably different from that outlined by a leading modern student of collective memory, Pierre Nora, who argues that history is the problematic reconstruction of events or things which no longer exist. Memory, on the other hand, is "a living tie to an eternal present." P. Nora, "Entre Mémoire et Histoire," in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, ed. Nora (Paris, 1984), 1: xix.

43. Brian Melbancke, *Philotimus* (London, 1583), sig. Mii; J. T. Freigius, *Historiae synopsis* (Basel, 1580).

to the assumption that the advent of print or the increasing availability of historical works in the later seventeenth century somehow eliminated the connection between the past and memory. Like the relationship between speech and writing, that between memory and history remained a dynamic, complex one. Because knowledge of the past was so useful a subject in daily discourse — increasingly so as the period wore on and historical knowledge became the mark of a gentleman — it was all the more essential that the educated citizen be able to recall, both from reading and conversation, a wide variety of details about the past for discourse, oral and written.[44]

As D. M. Loades has pointed out, the moderately well-educated Elizabethan gentleman, dabbling in history among many other subjects, would often rely on his memory rather than on written notes for the historical citations and aphorisms he employed in letters, speeches, or conversation. Loades offers the example of George Wyatt, the son of the Marian rebel, whose unpublished "Treatise on the Militia," written at the end of Elizabeth's reign, contains numerous errors of detail and misquotations, likely the result of relying on his powers of recall. Others took the obligation of note-keeping more seriously, at least as an ideal. In an appendix to his life of the Earl of Strafford, Sir George Radcliffe contended that, though books were useful, "the best assistance is the company of an able schollar" who could help one discriminate among a multitude of writings. Radcliffe, however, took care to heed the advice of an unnamed "great scholar" (perhaps Archbishop James Ussher) who told him "that it was losse of time to read without a pen in my hand to note something for helpe of memory . . . ."[45] Though note-taking had become obligatory for most students long before, the antiquary Cox Macro, later chaplain to George II, felt compelled as a young man to offer a stern criticism of his fellow students who failed to commit to paper what they had read:

> Young students neglect many times gathering notes out of the books they read either because they think their memory good enough to retain them without noting or else because they are slothfull & will not take the pains. Let such as trust too much to their memories know that howsoever the present times seem so fresh in their minds, that they think they cannot forgett them, yet they will find that process of time & other studies will so wipe them out of their memories that they shall remember very little in a whole book unless they have memoriall notes to run over now and then.

Note-taking also made the material easier to understand, thought Macro. Yet a few pages further on, he warned just as strongly against the commitment of *too much* material to writing, recommending the student simply keep a small lined octavo volume and "into these collect all the remarkable things which you meet with in your historians, orators or poets ever as you find them promiscuously." Only those should be collected that are so familiar that they "offer themselves to your memory upon any occasions," and Macro

44. D. R. Woolf, "Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England," *Albion* 18 (1986): 159-93 and the sources cited therein.

45. *The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire*, ed. D. M. Loades (London, 1968), 54-55; *Wentworth Papers 1597-1628*, ed. J. P. Cooper (London, 1973), 326. Even in the context of a printed sermon, the Bishop of Rochester, William Barlow, could boast of his ability to recount a continual line of bishops in the primitive church "and thereby trouble rather your patience, then mine owne memorie": *The Antiquitie and Superioritie of Bishops* (London, 1606), sig. E1^{v}.

offered some hints for easy memorisation of sayings and aphorisms, such as recalling one or two key words.[46] Notes were not a replacement for memory; they simply provided a further step in the digesting of written material into memorisable form.

With or without the aid of notes, the educated remained obliged to commit to memory those aspects of the past which they wished to reproduce in speech. From the early-sixteenth to the late-seventeenth century, it remained useful to be able to repeat facts, aphorisms, or stories in conversation without reference to a text. As Fulwod had asked rhetorically,

> For what helps it good bokes to read
> or noble storyes large;
> Except a perfect memorye,
> doe take thereof the charge?

The period was one of constant "feedback" between orality and literacy, and many a tale ran between speech and writing or print, often many times. In May of 1660, Samuel Pepys noted having been told a story taken from a translation of a "novel" by Paul Scarron. His source, Doctor Timothy Clarke, had read the tale, memorised its most significant features, and was now in the process of transmitting it to his friends and associates. Pepys himself found the tale "an exceedingly pretty story and worth my getting without book when I could get the book." In this instance, the printed work remained simply the source for a subject of oral discourse.[47]

Sayings, dicta, and bons mots once uttered by famous people in the past could be drawn either from personal memory or from writing and reused in new contexts. MPs making speeches liked to support their arguments not only with precedents from written documents but also with their recollections of the views or sayings of famous persons. Thus Sir Edward Coke, speaking in the debate on habeas corpus in a conference between the Commons and the Lords on 17 April 1628, introduced the name of Queen Elizabeth into the discussion, following his opponent, Attorney General Sir Robert Heath. Coke commented that he had "heard Queen Elizabeth say that her father, King H. 8, did hope to live so long till he saw his face in brass, i.e. in brass money." What is interesting is not that Coke picked on Elizabeth — such references were common during the 1628 session — but that the anecdote he repeated had virtually nothing to do with the point at issue. Its purpose was less to prove Coke's case against arbitrary imprisonment than to serve as an amusing digression and to impress younger members with the age and stature of the speaker.[48]

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46. Cox Macro, "Directions for Young Students in the University" (c. 1697-1700) Bodl., MS Top. Camb., e. 4, fos. 25^{r-v}, 26^{r}-28^{r}.
47. Fulwod, *The Castel of Memorie*, epistle dedicatory; *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, eds. R. Latham and W. Matthews (11 Vols., Berkeley and London, 1970-83), 1: 135 and 266. Pepys obtained the book *The Fruitlesse Praecaution* six months later and read it in bed.
48. *Proceedings in Parliament, 1628*, ed. Robert C. Johnson, Mary Frear Keeler, Maija J. Cole, and William B. Bidwell (6 Vols., New Haven, 1977-83), *Lord's Proceedings 1628*, 288; N. Fuidge, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Petition of Right," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 48 (1975): 45-51. Coke was here paraphrased by the Bishop of Lincoln, who may in turn have repeated the tale at second hand.

On other occasions, such quips could prove of greater relevance. In 1631, at the Star Chamber trial of Sir Richard Greenfield, who was charged with calling the Earl of Suffolk a "base lord," Richard Neile, then Bishop of Winchester, recalled for the council an incident thirty years earlier. He "related what he had heard the Lord Treasurer Burleigh say longe agoe, upon the comming forth of Dollman's book, that he would boldly justify the house of Suffolke from the earles of Norfolke to be descended of Edward the 4 . . . ." The aged Neile was much given to such reminiscences: in another case, he recalled of "the ould Lord of Hunsdon" that, whenever he grew angry with a servant, he would say "I will hang thee; nay, I will marry thee to a whore."[49] Such sayings were repeated, second, third, and fourth hand, over several generations. Many of them may never have been written down until years after they were uttered. Like the dinner conversation or table talk of scholars such as John Selden, they could survive quite well in the form of memory and casual conversation. Memorised and spoken rather than written, they need never have come into conflict with the written record of the past though, in many cases, they presented an alternative view, free from the rhetorical and social restrictions which applied to formal historical writing and biography.

Thomas More provides a case in point. Tudor chroniclers and their Stuart successors tended to regard him either as a persecutor of early Protestants or, at best, as a misguided champion of papal power, and it was necessary to portray him as such in later accounts of the 1530s. Yet in formal conversation one can detect, as early as the reign of Elizabeth, a tradition of Thomas More anecdotes much more favourable to the executed former royal minister. John Manningham, for example, was told some "jeastes" of More in June of 1602 while walking in Westminster with one Mr. Foster, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn. Half a century later another student, William Johnson of Clare College, Cambridge, would record in his commonplace book, amid numerous proverbs, Latin aphorisms, and remarks from Suetonius, the tale that "Sir Thomas More would compare the great number of women to bee chosen for wifes unto a bag full of snakes, having amongst them one eel; now if a man putt his hand unto this bagg he may chance to light on the eel, but he is a hundred to one if hee bee not stung with a snake." Unlike the similar tales surrounding other famous people, such as the poet John Skelton, many of these More tales appear to have a seventeenth-century written source: the first written record of one of Manningham's dates to 1615.[50] Prior to that, they inhabited a space somewhere between history and legend, floating freely over the years from speaker to listener in much the same way that modern urban folk tales and jokes of pronounced

49. "Dollman's book" refers to R. Doleman (alias Robert Parsons, et al.), *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of Ingland* (Antwerp, 1594); *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, ed. S. R. Gardiner, Camden Society, NS 39, 109 and 174; for another example of royal name-dropping, with reference to a former chaplain of James I, see ibid., 257.

50. *Diary of John Manningham*, 73 and 326 ff.; Bodl., MS Top. Camb., e. 5 (commonplace book of William Johnson, 1652-63), fo. 31^{v}; Robert Parker Sorlien, "Thomas More Anecdotes in an Elizabethan Diary," *Moreana* 34 (May 1972), where he notes the first written appearance of one of these anecdotes in Cresacre More's *Life of Thomas More*, composed about 1615. Tales involving Skelton appeared shortly after his death, and many were printed by Thomas Colwell in *Merie Tales Newly Imprinted Made by Master Skelton the Poet Laureat* (London, 1567).

bad taste are known to do today. Without being written down, they needed no other source than the mere telling and, because they derived from no specific authority, they were impossible either to refute or to prove. They therefore became both unchallengable and yet constantly open to challenge. So, too, were opinions about the past which were based on oral conversation. Sir John Harington, writing to Prince Henry in 1606, revealed a difference of opinion with an associate over the character of Bishop Stephen Gardiner. Evidently striving to impress the prince, Harington boasted that Gardiner had persecuted him before his birth by imprisoning his father. He disagreed with "old Sir Matthew Arundel" who had argued "that Bonner was more faultie than he, and that Gardiner would rate him for it; and call him Asse, for using poore men so bloudily."[51] This is precisely the sort of minor disagreement about details of the past, great or trivial, that creeps into discussions today, the difference being that we now have a wider array of easily available written checks on inaccurate facts and faulty memories.

COMMUNITY MEMORY

When Abraham de la Pryme, who had a remarkable ear for popular lore, took up a curacy in 1697 in his home parish of Hatfield in the south Yorkshire fens, he was greeted with a five-year-old tale that was bruited about the parish as if it involved the death of a king. "This day I heard for a certain truth, and there are many that will give their oaths upon it," Pryme scribbled enthusiastically in his diary, "that Tho[mas] Hill, fowler for Mr Ramsden, did shoot thirty-two pair of duck and teel at one shot in the Levels, in 1692-3."[52] This purely local occurrence, trivial as it may seem, had as much significance in the history of the parish, and in the memory of some of its inhabitants, as any national event in remote London.

Written history, churned out on the presses of London and the two universities, could neither record nor recall everything, despite the great claims made on its behalf by its humanist advocates. In particular, it could not serve as a substitute for personal and community memories of the customs, practices, tales, and traditions inherited from the past. Every individual in Tudor and Stuart England, of whatever social degree, had memories of the past as lived experience, rather than as inscribed object. The principal difference between the literate and nonliterate lay in the greater variety of channels open to the former for selecting from those experiences and funnelling them into permanent records such as autobiographies and diaries. Diary evidence tells us that early memories of home and family tended to stay with people, even when overtaken by more recent events. Evelyn recalled in midlife his earliest memory, "from which time forwards I began to observe," as the sight in 1623 of his baby brother in a nurse's arms. He could "most perfectly remember" the birth of the future Charles II in 1630, when he was seven years older. Abraham de la Pryme provided even more details of his early memories in the diary he began keeping at the age of fifteen. Except vague impressions of domestic surroundings, such as the first house he lived in at Hatfield, he could recall "very little observable before I was ten or eleven years old, onely my going to school

51. John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, ed. T. Park (2 Vols., London, 1804), 2: 68-69.
52. *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, 165. For the breadth and structure of such local historical beliefs, see my "Of Danes and Giants: Popular Beliefs about the Past in Early Modern England," *Dalhousie Review* 71:2 (1991): 166-209.

and such." His earliest recorded memory was of his father moving the family to "an old great larg hall in the Levels" which had previously lain unoccupied because of "the great disturbancys that had been there by spirits and witches, of whome there are many dreadfull long tales."[53]

Events in a person's memory are often rendered more meaningful by associating them with external events, which are often easier to recall than dates. There is no reason to suppose that early modern individuals did not recall their own pasts in the way we do, through mentally combining different types of experience, the personal with the external, the local with the national, or that they did not place present events in perspective through the process of associating and comparing them with those in the past. In this way, the recollection of personal autobiography shaded almost imperceptibly into memories derived second-hand from family, kin, and community. Thomas Crosfield, for instance, noted the significance of the birth of the Prince of Wales in 1630 with the remark that no heir to the throne had been born in England since Edward VI, nearly a century earlier. When guns were fired at Berwick to greet James I on his journey south in 1603, one observer reported having "heard it credibly reported, that a better peale or ordinance was never in any souldiers memorie (and there are some olde King Harrie's lads in Barwick, I can tell you) discharged in that place." The collective memory referred to here dated back at least sixty years, and its perceived accuracy actually served to underline the significance of the event in recent times, for no man could "remember Barwick honoured with the approach of so powerfull a Maister."[54]

Small and insignificant events such as changes in the weather, which also figured prominently in the sense of time, also bulked large in community memory. A dozen years after it occurred, Abraham de la Pryme still recalled the late frost which had afflicted the Derbyshire peak country in 1684, when "snow lay beyond several hills all the following summer, and the frost was in the ground on the sun side till after July came in." Pryme's parishioners had longer memories still than their young curate. A sudden thaw in December 1697 occasioned a flood of the Great Level Fen, causing Pryme to note, this time from the community memory rather than his own, that "about forty-one years ago there was then the greatest flood that was ever remembered." Most parishioners agreed that the current flood, which began late at night, was even worse, and "all the oldest men that are says that it is the vastest flood that ever they saw or heard of." A storm which blew up at Cromwell's death on 3 September 1658, demolishing the "minister" at Ripon (later rebuilt as Ripon Cathedral), was known half a century later as "Oliver's Storm." Further south, it was declared of a terrible gale on the night of 11-12 January 1690, that "there had not ben known the like, in almost the memory of any man now living." On 3 August 1640, John Worthington, then a student at Cambridge, recorded the passage of a great tempest with the remark that "the like thunder was never heard by old men now living." In Worcestershire, Henry Townshend

53. *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer (6 Vols., Oxford, 1955), 2: 6 and 10; *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, 3-4.

54. *Diary of Thomas Crosfield*, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1935), 43; John Nichols, *Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First* (4 Vols., London, 1828), 1: 63.

commented of one severe storm that "the like winds are by no man's remembrance either seen, heard, or known."[55] The Reverend Samuel Say of Lowestoft, Suffolk, who kept a meteorological diary for several decades in the early-eighteenth century, recorded for 1735 that the late autumn had seen "warm showers and warm dews in such plenty as I never remembered"; for 3 February 1702 he recorded "a dreadfull storm did great mischeif." The winter of 1708-09 was "one of the most remarkable winters for cold, that had been upward of 58 years," and had been preceded by "the coldest summer, spring & harvest, upon the whole, of any in 47." These recollections came largely from local informants but, over thirty years later, Say would be able to turn to his own notes to observe the similarity between the severe winter of 1708-09 and that of 1739-40, which "began on the very same day, & with the same winds."[56]

Nor was the weather the only detail of this kind of "living" or recent memory to be found in local communities. Topographical and architectural features also shaped mental horizons. In the parish of Sutton Benger, Wiltshire, was a gravelly field called "Barret's" which was sown annually with barley. According to John Aubrey, the field was so fertile that it "never lay fallow in the memory of the oldest man's grandfather there." Buildings provided reminders of their builders, or at least of their recent inhabitants. The funeral procession of Sir Arthur Darcy in 1561 began at a house where once, noted Henry Machyn, "lyved old Clarenshus master Benolt the kyng at a[rms in the] tyme of kyng Henne viijt." As late as 1570, William Lambarde, discussing Henry VII's architectural improvements to the palace of Eltham, discovered that these were "not yet fully out of memorie."[57] Living memory thus flowed into the vaguer territory of time *before* memory, that time "out of mind" beloved alike of common lawyers and of ordinary subjects anxious to preserve customary rights against the advent of agricultural and economic change. Community memory was exploited in legal disputes as a kind of negative resource. If no man living — and this was an added reason for preferring the extremely aged as witnesses — could recall a situation different from that which currently existed, it could be taken that things had always been that way. Petitioners for licenses for alehouses, for instance, commonly fell back on the argument that their community had always had such establishments in the past. The parishioners of Boxley in Kent used this argument in 1602 to get a recently suppressed alehouse restored "as the same house of long tyme evyn tyme out of memory of man hath byn used." The inhabitants of nearby High Halden made a similar case seven years later, this time to have a house erected where one did not exist, arguing that there had always

55. *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, 165 and 167-68; Sir John Percival, *The English Travels of Sir John Percival and William Byrd II: the Percival Diary of 1701*, ed. Mark R. Wenger (Columbia, Missouri, 1989), 117; *Diary of John Evelyn*, 5: 2; *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr John Worthington. . .*, ed. James Crossley (London, 1847), 1: 8; *Diary of Henry Townshend of Elmley Lovett, 1640-1663*, ed. J. W. Willis Bund (2 Vols., London, 1815-20), 1: 86.

56. Bodl., MS Top., Suffolk e. 1, fos. 11^{r}, 16^{r}, 17^{r}, 20^{r}-21^{r}.

57. *Wiltshire. The Topographical Collections of John Aubrey, F.S.A.*, ed. J. E. Jackson (Devizes, 1862), 293; *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. J. G. Nichols, Camden Society OS 42 (London, 1848), 255; William Lambarde, *Perambulation of Kent* (2nd ed., London, 1596), 524.

been one "in the tyme of any mans memorye."[58] In 1673, the Norfolk JP Henry Goodhead took depositions from several old men to resolve the issue of a right of way through a messuage attached to the rectory in Attlebridge. Robert Wallys, "aged fourscore & eight yeares or thereabouts" could recall back seventy years "and beleiveth that the said messuage is an antient messuage, & built before the memory of any man alive"; another old man, Nicholas Carr of Norwich, deposed to having known the previous owner of the land over forty years earlier.[59]

SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL HISTORICAL TRADITION

It has long been acknowledged that attitudes to the past play an important part in forming attitudes to the present, as well as vice versa, though relatively little attention has been paid to the importance of memories of the *recent* past in the development of differing attitudes to contemporary events. Why is it that people should regard a certain period in their own memory, or in the memory of their acquaintances, as good or bad? The long-lived antipathy of English Protestants for the age of popery, and especially for its Marian revival, cannot be attributed solely to government propaganda, nor even to such tradition-makers as Foxe. Such feelings had to be maintained across generations, and the young were informed by their elders, just as children are now, of the "correct" attitude to take toward the relatively recent past. What is memory for one generation almost inevitably becomes history for its successors. If it endures long enough, it can acquire a defining and normative authority over perceptions of the past. What began as personal memory becomes, in such circumstances, a "social" memory.

When the Puritan Sir Francis Hastings informed the young Earl of Essex in 1588 how fortunate the latter was to have been born "in a time wherin the darkness of popery and superstition is expelled," he was reflecting the strong hold among Elizabethan Protestants of a particular social memory of the prereformation era, a memory not, of course, universally shared, but nevertheless dominant. A social memory need not be univocal or undisputed in order for it to control and shape discourse about the past. A hundred years after Hastings' comment much the same situation applied, in a rather more multipartisan context, as Restoration political attitudes and allegiances were formed by differing memories, both personal and second-hand, of the civil wars. It was common for royalist or moderately parliamentarian writers to refer to the two decades prior to the Restoration by such phrases as the late "broken" times. Precisely where the normal passage of history had ended and the implied fracture, or anomaly, had occurred would depend on one's political point of view: a Restoration antiquary of royalist sympathies, such as Evelyn or Wood, would likely view the whole period from the calling of the Long Parliament as one huge disaster. An older Presbyterian like Denzil Holles and even a moderate Cavalier like Clarendon would have a different view, while Republicans such as Algernon Sidney or Edmund Ludlow would see even the events of 1649 to 1653

58. *Records of Maidstone* (Maidstone, 1926), 250. Many landholding families dated their tenure from time out of mind in the absence of manorial records indicating conveyance at a specific date. See Mildred Campbell, *The English Yeoman Under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts* (1942, rep. London, 1967), 51 for the Cornish example.

59. Bodl., MS Tanner 312, fos. 55^{r}-59^{r}.

as a natural development, ruined only by Cromwell's progressive turning back toward monarchy. Abraham de la Pryme's distaste for "the abominable wickedness of them [sic] times" derived not from personal memory (he was born in 1671), nor even from reading, but from the conversations he had with veterans of the civil wars, Royalist and Roundhead, such as an aged former Cromwellian trooper who declared to Pryme that "clergymen in his great master's days were no more esteem'd of than pedlars."[60]

Individuals of much the same age, who have lived through the same events, may have strikingly different perceptions of the way in which those events took place and assign different values to them, as an incident from the early years of Elizabeth's reign testifies. The Elizabethan settlement of 1559 stopped short of the Edwardian reformation, particularly that which had been promulgated in the prayer book of 1552; yet most ecclesiastical authorities proved anxious to see their own version of the Reformation as a continuation of the movement interrupted by Mary Tudor's reign. Confronting several Londoners charged in 1567 before High Commission with staying out of church and holding their own conventicles, the Dean of Westminster, Gabriel Goodman, pointed out that ecclesiastical authorities were not papists. "No, we hold the reformation that was in King Edward's days." William White, speaking for the accused, found this unacceptable, both because he did not accept the similarity between the Elizabethan liturgy and the Edwardian and because he perceived even King Edward's church as having been too close to popery.[61]

Much of the preceding discussion of the place of memory in early modern culture has focused on the educated elite. This is of necessity for, though it is clear enough that the lower levels of society continued to rely on memory as the custodian of their past much longer than did their social superiors, they have for that very reason left us little in the way of commentary on its place. We are left to speculate, to piece together from occasional references and from the behaviour of the literate, the ways in which memory functioned at the lower levels of society.[62] The last few pages of this essay will briefly

60. Hastings to Essex, 9 September 1588, in *Letters of Sir Francis Hastings, 1574-1609*, ed. C. Cross (London, 1969), 39; *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, 84.

61. *Remains of Edmund Grindal*, ed. W. Nicholson (Cambridge, 1843), 213.

62. Work on collective memory, its relationship to history, and the influence upon it of such factors as class, family, and geographical location begins with Maurice Halbwach's classic studies, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris, 1925) and *La memoire collective* (Paris, 1950). For more recent views which revise Halbwach's stark division of memory from history proper, see Pierre Nora, "Memoire collective," in *La nouvelle histoire*, eds. Jacques Le Goff, Roger Chartier, and Jacques Revel (Paris, 1978), 398-400; Nora, "Entre memoire et histoire," xv. ff; Popular Memory Group, "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics and Method," in *Making Histories: Studies in History-Writing and Politics*, eds. Richard Johnson, Gregor McLennan, Bill Swartz, and David Sutton (London, 1982), 205-52, esp. 207 and 211. Useful brief introductions to the subject are provided by N. Wachtel, "Memory and History: an Introduction," *History and Anthropology* 2 (1986): 207-24; P. H. Hutton, "Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities: the Halbwachs-Ariès Connection," *Historical Reflections/ Réflexions historiques* 15 (1988): 311-22; Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 194-214; Jan Vansina, "Memory and Oral Tradition," in *The African Past Speaks*, ed. J. Miller (Folkestone, England and Hamden, Conn., 1980), 264. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 36ff.

explore some of the effects of cultural change on the functioning of memory at the personal, community, and social levels, and especially the implications of such change for the early development of a broadly "national" social memory, expressed in the formal historiography that began to develop in the sixteenth century.

Those members of early modern society who were privileged with the knowledge of how to read had a key which allowed them to pass back and forth more easily than the illiterate between their personal experiences and those of others living and dead. The higher up one went on the social ladder (which from 1550, if not before, was increasingly coterminous with the ladder of education), the greater the possible overlap between personal memory and memories of either the community or of society as a whole, the latter contained largely in an ever-growing quantity of histories and other written or printed documents given official or at least orthodox status by the state, the church, or simply the scholarly community. Within the lower levels of society, the ability to read and write gradually separated the population into a middling sort who were able to gain access to what was emerging as a national past immediately, through relatively broad reading, and their own educational inferiors whose participation remained largely passive, through much more limited and selective reading, or even vicariously passive, through hearing others read or witnessing dramatised or ritualised versions of the past. This is one good reason why a simple distinction between two cultures, elite and popular, will not bear much weight. There are too many instances of influence up and down the social scale, between oral and literate, to permit a rigid and bipolar division.

That being said, it seems equally unwise to adopt the opposite point of view, that the culture of the unlearned was and remained virtually identical with that of the literate, simply a less well-articulated copy. There *were* cultural differences that distinguish groups within early modern society, just as there had been within ancient and medieval societies, and these differences could lie along horizontal as well as vertical lines. Taken together, they reveal a society that, by 1700, was neither homogeneous nor polarised between rulers and ruled, but segmented and stratified, with a great deal of overlap between and among social groups. As has been suggested elsewhere, increasing literacy, enhanced by print, played a significant role in the subordination, overlaying and, in some instances, the disappearance of much local oral lore about the past as a national historical tradition seeped down into the grassroots.[63] Even where literacy remained low, the printed word could make its influence felt through its mere existence and all-pervasiveness, and it had a homogenising effect on language and thought which mere

63. D. R. Woolf, "The 'Common Voice': History, Folklore and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* 120 (1988): 26-52. The literature on printing and literacy is both vast and well known and, for the sake of brevity, will not be cited here. Of particular relevance here is K. Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England," in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford, 1986), 97-131, which argues persuasively for a more socially heterogeneous participation in literate culture than was allowed by earlier work. The best recent studies of English society at this time include K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London, 1982) and J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1760* (London, 1987).

writing alone could not begin to achieve. This is true in spite of widespread ideological differences (religious, political, or simply intellectual) of interpretation which were endemic to literate attitudes to the past, and which appeared more openly and explicitly in formal historical writing after 1640.[64] We should not confuse disagreement, however pronounced and even bitter, about the ideological significance of an historical event with a more fundamental lack of coherence between types of historical consciousness. Whether the Norman Conquest, Magna Carta, the Tudor accession, and the Civil War were deemed good or bad, they were still accepted in later years as major watersheds in the educated vision of history, principal points on an agenda for historical discourse. Discussions of the character and importance of Henry II or Henry VIII, of Thomas of Lancaster or Thomas Wolsey, may vary widely in their conclusions, but they remain discourse about kings, magnates, and national affairs.

Print did not of itself greatly increase local literacy, but the sheer *volume* of writing and printing had, by 1700, seriously challenged the autonomy of personal and community memories both by expanding the contents of social memory and allowing it to feed back more efficiently into the mental world of the individual reader. The social memory in itself was increasingly characterised in the seventeenth century by an educated imposition upon the previously disordered and unruly collective past of the principles of temporal order and cause-and-effect narrative, together with a rhetorical emphasis on moral or political lessons. This brought with it a winnowing of the "important" from the "trivial" among the subjects, issues, and even the facts surviving from past times: in one sense, it meant the triumph of History as a taught subject, as simultaneously the core and the guide of social memory, over history as a more all-inclusive repository of experience, myth, custom, and belief. The greater the density or volume of written texts, the larger this social memory loomed. The educated, in town or parish, could inhabit both worlds, fitting their own memories into the social past with little incongruity and even, because they *wrote* and often engaged in political action, making that memory themselves. For the majority of the population it was not so easy to strike a balance. The marginally or vicariously literate person could obtain passive access to the social memory, but could usually make little impact on it. By obtaining that access, through ballads, sermons, national celebrations, and news from the capital, they participated, often willingly, in the reshaping, homogenisation, subordination, and marginalisation of their own community memories.[65]

Interaction between local and national memory continued, even if the direction of the traffic was increasingly from the top down. While by 1700 social stratification had in many ways affected the nature of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, the oral transmission of custom, lore, and knowledge of the past continued to occur among and between all levels of society. Before 1500 the gap between the historical

64. On the genesis of multiple historical perspectives in the early-seventeenth century, see my *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology and the "Light of Truth" from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto, 1990), Chap. 8.

65. On the formation of a national memory through holidays and other public celebrations in the seventeenth century, see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989).

sense of the aristocracy and gentry and that of their social inferiors was significantly smaller than it would become (though the clergy, by virtue of literacy, had access to a broader, Latin textual community and consequently became readers and writers of a chronological past much earlier). This is not, of course, to suggest that the community memory of the baron and that of the medieval freeholder or villein had ever been anything like the same. The labouring orders in medieval England had little to do with the chanson tradition and even less to do with the aristocratic chronicles that developed in the fourteenth century, though they did share a common recognition of the importance of manorial custom, written and unwritten, and of the legal institutions through which disputes were often resolved. The baronial sense of the past, on the other hand, would not be limited to, or even necessarily in agreement with, the customs and traditions with which tenants preserved their way of life, though the operation of such local institutions as courts baron and courts leet would ensure a degree of exchange between high and low both before and after the spread of lay literacy.

Yet while the *contents* of those community memories did indeed differ throughout the Middle Ages, the *type* of material remembered was of a kind, particularly where the historical past was concerned. Robin Hood, Palmerin, and Guy of Warwick, along with Hercules, a romanticized Alexander and Julius Caesar, and various saints and martyrs were in 1500 a common coin for the consideration of the past, in a way they would no longer be in 1700. Two centuries of lay education at the top end of society, enhanced by print, assisted in the reorientation of elite historical sensitivity away from the local and the oral toward the national and the written; from legendary and half-legendary tales built around spatial location and isolated episode to chronologically rigorous narratives organised according to time; from a past recalled and retold in imagination, poetry, song, and casual conversation, to one contained in printed pages and constructed primarily from documentary sources. Historians since the eighteenth century have placed little weight on personal memory and used it solely to shed light on "great events" often documentable in other ways: it is no accident that autobiography has since that time been widely regarded as an ancillary and not altogether trustworthy form of historical writing. The literary and academic traditions of narrative historiography that run from Hume through Macaulay to Churchill, from Brady and Burnet to the *Oxford English History* have established their dual monarchy over social memory at the expense of folklore, myth, and antiquarianism. The textbooks of the last three centuries, complete with their lists of things "every schoolboy knows," continue even today to create historical fodder for memorisation, but they have until very recently had little space for the local and the traditional amid their annals of monarchs, wars, and parliaments.[66] Even at the level of so-called "popular" history, the kind found today at W.H. Smith's, in television and film, and in surviving historical rituals like the Fifth of November bonfires, the episodes and personalities that we now most remember derive predominantly from national history rather than local tradition. Guy of Warwick has had to step aside in favour of Guy Fawkes.

66. J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent* (Cambridge, 1981); V. E. Chancellor, *History for their Masters: Opinion in the English History Textbook, 1800-1914* (Bath, 1970).