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Identity and Trauma

Two Forms of the Will to Memory

GIL EYAL

There seems to be general agreement among scholars that in Eastern Europe, after the fall of communism, there is a crisis of collective memory. At the same time, there is also disagreement about the causes and nature of this crisis: some attribute it to postcommunist amnesia, a tendency to forget the crimes and compromises of communism, which is responsible for many of the ills of postcommunist society. They usually repeat Santayana's famous dictum that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Other scholars, however, entertain the opposite view and argue that the problem is not forgetting, not that there is too little memory, but rather too much of it: an excessive preoccupation with historical wrongs and injuries, and too many competing versions of history. Claus Offe, therefore, formulated a counter-dictum: "those who remember history are condemned to repeat it." The implication being that strategic forgetting might be preferable.¹

It turns out, however, that this sense of crisis is not unique to Eastern Europe. It pervades also the scholarship on collective memory in the "Western" world. Pierre Nora's monumental work on the "sites of memory," after all, is introduced with the resignation: "we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left," while Tony Judt's complaint about too much memory in Eastern Europe was coupled with the opposite diagnosis about Western Europe—too little memory and remembering.² Nor is there shortage of the counter-assertion about too much memory in West European and North American societies. Observers of the German

and American cultural scenes, for example, have discerned a “fascination, even obsession, with historical memory ... [a] surging commitment to remembering,” and have speculated about its causes and consequences.³

With so many complaints one starts to suspect that the problem may not lie with the societies in question, and their purported preferences to forget or to remember, but with the concept of “collective memory” itself, and those who formulate it. It seems that whenever “collective memory” is discussed, it immediately elicits doubts, which, to be precise, touch not only on its quantity, but also more generally on its authenticity, validity and significance. This suspicion is reinforced by another observation, namely that the same complaints and doubts have attached themselves with tenacity, over the past century, not only or primarily to the concept of “collective memory” but even more so to the concept of individual “memory,” which ever since Théodule Ribot’s identification of “diseases of memory” has been at the center of scientific scrutiny and cultural conflict.⁴

Why are there so many doubts and complaints about memory, collective or individual? Is it because it is in the nature of memory to be imprecise, indeterminate and indeed many times reconstructed or invented?⁵ I do not think so. First, one cannot use a universal human constant to explain a historical event—the rise of contemporary complaints and doubts about memory. Second, and related, any judgment on the imprecision or indeterminacy of memory, about whether there is too much or too little of it, is impossible to render unless against the background of a certain understanding of what memory is *good for*, how it should be *used*, what it should *do* for the collective or individual subject. Memory might well be somewhat imprecise and indeterminate, but it is only when we expect it to answer some pressing need that we begin to problematize it as such, or to become concerned with its quality and quantity. And it is not enough to say that memory is expected to reflect accurately the collective or individual past, because this merely begs the question: why do we need an accurate representation of the past to begin with? How accurate should it be? For what purpose?

I would suggest therefore that the sense of a crisis of memory, and the diagnosis of too much or too little memory, are generated not by the universal nature of human memory but by a historically specific *will to memory*, a constellation of discourses and practices within which memory

is entrusted with a certain goal and function, and is invested, routinely, as an institutional matter, with certain hopes and fears as to what it can do. It is always against this goal that memory is measured and found wanting.

In this article, I will compare the discourses and rituals of collective memory in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia in order to show that there are actually two different types of “will to memory” now operative in Eastern Europe, each of which specifies the goal of collective memory quite differently. In fact, they correspond to two different understandings of the functioning of memory in the individual psyche, i.e. of what memory is supposed to do for individuals: in one version, memory is the guarantor of *identity* and maintains it through time—it is the mechanism of *retention* responsible for the experience of being a selfsame individual moving through time; in the other version, however, memory plays a role in overcoming psychic *trauma* and the processes of dissociation it sets in motion. Individuals are healed by remembering that which was repressed. Without metaphor or hyperbole I can say that the first case represents the type of will to memory championed by a group of leading Slovak historians and politicians, while the second is characteristic of the type championed by a group of important Czech dissidents and politicians. Moreover, I will show that each of these two different forms of the will to memory tends to generate its own distinctive set of conflicts around memory, its own sense and rhetoric of a “crisis” of memory. On the one hand, the investment of memory with the function of guarantying identity generates the sense of an embattled memory, attacked and challenged from the outside by competing versions of the past. It is, no doubt, responsible for the observers’ complaint about too much memory. On the other hand, the investment of memory with the function of overcoming trauma and protecting society from repetition generates the sense of an unstable memory, undermined from within and continuously swinging between fact, fantasy and falsity. It is, no doubt, responsible for the complaint about too little memory.

Why has the will to memory developed so differently in the two former republics of the once unified Czechoslovak Federation? My account will highlight how the different goals and utilities ascribed to memory correspond to the different ways in which Czech and Slovak intellectuals envisioned their social roles after the fall of communism. When it is entrusted with the role of maintaining identity, collective memory stands

for the embeddedness of intellectuals in society, especially in the nation or ethnic group, whose spirit and destiny they merely articulate. But when its goal is to heal through truth and to overcome trauma, collective memory positions intellectuals as the transcendent pastors of the individuals that compose civil society, whose consciences they guide.⁶

This is admittedly an ironic conclusion. The early scholars of collective memory have expended a great deal of effort to carefully distinguish their object from the writing of history by historians. They presented memory as popular, organic, living, composed of visual images, while history was deemed elitist, external, textual and dead. History only came in and took over when memory was no more.⁷ But this opposition, I believe, was in bad faith. After all, when they chose to rename and reinterpret as “memory” what used to be called in the past “tradition,” “folklore” or “myth,” the early scholars of collective memory actually begun to reduce the distance between oral traditions and history as written by historians. Before Halbwachs, the terms “tradition,” “folklore” or “myth” were typically opposed to history and subordinated to it as “errors” versus the “truth,” as the objects of science versus its authoritative subject. The term “memory,” on the other hand, begun to blur these distinctions. When social memory studies took off again, after the 1960s, it was in a context in which traditions, folklore and myths no longer signified errors but were treated as forms of “subjugated knowledge,” no less valid than the official history written by historians. This meant that it was impossible, anymore, to maintain a strong distinction between collective memory and the writing of history by the historians: on the one hand, history opened itself up to the subaltern and the popular, as witnessed, for example, by the emergence of the discipline of oral history; but on the other hand, memory too opened itself up to history, and historians and intellectuals begun to construe their work as an “art of memory,” thereby seeking to partake of the privileged relation to the sacred collective subject that the term “collective memory” denotes.⁸

A COMPARATIVE ANATOMY OF THE WILL TO MEMORY

By using the term “will to memory,” I mean to historicize how we use the concept of collective memory. There are many ways to remember,

recall, recollect and memorialize, and there is nothing given or immutable about memory or its purpose. As Nietzsche showed already long ago with respect to punishment, statements about the utility or purpose of a practice have nothing to do with its origins, and frequently constitute an attempt to shape it, to bend it this way or that. The datum of the historian of practices, including the historian of memory-practices, is composed of the historical accumulation of various interpretations, neither of which is truer or more meaningful than the others: “whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again interpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it.”⁹ With respect to collective memory, it is possible to distinguish analytically four dimensions of such interpretations.¹⁰

First, an *injunction to remember*: to paraphrase Nietzsche we could say that memory was not first devised for remembering; only an explicit *injunction to remember* imposes this function on various practices, rituals and discourses and turns them thereby into forms of “memory-work.” This injunction to remember may take different forms and be justified by reference to various beliefs and needs. Frequently, though not universally, it is provided by identifying a certain lapse of memory—forgetting—which may be variously interpreted as caused by external distortion and censorship, as we shall see in the Slovak case; or as in the Freudian model by internal repression and motivated forgetting; or it may be attributed to modernity, to the rapidity with which events follow one another, and the breakdown of traditional ways of life.¹¹ More generally, however, we could say that the injunction to remember is provided by a certain problematization of memory. Whether or not forgetting is an explicit focus, memory is suddenly highlighted as a problem and as something toward which the actor has a duty. Probably the paradigmatic example is provided by the Bible. As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi notes, the Hebrew verb *zakhor* (which means “remember!” in the imperative case, as in “[one] must remember”) appears in the Bible no less than 169 times, and involves an unconditional injunction to remember, incumbent on both the people and God as part of their eternal covenant. Forgetting appears almost as many times, but not as the source of the injunction to remember. It is a duty—“do not forget...”—which itself follows from the fact that the Jewish God makes himself manifest in history, and thus memory and faith are almost one and the same thing. Or as Amos Funkenstein puts it, while other peoples

“traced their origins back to mythical times” as a sign of their “true nobility,” the Hebrews accepted the stigma of youth and substituted for it a historical consciousness of being the “Chosen People.” Consequently, memory was problematized as a religious duty—to worship God and to become a holy people meant to recall a particular historical period, in the course of which the special covenant between God and his Chosen People was forged.¹²

The second dimension of the will to memory has to do simply with what is to be remembered. What is, so to speak, the *mnemonic substance* upon which memory operates? Or put more simply, which part of the past is deemed of consequence for the present and hence must be remembered? There is, for example, an important distinction regarding the time horizon of memory: is it the remote past of the scriptures, as in Jewish rituals and prayers? The immediate events of the recent past, still part of collective experience, as in memorial books? Or the past of historiography, stretching as far back as the records permit, and punctuated by events of political, economic and cultural significance?¹³ Already in this distinction we can see that at stake are not simply quantitative time differences but completely different ways of construing the object of memory. The very idea, for example, that what has to be remembered is “events” is specific to only certain forms of the will to memory. A good example is the instruction of the Passover Haggadah that “each generation should consider themselves as if they themselves were rescued from Egypt.” In a certain limited sense the exodus from Egypt is mentioned here as an “event” to be remembered, but as a historical event, with all its details, it is completely uninteresting from the point of view of the ritual prescribed by the Haggadah. The exodus is significant not as an event, but as an act of divine intervention in history, as part of that “invisible history” which lies underneath the manifest surface of the world and is stretched between destruction and redemption.¹⁴ Significantly, the Haggadah asks the believers to “consider themselves as if they themselves were rescued from Egypt,” i.e. not to remember an event but to place themselves, once again, within that invisible history, and in a sense reenact it.

Another example of a different mnemonic substance is trauma. As we shall see in the section dealing with the Czech dissidents, the literal interpretation of trauma as a real event is only the gambit in a much more complex game of interpretation in which trauma acquires completely

different dimensions as fantasy, as false memory, etc. In a sense, trauma completely escapes the historical or biographical time of events. It stands for psychological pain so powerful, so enduring—not necessarily due to its own characteristics but by virtue of the force of repression that paradoxically is meant to make it disappear—that it becomes impossible to localize in a sequence of events; in fact, it marks a fissure in the chain of events. It pervades the psyche, present at all times. The task of memory is to combat repression and its abnormal consequences by exposing oneself to this pain, regardless of how real was the traumatic event.¹⁵

The third dimension of the will to memory has to do with what it means to remember. What is the *mnemonic operation*? How does memory work? There is, for example, an important distinction between repetition and recollection,¹⁶ but I don't think it exhausts the various options at play. Repetition itself is open to a whole range of interpretations, from unreflective habit to elaborate and conscious "arts of memory" to the dramatic form of reenactment. It brings into play various techniques of memory-work, such as the prayer through which the faithful concentrate their thoughts on the object of memory, or the rituals of reenactment, as in the Jewish holidays of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles meant to reenact and memorialize the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai.¹⁷ Recollection, as well, may be construed in different ways. It may be seen as a creative reconstruction of the past in light of present interests, as in the "invention of tradition," or it may be seen as an effort of memory, neither to repeat nor to reconstruct but to recover traces of what has been lost, forgotten, covered over or censored. The techniques of memory-work at its disposal may vary widely, from archeological and philological investigations, as we shall see in the section dealing with the Slovak historians, to confession and public shaming, as we shall see with respect to the Czech dissidents.

Finally, forms of the will to memory differ, as I emphasized earlier, also in how they interpret the goal of memory, its utility, effect or function. The investment of memory with the function of preserving collective identity over time is quite common. Already in Halbwachs's classical formulation, collective memory "provides the group [with] a self-portrait that unfolds through time ... and allows the group to recognize itself throughout the total succession of images." Pierre Nora, as well, acknowledged his debt to Halbwachs in this regard: "Memory is life, borne by

living societies founded in its name ... a bond tying us to the eternal present.... Memory is blind to all but the group it binds—which is to say, as Maurice Halbwachs has said, that there are as many memories as there are groups.” The other high priest of memory, Anthony Smith, concurred: “One might almost say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation.”¹⁸ But this is by no means the only utility ascribed to memory. Let me return to the example of Jewish prayers and rituals in the diaspora. Both Nora and Smith cite these as a quintessential example of how memory functions to integrate the group,¹⁹ but their treatment is completely anachronistic. For memory to be ascribed this role, collective identity itself has to be first problematized. It has to come under scrutiny and be treated with a critical attitude for it to become part of an injunction to remember and then also the goal of remembering. The “degree of creative freedom” from the contents of tradition, as Funkenstein would put it,²⁰ has to be much larger. To ascribe this quite modern problematization to Jewish medieval practices is to describe them in terms very distant from their own. Within the rituals and prayers of medieval Jewry, the goal of memory was not to integrate the collectivity, nor to recall the glorious past of the nation and restore her to her true self. This, as we shall see, will be a much better description of the goal of memory for the Slovak historians (or for Zionist intellectuals and politicians, for that matter). The purpose of memory was essentially religious, to reconstitute, over and over again until the time of redemption, the special covenant between the Chosen People and God. Memory became fused with the condition of exile, and together they attested to divine election.²¹ And there are other purposes ascribed to memory, as well, especially a whole family of utilities having to do with “coming to terms with the past,” or “settling accounts.” These may range from the simple wish to pay tribute to those who were wronged in the past; through the search for “reconciliation,” which only the truth about the past could provide; through the claim that the truth about past crimes and the persecution of their perpetrators will protect society from cycles of retributive violence;²² to the more elaborate versions, as we shall see in the Czech case, in which memory, by overcoming trauma, is meant to cure society and protect it from itself, from its tendency to repeat abnormal and dangerous patterns of behavior.

THE SLOVAK HISTORIANS: MEMORY AS THE GUARANTOR OF IDENTITY

In the last decade before the fall of communism, a group of professional historians holding mid-level positions in the Slovak communist academic hierarchy, set out to produce a new official version of Slovak history. After the fall of communism, as these historians were advanced to key posts in the cultural elite, and managed to strike bargains with the postcommunist political elite, their version of Slovak history was incorporated and enshrined in the 1993 constitution of the new Slovak state.²³

This version of Slovak history was a narrative about the formation, continuity and final identity of the nation. The *injunction to remember* was provided by the sense of an external assault on the nation. Its enemies—especially the Hungarians, but also the advocates of Czechoslovakianism—were seeking to undermine its identity and territorial integrity, indeed its very existence, and for that purpose they censored and falsified crucial elements of the nation's history. For a small nation such as the Slovaks, memory was a crucial bulwark against the encroachments of stronger nations:

History has ... a commission to teach; the arterial highway of life should be an artesian well of life.... This school of History [*sic*], as it seems, has been attended only by the small and weak. The great and powerful had no need to learn; they have been creating History themselves, and if History did not match their needs, they modified History without hesitation.... But as I have already mentioned: we cannot lose our memory.... We cannot forget the history of Slovak–Magyar relations.... “God keep us from losing our internal sense of being, our most inherent meaning, but, as well, our ability to resist. We will always remain a small nation, but, as far as we defend our truth, we will never remain powerless.”²⁴

Of the two assaults, the Hungarian one was perceived as the more serious, an intentional misrepresentation of Slovak history motivated by irredentist ambitions.²⁵ Hungarian historians and politicians claimed that Slovaks settled in the territory of latter-day Slovakia only *after* it was conquered by the Magyars, and by the invitation of Hungarian kings. The Slovak historians, on the other hand, claimed that the settlement of Slovaks on

the territory of latter-day Slovakia far preceded the Hungarian invasions, and that there was a continuous, unbroken history of Slovak presence in the land.

This injunction to remember meant that the characteristic *mnemonic operation* of the Slovak will to memory was the recovery of traces of national existence, traces lost, forgotten, censored or falsified. Slovak historians and archeologists literally dug for evidence demonstrating Slovak precedence in the land, early Slovak sovereignty, Slovak cultural creativity, etc. For example, they produced archeological evidence to argue that the remains of old Slavonic settlements from the fifth and sixth centuries were identical with the Slovak settlements reported in historical sources from the eleventh century. This was meant to prove that the ancestors of the Slovaks occupied the territory of present-day Slovakia prior to any other claimants, especially the Hungarians.²⁶ Other archeological investigations traced Samo's realm, the oldest political structure reported in the sources, to the area of latter-day Slovakia, and his fortress of Wogastisburg to the vicinity of Bratislava.²⁷ Similarly, Slovak historians identified the later Great Moravian kingdom as "the first Slovak state," showing that its borders corresponded to present-day Moravia and Slovakia combined, and arguing that the Great Moravian "nation" was composed of two ethnic groups—Moravians and Slovaks—of whom "only the Slovaks have maintained their specific national identity." This was meant to show that the ancient Slovaks were not mere tribes, but a "state-bearing nation." In fact, the first state-bearing nation in the area, even prior to the Czechs.²⁸ Throughout these investigations, historiography, archeology and philology were assigned the role of reaching into the distant past and recovering that which has been lost or forgotten:

If historiography is to give a satisfactory answer to the question how, despite these adverse conditions, the Slovaks have survived, how they have constituted themselves into an independent ethnic and political association on the map of Central Europe, it must needs reach far back into the past, down to the foundations of Slav Samo's realm, Pribina's principality and Great Moravia itself, which molded Slovakia into a definite country, cemented the Slovak substrate and thus built the foundations of a modern nation.²⁹

What exactly were they recovering? What was the peculiar *mnemonic substance* upon which this will to memory worked? As with the “invisible history” of Jewish memory, underneath the visible events there was a more fundamental level wherein one could discern the nation as an actor of a wholly different history—national-economic, national-social, national-linguistic, etc.: “a nation is a historically developing social organism. Its integrating basis is the ethnic-linguistic identity of society through different stages in its economic-social development. On it rests consciousness of historical continuity...” At this level what counted were not events, but the “constants of history”—labor, life, territory, language and consciousness. Together they comprised the continuity of national existence.³⁰ Even after its fall, so claimed the Slovak historians, the Great Moravian kingdom bequeathed to its inhabitants a distinctive civilization informed by the linguistic innovations of Cyril and Methodius, the apostles to the Slavs, and the memory of a unified political existence within a clearly demarcated territory. Slovak philologists and geographers have analyzed Slovak place names, idioms and customs to show that this civilization was preserved in Slovak oral tradition and folklore, and found its way through them even into Hungarian language and culture. “Slovak history was not lost, but it became, in this way, an autonomous part of Hungarian history.”³¹ In short, the *mnemonic substance* was composed of all these traces left behind not simply by individuals, but by the nation, by this “historically developing social organism.”

Within this social organism, memory played an important function. Its goal was to preserve the identity and continuity of the nation through the ages, such “that not even an almost millennial denial of their rights in the Hungarian state succeeded in etching away their national unity.”³² The heritage of Great Moravia was carried and preserved by the laboring masses, the peasants, who dug into the soil and preserved in the simple constants of their way of life the memory of Great Moravia and Slovak statehood:

A state which had for nearly a hundred years formed and informed the history of Central Europe perished.... Some older historians interpreted it as a national catastrophe that meant the interruption of the nation’s life. It is impossible to agree with that. Today we know that Slovakia and the Slovaks simply reached the threshold of

a new life, a new age which, however, was not so favorably disposed toward them.... Centuries had to pass before our two nations met again in a common state, before we found ourselves on the same path in a battle for national freedom.... All this could come to pass only because the Slovak plains and valleys were not abandoned after the fall of Great Moravia. Once more the peasant cut his plough into the soil; the scythe swished on the meadow; songs could be heard on a hillside and a child's tears in the cradle. Life and work, the two constants of history, preserved Slovak society from extinction.³³

This narrative of Slovak history, and the role it apportioned to memory, was enshrined not only in texts, but also in visual art. An example can be seen in figure 1. It is a painting by F. Gajdoš, which used to hang in the Hall of the Knights in Bratislava Castle. It is there no more, owing no doubt to the grandiose socialist-realist style in which it is rendered, but the narrative of history it depicts is precisely the same as that enshrined in the postcommunist constitution. At the bottom center we see a lonely female figure, from which the whole composition flows upwards on both sides. It no doubt represents the Slovak nation—its spirit, origin and historical destiny. The details in the bottom part of the painting are unimportant for our purposes. Suffice it to say that they depict the rise and fall of Great Moravia, and they include in the tale also Cyril and Methodius, the inventors of its unique civilization. More important for our purposes are the two figures in the center of the painting who are watching the events unfolding below: one, a peasant woman, stern and resolute, looks upon the warriors. From her position, right in the middle of the composition, exactly above the sad national spirit at the bottom, we can recognize her significance. We meet again the national spirit, identical and yet now in the form of a peasant woman, the toiling masses, hardened and strengthened by years of servitude to foreign invaders. Through work and tradition she ensures the nation's survival and thus connects the past and the present. She is memory incarnate and embodied. To the right, and a little bit below, a man seated in the classical "thinker" pose, watches the battle too. He obviously represents the national intelligentsia, or even more specifically, the national historian who is the other guarantor of the nation's survival through the years, the other bearer of



Fig. 1. F. Gajdoš, *Od veľkej moravy po dnešok* (From Great Moravia until today). Source: Matúš Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie* (Personalities of Great Moravian History) (Martin: Osveta, 1986), p. 205.

collective memory, erudite and textual. The final scene above them is less interesting for our purposes. It clearly depicts a group of socialist “new men” and women, confronting and vanquishing their opponents by peaceful means. It is noteworthy that the painting no longer needs to indicate whether these “new men” and women are the international proletariat who has transcended the bonds of nationality, or the newest and final incarnation of the Slovak nation, the Slovak working class. It is eloquently silent on this point. As the historians have averred: “national historical consciousness is the inevitable basis of modern socialist consciousness.”³⁴

I dwelled on this painting at some length, especially because of the figure of the thinker. It eloquently depicts the “will to memory” encapsulated in this form of historiography. The first thing we must note about it is that it is *embattled*. It is no coincidence that in the painting the historian appears right above the warriors and almost among them. Historical memory is a battlefield, and the stakes are no less than the nation’s very existence. Or put differently, we can say that this form of the “will to

memory,” which invests memory with the function of guarantying identity, tends to generate its own sense and distinctive rhetoric of a “crisis” of memory: it typically depicts an *external* assault on collective memory by competing narratives composed by the enemies of the nation, who thus attempt to undermine its identity, integrity and territorial claim, indeed its very existence.

This is not an accidental feature of this will to memory. As we have seen, it is the source of its very injunction to remember, and without the sense of external challenge, without the multiplication of memory, it loses its *raison d’être*. Hence, the Slovak historians inhabit an agonistic world, in which they constantly do battle with competing versions of history: they vehemently dispute the claims made by the “American-Hungarian historian” Imre Boba, about the localization of Great Moravia in what is today Serbia. It is immaterial that Boba has lived in the US for more than forty years, and that originally he was Polish-Hungarian. They detect here a Hungarian “political aim ... to deny the historical validity of Slovak territory.”³⁵ They even accuse certain “Hungarians” of censoring and not publishing the true findings of archeological excavations for “political” reasons. For similar reasons, they have felt compelled to do battle also on another front, against certain Russian historians who argued that Great Moravia was the “first common state of Czechs and Slovaks,” i.e. the first “Czechoslovakia.” Here too they detected a sinister plot, attempting to thwart the Slovak struggle in the 1960s to federalize Czechoslovakia, and in the 1970s and 1980s to protect this federalization and increase the autonomy of the Slovak Federal Republic. This is precisely why they have insisted that in Great Moravia only Moravians and Slovaks came together, of which the latter played the leading role. No longer were Slovaks to be consigned to the position of “lesser brothers” to the Czechs.³⁶

A similar sense of external assault has generated also the recent tendency to remember and rehabilitate the Slovak fascist puppet state of World War II. Before the fall of communism this was typically the work of émigré historians, themselves old *Ludaks* (i.e. members of Hlinka’s fascist People’s Party) or their offspring, who were trying to justify and rehabilitate their own actions. But as the conflict with the Czechs intensified, and the latter accused the Slovak elite of harboring fascist sympathies, the struggles over the historiography of the Tiso regime and the uprising against it (the so-called “Slovak National Uprising”) became analogous to the struggles

over the historiography of Great Moravia. To rehabilitate the Tiso regime, or at least to present the Slovaks as essentially antifascist, became synonymous with defending the nation's identity by preserving its memory.³⁷

The second thing to note about Gajdoš's painting is that the historian, the narrator, is *in* the painting. This form of "will to memory" is not only embattled, but also embedded:

the historian is then naturally not only the subject, but also the object of history. In other words, the past affects us not only ... by its conscious element, but also by its unconscious and unknown element.... this double relation manifests itself as a strong tie between the historian's social standing and his scientific endeavors....³⁸

As I noted earlier, the whole point of the "memory turn" overtaking the social and human sciences is that the boundaries between history and tradition, the scientific and the popular, are blurred, and that with the same postmodernist gesture by which the historians invite the "subjugated knowledges" in, they also acquire the capacity to identify with them and to enjoy the prestige of embeddedness and authenticity. The historian is inside the painting, he no longer enjoys an objective viewpoint, but by the same token he also becomes the voice of collective memory and thus acquires the function of preserving the nation's identity. As the Slovak dissident historian Jozef Jablonický put it: "The results of historical science are not produced in the laboratory, it is a societal science. History is a national discipline."³⁹

THE CZECH DISSIDENTS: MEMORY AS A MEANS OF OVERCOMING TRAUMA

While the Slovak form of the will to memory was elaborated by a group of historians who climbed within the communist hierarchy, the Czech form was mostly a dissident affair. It originated in the struggle of the dissidents to reclaim history and memory as an act of resistance against communist power, which they depicted as a power to erase and forget.⁴⁰

The injunction to remember articulated by this group is well captured in the first page of Milan Kundera's wonderful *Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. He notes how the figure of Vladimir Clementis was system-

atically erased from history books after his execution. And yet, there was a trace left behind: a famous picture still showed the Czech leader Gottwald donning a fur cap given to him by Clementis just moments before the picture was taken. Though Clementis was airbrushed out of the photograph, his cap remained behind, a visible warning to those who knew that, as Kundera put it: “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”⁴¹ Memory emerged as a moral duty, as “historical responsibility,” because power benefited from forgetting and encouraged it. Forgetting was rife and systematic, caused by repression and censorship, and historical memory was full of “black holes,” where nobody knew anymore what had happened. The dissident response, therefore, all across Eastern Europe but especially in the Czech Republic, was to champion memory against the regime, to hold commemorations of people who were purged and of events that were censored, and to dedicate underground *samizdat* publications to them.⁴²

But what was the point of remembering? In Kundera, as in Václav Havel, memory is a heroic gesture of individual resistance meant to create the possibility of “living within the truth.” Mirek keeps a diary, he tells his friends, because “nothing we do is in violation of the constitution ... trying to hide, feeling guilty—that’s the beginning of the end.”⁴³ For the individual, memory is indispensable for authentic life conduct. Maybe this form of “living within the truth” could also serve as an example for others and motivate them to resist the regime? Quickly, however, the dissidents discovered that their heroic resistance was met with general indifference among the wider public, and certainly was not emulated. It was at this point that their memory campaign turned in a different direction, and they begun to articulate a different sort of goal for it. In good Freudian fashion, they interpreted the indifference of the public as evidence for a more insidious form of motivated forgetting, a sort of amnesia pact between the regime and its subjects. They began to champion memory not simply as a tool of resistance against the regime, but also as a means of effecting an internal transformation in the hearts and minds of ordinary communist citizens, and thereby undoing the moral corruption of communism.

A good example is their analysis of the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans after World War II.⁴⁴ The very fact that they chose to write about this topic is instructive, because the expulsion, in which three million

ethnic Germans were forcibly removed from their homes and driven across the border, was conducted by the Beneš government before the Communists rose to power. Clearly, choosing to write about the expulsion in *samizdat* during the 1970s, the dissident historians were not seeking to expose the injustices wrought by Communists. Their interest in the expulsion stemmed from the thesis that it prepared the moral climate for communism: that it perverted standards of justice by applying the notion of collective guilt, and thus prepared the way for the show trials of the 1950s; that it created a communist constituency of individuals who were complicit in the expulsion, benefited from it, and were thus profoundly interested in forgetting what took place; and that it encouraged looting and thus undermined respect for private property:

The transfer ... taught the nation not to respect ... the principle of property, a value created over generations. It ... taught [the nation] to steal.... The alienation of property in socialist ownership ... does not have its source and spring in the origin of socialism, but here in the immense stealing and robbing of German property.⁴⁵

The point of writing about the expulsion, then, was to break the amnesia pact between the regime and the nation, a pact upon which communism rested. Memory, as represented by the dissidents, was therefore an antidote not simply to the “external” censorship of the regime but to the internal processes of repression and dissociation, which conditioned individuals to “live within a lie” and to become complicit in their own subjection.⁴⁶ In the course of this debate, the *mnemonic substance* of the Czech will to memory transformed as well: from the *event* of the expulsion to the *trauma* of moral complicity, which, because individuals wished to deny it, immobilized them in the face of totalitarian power and made them complicit with it even more.

We can recognize in this dissident will to memory the psychoanalytic model of the effect exercised by childhood trauma on adult psyches. The argument proceeds as follows: because it is too painful to remember, trauma is repressed. Repression, however, is active and motivated forgetting, and it is preserved only through a constant internal (though unconscious) vigilance. This constant effort distorts the personality of the adult, in extreme cases causing individuals to dissociate and split their personalities.

The only way to overcome these problems is to recover the memory of the original trauma and acknowledge it.⁴⁷ This was precisely the structure of the dissident argument: the very normalcy of societal and individual psyches was staked on the operation of memory. With so much to deny and forget, reality split into two—official and personal—and with it individuals as well. To be a communist subject meant to conduct a double life of *dissimulation*, to say things one does not mean and be silent about certain things that were unmentionable; to do certain things as pure meaningless ritual, and to avoid doing and taking responsibility for what really mattered; to refuse, in a sense, authenticity and identity. We can see how the argument of trauma, denial and dissimulation completely changed the mnemonic substance. The trauma, first, has been pushed outside the framework of meaningful time, before communism, as a sort of “original sin”; and then it was stretched to form a chain of repetition, of continuous acts of complicity each of which is a “mini-trauma” all of its own.⁴⁸

This trauma model explains why the memory campaign of the dissidents did not subside after the fall of the communist regime in 1989, when, ostensibly, censorship was no more and the truth about the past could be told. On the contrary, it became more intense, more public, shriller, and since now they also possessed political power, far more consequential. For the trauma to cease to exercise its pernicious effect, and for individuals to recover their moral responsibility, the trauma and the whole chain of moral complicity that ensued from it had to be *confessed* and *witnessed*, rather than simply remembered and told. This was the peculiar *mnemonic operation* of this will to memory. To tell the truth about the past did not mean simply to recover an event that was lost or censored, but to own up to its significance; to recognize that one has denied it in the past and to accept responsibility for one’s moral complicity; or at the very least watch somebody else do that, and through identification with the negative hero of the confession drama overcome one’s trauma as well. Postcommunist citizens, argued the dissidents, needed to confess that they too were complicit in the crimes of communism, even if in a passive sort of way. They needed to own up to dissimulation, in order to break with it. Any refusal to do so, any failure to admit to such guilt, was interpreted by the dissidents as a motivated failure of memory, the effect of unconscious repression and denial. Hence the attempts of the dissidents to organize various confessional campaigns, in which the traumas of

communism would be remembered, told and witnessed. One of the first acts of Havel as president, for example, was to issue a public apology to the Germans about the expulsions. Such apology was meant to start a chain of confessions from those who had moved into German property and thereby break the spell that held them enthralled to the old totalitarian mentality. Then, by association, confession should have spread to all those who had similarly collaborated with the crimes of communism.

Not only has the memory campaign of the dissidents not subsided after the fall of communism but they invested memory with even weightier hopes and fears. Now that the communist regime was no more, and society needed to be built anew, the main obstacle was no longer communist power but its unconscious effects, the subjects it left behind still tainted by their moral complicity. Memory and confession were called upon to cure society—healing through truth—and to protect it from repetition, from the return of totalitarianism in any guise.⁴⁹ The very normalcy of the future was staked upon memory:

Nations, like individuals, need to face up to and understand traumatic past events before they can put them aside and move on to normal life. This is important for the victims, who can truly heal and resume their contributions to society only when their dignity and suffering have been officially acknowledged. But it is just as important for the collaborators. Preventing dictatorship's return requires a full understanding of the mechanisms of dictatorship.... A nation's decisions about how to face its past are central to the challenge of building real democracy.⁵⁰

Under the weight of this goal, however, memory buckled. The crisis of memory that ensued, and which is still very much in evidence all over East Central Europe, was not caused by generalized forgetting and amnesia, but was the result of the investment of memory with the function of healing and protecting society. What happened was not unlike what Ian Hacking shows happens when memory is entrusted with the task of healing individuals. In the case of repressed memories, which analysts and courts attempt to coax onto the surface, an inevitable equivocation emerges between fact, fantasy and falsity. Memory could be construed as recalling a real event, let's say child sexual abuse, which has been repressed because

it was too painful. But it could also be construed as reacting to an imaginary event, i.e. to a fantasy expressing unconscious desire, which was repressed as well because it was illicit. Finally, memory could be construed as false. It could be construed as a learned manner of relating to oneself, of reinterpreting one's feelings and memories, with the more sinister implication of memories being "implanted" by the analyst. Hacking reports veritable "culture wars" between psychoanalysts, feminists, multiple personality advocates, parents' associations and "false memory" foundations championing these three interpretations, particularly around allegations of child sexual abuse, with very little possibility of settling on the "true" nature of the event. The search for "truth in memory," inevitably, because of what we want memory to do for us, ends in debacle.⁵¹

When it comes to the theory of *collective* trauma, *collective* forgetting and remembering, a similar equivocation presents itself with similarly pernicious consequences: there is the realistic, factual interpretation, according to which the trauma is a crime perpetrated in the past on the innocent, and then forgotten, because knowledge about it was censored, distorted and misrepresented. This is very similar to Kundera's original intent. Such knowledge should be made public once again, in order to rehabilitate the victims and punish the wrongdoers. Memory heals and protects society by "settling accounts": those who suffered are recompensed for their suffering, whether through reparations; through restitution of stolen property; through rehabilitation that restores their dignity; or through the satisfaction of seeing their tormentors punished. Those who committed crimes are brought to justice and punished, or they are barred from holding public office, or they are simply exposed and shamed. In this way, society removes dangerous elements from its midst. The proponents of this view are well aware that such measures are limited. They will never reach all the guilty, and certainly they will not touch those who were complicit in the crimes in a passive sort of way. But this is as it should be, they say. Settling accounts through restitution, persecution and screening also acts symbolically on society, sending a clear message of condemnation, drawing a sharp line between the past and present, and indeed sacrificing a "scapegoat" for society's sins, thereby guaranteeing the establishment of the rule of law in the present, and allowing the majority of citizens to put the past behind them.⁵²

In the Czech Republic, the proponents of this view included Prime Minister Václav Klaus and his circle of technocrats, as well as some of the more “conservative” dissidents allied with him.⁵³ They drafted and eventually passed the “lustration” law, which required screening the past careers of any individual holding, or seeking to hold, parliamentary office or jobs in high-level governmental offices, the military, the intelligence services, the police corps, state radio and television organizations, news agencies, state-owned enterprises, railways, banks, high academic positions, the judicial bench, etc. Any individual who was found to have been in the past a member of the former secret police, or an informer for it, a former communist official from the district level up, a former member of the people’s militia, or of the national front action committees, was barred for a five-year period from holding these positions. This period was later extended till the year 2000. They explicitly rejected the thesis of universal guilt, which as we saw was an essential element of the dissidents’ trauma model, and turned it back at them:

It was not “we” who did this. None of “us” would ever have had the audacity, for we do not know this type of ambition. Behind every arrogant attempt to draw up completely new social institutions, there lurks the cerebral and sometimes physical violence of a handful of self-important intellectuals.... The attempt at socialism ... was not “mob violence” ... but rather a revolt by a group of leftist intellectuals.⁵⁴

The term “lustration” served their intention well, as it referred to the ancient custom of sacrificing a scapegoat to appease the Gods and purge society’s sins. Czech intellectuals translated it as meaning “purification by sacrifice, purging.”⁵⁵ But from the point of view of the dissidents, of course, the problem was that the distinction between victims and the guilty was problematic. The evidence at the disposal of screening committees was mostly from the files of the secret police, and when it came to identifying collaborators and informers these were especially unreliable. The dissidents in particular were likely to be accused as “collaborators,” because when they were arrested by the communist regime pressure was put on them to inform on their colleagues, and they were mentioned in the files as “candidates for collaboration.” There were several highly

publicized cases of such former dissidents being screened by lustration and then suing in the courts.⁵⁶ At their disposal the dissidents had an alternative to lustration, namely confession, with the associated ideas of universal guilt, trauma and dissimulation. Here the trauma was not interpreted realistically, but symbolically, as in the Freudian interpretation of trauma as fantasy. There was no simple distinction between victims and perpetrators because everybody were complicit in the crimes of communism, and everybody were victimized by it, especially victimized by their complicity. The real trauma was internal, caused not so much by the concrete crime as by the fact that people had to live with repressed knowledge of its existence. It is not knowledge per se that could overcome forgetting/denial, nor even persecution and condemnation, which will merely allow individuals to continue to deny their guilt and project it toward external figures (scapegoats). Confession was needed and *witnessing*, a sort of sentimental education that could be orchestrated through public apologies, historians' tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, private meetings between informers and their victims, self-criticism, the erection of monuments and the building of museums.⁵⁷

While they had a different vision of the mnemonic substance and the mnemonic operation from Klaus and his circle, the dissidents construed the goal of memory similarly. They too warned that the future of society hung in the balance, and that memory was needed to protect and heal society. Without confessing to the crimes of communism and without breaking the cycle of dissimulation, argued the dissidents, there is no chance that postcommunist societies will be able to lead normal lives. They will be continuously haunted by unconscious trauma, and highly susceptible to *repetition*, even when, or precisely because, they try their hardest to put the past behind them (i.e. to forget): "We are like an obese person who forgets that he is loaded down with several dozen extra kilos and that these are an extra burden for his heart and ultimately shorten his life."⁵⁸ Memory, by contrast, heals through truth. This argument was by no means unique to the Czech dissidents. It was of course at the core of recent debates in Germany about the Holocaust, German complicity and proper commemoration. It has provided the rationale for the "Truth and Reconciliation" Committees in South Africa, and from there has spread to Latin America and the rest of the world as a package recommended by human rights groups and funded by foundations.⁵⁹ It has been made with

respect to the Bosnian conflict, as an explanation for Serb behavior, and a suggestion of how to achieve peace and understanding after the conflict is over.⁶⁰ It is the justification given by groups like the Russian NGO *Memorial*, for why they engage in building monuments to gulag victims. They explain that memorializing is required in order to guarantee that society will not return to the past.⁶¹ It is also the justification for some forms of revisionist history in Israel.⁶²

Finally, “false memory” makes its appearance too. This attitude no longer concerns itself at all with the trauma, because it is obsessed by what it perceives as a ubiquitous distortion of memory. If memory is unstable, if it is impossible to decide between fact and fantasy, this must be because sinister forces still operate to distort it. Memory, which was meant to heal, becomes itself in need of defense by radical surgery, for example by the publication of black lists of communist collaborators, regardless of how they were obtained, how accurate they may be, and regardless of the consequences. This interpretation is common among the more extreme fringes of Czech society, but it was initiated, as well, by a former dissident. Petr Cibulka, the current dark prince of Czech “wild lustration,” of anticommunist moral panics and conspiracy theories, was a dissident, member of the famous “Jazz Section,” a Charter 77 signatory, a political prisoner, even member of the first postcommunist parliament dominated by the dissidents. Today, however, he is the editor of *Rudé Krávo* (Red cow), a magazine responsible for the publication of “collaborator” lists based on stolen secret police files, and known for the accusation that Havel, too, was a secret police informer.⁶³ The emergence of “false memory” thus makes it even more difficult to decide on the “true” nature of the trauma, and to my mind indicates that the cause of this crisis of memory is in what memory is required to do, i.e. in the investment of postcommunist life by a certain will to memory characterized by the idea that memory *protects* and *heals*, that at issue in memory is not justice per se, but society’s safety, well-being and normalcy.

A final note on the social role ascribed to intellectuals by this form of the will to memory: we already saw how the Slovak will to memory was characterized by embeddedness. When the historians relinquished the superiority of history over tradition, they received in return the prestige of immanence as representatives of society’s collective memory and guardians of its identity. In the Czech model of trauma and confession,

the significance of memory is not embeddedness, but individualization. As *Memorial* explains: the goal is to “give back to victims their individuality, which a monstrous system robbed from them.”⁶⁴ As the guardian of memory, the intellectual does not become an immanent part of society’s mechanisms of cohesion and reflection. Rather, he or she stand outside it as pastors, who take care of the flock by taking care of each individual soul. The pastors are virtuous individuals who confess and question themselves regularly, and by virtue of the purity of their example, they are also shepherds and leaders of the flock: seeing to the truthfulness of the individual’s confession; prescribing penance; and guiding the individual conscience toward salvation/healing. This is precisely what Adam Michnik, for example, endeavored to do for Poles and Jews as he criticized himself, confessed his fault in ignoring the crime in Jedwabne, and searched for what exactly would be his “individual responsibility and ... guilt” with respect to it. His, and other Poles’ responsibility, he felt, was not for the crime, but for denying the truth about the crime, “and that for decades a lie was repeated.” If Poles were to overcome their “deep trauma which surfaces with each new debate about anti-Semitism,” they needed to follow Michnik’s example and leadership.⁶⁵

CONCLUSIONS

I have sought to show that the sense of a crisis of memory in contemporary East Central Europe is generated neither by the universal nature of memory nor by some peculiarly East European “obsession” with the past, but by two different types of “will to memory,” two different investments of memory with a certain utility or purpose. I have argued, though I cannot make the case fully here, that the contrast between these two forms of memory corresponds to two different understandings of the social role of intellectuals: one which embeds them in society as the guardians of collective memory and identity, and the other which positions them outside it as pastors of individual memory and conscience. On the one hand, we have a completely immanent claim to represent the collectivity. The historian is inside the painting. He is identical with the nation’s spirit and memory. He is an organ of this “historically developing social organism.” But by the same token, he cannot speak in the name of values or ideals

that are greater than the nation. He is completely within the stream of the nation's history and cannot observe it from without. On the other hand, we have a claim to speak in the name of transcendent values, but this claim is limited to a pastoral encounter between individuals. The pastor stands outside the collectivity. He speaks about justice, morality, authenticity and truth. He addresses himself to the civil society of individuals. But by the same token, he never tells them who they are. On the contrary, he seeks to lead them by example to find out, by themselves, through confession, who they are. It is almost as if intellectuals could no longer partake at once of the double privilege they enjoyed in the past—transcendence and representation—and had to choose between them: either representation without transcendence, as in the Slovak case, or transcendence without representation, as in the Czech case. I do not think this situation is unique to East Central Europe, though it may be more obvious for the moment in postcommunist societies. It stems from a crisis of the social role of intellectuals, somewhat analogous to what Zygmunt Bauman has characterized as a transition from the role of legislator—who propounds universal truths—to the role of interpreter—who translates between communities and points of view that are valid in equal measure.⁶⁶

NOTES

1. Claus Offe, "Ethnic Politics in East European Transitions," *Zentrum für Europäische Rechtspolitik, Diskussionspapier*, 1/93 (Bremen, 1993), 22–23. Both diagnoses—of too little or too much memory—have been made so many times that it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of references. Examples of the first view are John Borneman, *Settling Accounts: Violence, Justice, and Accountability in Postsocialist Europe* (Princeton, 1997); and Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism* (New York, 1996). Examples of the second view are Jerzy Jedlicki, "Historical Memory as a Source of Conflicts in Eastern Europe," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 32, no. 3 (1999): 225–32; and Tony Judt, "The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe," *Daedalus* 21, no. 4 (fall 1992): 99.

2. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, no. 26 (spring 1989): 7; Judt, "The Past," 99. To do justice to Nora's complex argument, his is truly a middle position between too little and too much memory. While the "milieus of memory" are no more, the "sites of

memory” are fast multiplying in the contemporary period. They are hybrid creatures between history and memory, depending at once on a “will to remember” and on history’s dislocation of memory.

3. Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, “Introduction,” *Representations*, no. 26 (spring 1989): 1–6. See also, Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York, 1995), 5.

4. I owe this observation, and many other insights that are at the core of this paper, to Ian Hacking’s superb *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton, 1995).

5. This is indeed the premise of Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York, 1980).

6. I cannot enter here into the question of why Czech and Slovak intellectuals espoused these different visions of the social role of intellectuals. I addressed this question elsewhere, by analyzing the struggles over the social role of the intellectuals prompted by the demise of the Prague Spring in 1968. My argument was that in the course of these struggles two different coalitions of intellectuals and technocrats were forged within the two federal republics, each carrying a distinctive vision of the social role of intellectuals. For more details, see Gil Eyal, *The Origins of Postcommunist Elites: From the Prague Spring to the Breakup of Czechoslovakia* (Minneapolis, 2003).

7. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 78–80; Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7–8; Rubie S. Watson, “Introduction,” in idem, ed., *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe, NM, 1994), 8; Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 108, 111.

8. Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, VT, 1993). The point that the concept of “collective memory” is an added interpretation superimposed over the earlier concepts of myth, tradition and folklore is made by Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, “Collective Memory—What Is It?” *History & Memory* 8, no. 1 (spring/summer 1996): 30–50.

9. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York, 1969), 77.

10. This framework is inspired by a similar one used by Foucault to analyze ethical programs. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (London, 1984), 25–28. For a similar attempt to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of memory, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1994).

11. This last interpretation is common among the scholars of collective memory, of whom Pierre Nora and Anthony Smith are the most prominent. See Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7, 9, 13; Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and*

Nationalism in a Global Era (Cambridge, 1995). Thus, to the extent that they relabel as “collective memory” what earlier was called “tradition,” “myth” or “folklore,” and to the extent that they present memory as a bulwark against the forgetting brought about by modernity, they should be seen as themselves adding an injunction to remember to their subject matter, and as articulating a particular form of the will to memory.

12. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), 5, 9, 24; Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, 1993), 11, 50–52. Funkenstein’s concept of “historical consciousness” is, in many respects, analogous to my idea of a “will to memory.” Funkenstein defines historical consciousness as “the degree of creative freedom in the use of interpretation of the contents of collective memory. This degree differs at different times in the same culture or at different social environments at any given time within the same culture” (ibid., 10). This concept, explains Funkenstein, mediates and overcomes the oppositions between collective memory and individual acts of remembrance, and between history and memory. It is, in short, a form of discourse (ibid., 4–10).

13. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 34. As Funkenstein notes, Yerushalmi’s strict distinction here between secular historiography and religious memory is unwarranted. The *Halakhah* (Jewish religious law) contains a well-developed historical consciousness, while professional historians are never quite capable of separating themselves from the conventions of collective memory. Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 10–11, 15–21. I chose to keep Yerushalmi’s distinctions here merely for heuristic purposes, since they are simple and easy to grasp.

14. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 10–11, 21–24. As Funkenstein shows, however, Yerushalmi was wrong to attribute such indifference to events and historical details to “Jewish memory” in general, or even to the author/s of the scriptures. This is why I preferred to focus strictly on the Haggadah, the ritual text of Passover, as an illustration of an injunction to remember coupled with indifference to historical events.

15. Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 183–97. For my purposes here, I would like to bracket questions about whether trauma and its effects are “real.” I follow Nietzsche, who said that the idea of trauma, or of psychological pain, was “not a fact, but only an interpretation—a causal interpretation—of facts that have hitherto defied exact formulation—too vague to be scientifically serious—a fat word replacing a very thin question mark.” Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 129.

16. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 19, 26.

17. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 44; Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 55.

18. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 83–86; Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7–8; Anthony D. Smith, “Memory and Modernity: Reflections on Ernest Gellner’s Theory of Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 2, no. 3 (1996):

383. See also Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique*, no. 65 (spring–summer 1995): 125–34: "The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose cultivation serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge ... of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity" (132). Even an otherwise trenchant critique of the concept of "collective memory" affirms this function of providing identity and integration, but claims that memory can only perform this function for very small groups of people who share indeed similar experiences. See Duncan S. A. Bell, "Mythscape: Memory, Mythology and National Identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (March 2003): 72–73, 79 n.3.

19. Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8; Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London, 1991), 33–37.

20. See n. 12 above.

21. Here I must part ways with Yerushalmi, who in somewhat qualified terms ascribes to memory the role of aiding in the survival of the Jewish people in their condition of "global dispersion." Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 5. See the much more subtle discussion in Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 10–13, 15–21.

22. Borneman, *Settling Accounts*, 23–25.

23. For more details about this group, see Eyal, *The Origins of Postcommunist Elites*, 120–31.

24. Vladimír Mináč, "Introduction," in Pavol Števček, ed., *Slovaks and Magyars: Slovak-Magyar Relations in Central Europe* (Bratislava, 1995), 7–10.

25. Dušan Slobodník, "Some Aspects of Recent Slovak-Magyar Relations," in Števček, *Slovaks and Magyars*, 101–12.

26. Vincent Sedlák, "The Ancient Slovak Settlement Area and Its Management until the End of the Middle Ages," and Dušan Čaplovič, "Historical and Habitation-al Development in the Carpathian Basin in the Second Half of the First Millennium in the Optics of the Archeological Sources," in Števček, *Slovaks and Magyars*, 11–40; Vincent Sedlák, "Staroslovenský sídlenný priestor a dielo Profesora Rapanta" (The position of an old-Slavic settlement and the work of Professor Rapant), in Richard Marsina, ed., *Historik Daniel Rapant: Život a dielo (1897–1988–1997)* (Historian Daniel Rapant: Life and works) (Martin, 1998), 34–47; Richard Marsina et al., *Slovenské dejiny* (Slovak history) (Martin, 1992), 23. For my own part, not being an expert on ancient and medieval history, I would not presume to pronounce judgment on either the truth or falsity of this claim and of those detailed below. Suffice it to say that none of these claims have been unanimously accepted by other scholars, be they Hungarian, Czech, German or American. They remain hotly contested, and at times even ridiculed.

27. Matúš Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie* (Personalities of Great Moravian history) (Martin, 1986), 36–44, 50; Čaplovič, “Historical and Habitational Development,” 33; Sedlák, “The Ancient Slovak Settlement Area,” 11.

28. Marsina et al., *Slovenské dejiny*, 33; Čaplovič, “Historical and Habitational Development,” 35–37; Sedlák, “The Ancient Slovak Settlement Area,” 21–24; Jan Dekan, *Začiatky slovenských dejín a ríše veľkomoravská* (The beginning of Slovak history and the Great Moravian empire) (Bratislava, 1951); idem, “Veľká Morava a problem staromoravskej narodnosti” (Great Moravia and the problem of old Moravian nationality), *Historický Časopis* 20, no. 2 (1972): 173–85; Matúš Kučera, “Veľká Morava a začiatky našich národných dejín” (Great Moravia and the beginning of our national history), *Historický Časopis* 33, no. 2 (1985), 163–200; idem, “Veľká Morava a slovenské dejiny” (Great Moravia and Slovak history) in J. Poulík, Bohuslav Chropovský a Kolektiv, eds., *Veľká Morava a počátky československé štátnosti* (Great Moravia and the beginning of Czechoslovak statehood) (Prague and Bratislava, 1985); Stanislav Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival* (New York, 1995), 20.

29. Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie*, 263.

30. Ibid., 5, 234.

31. Čaplovič, “Historical and Habitational Development,” 36–37; Sedlák, “The Ancient Slovak Settlement Area,” 13–18, 21–22; Ján Dekan, *Veľká Morava: Doba a umenie* (Great Moravia: Period and arts) (Bratislava, 1976); Matúš Kučera, “Problémy vzniku a vývoja feudalizmu na Slovensku” (Problems of the rise and development of feudalism in Slovakia), *Historický Časopis* 22, no. 4 (1974), 541–64; Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 35.

32. Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie*, 265.

33. Ibid., 234. Matúš Kučera, *Slovensko po páde Veľkej Moravy (Študie z hospodárskych a sociálnych dejín)* (Slovakia after the fall of Great Moravia: Studies in economic and social history) (Bratislava, 1974); Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 37.

34. Kučera, *Postavy veľkomoravskej histórie*, 5.

35. Sedlák, “The Ancient Slovak Settlement Area,” 22. The localization of Great Moravia remains, indeed, a matter of grave dispute. See, for example, Henrik Birnbaum, “Was Medieval Moravia in the Hungarian Basin?” www.c3.hu/scripta/books/96/04/04birn.htm (last accessed 16 Feb. 2004).

36. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 35–36; Marsina et al., *Slovenské dejiny*, 33. On the Slovak struggle for federalization and in its defense, see Carol Skalnik Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia* (Princeton, 1988). It is quite telling that while Marxist Czech historians affiliated with the regime tended to hew close to the official line about “the first common state of Czechs and Slovaks,” dissident Czech historians such as Dušan Třeštík tended to ridicule it. See Dušan Třeštík,

“Vel’ká Morava—zemu stuhovavá” (Great Moravia—the migratory land), *Lidové Noviny*, 20 Dec. 1995, 8. Thus, for completely opposite reasons, the Slovak nationalist historians and the Czech dissident historians were united in opposition to the official line, a precarious unity that unraveled immediately with the fall of the regime.

37. For works that engage in rehabilitating the Tiso regime, or which seek to present the Slovaks as essentially antifascist, see, for example, Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia*, 205–23; and Anton Hrnko, *Politicky vyvin a protifasisticky odboj na slovensku, 1939–1941* (Political developments and antifascist resistance in Slovakia, 1939–1941) (Bratislava, 1988). For the history of the debate, see Dušan Kovač, “The Uprising: More Than a Tale of Long Ago,” *Parlamentni Kourier*, nos. 7–8 (1994): 99–102. For the Czech accusations, see for example the interview given by Havel’s spokesman, Michal Žantovský, to *Mlada Fronta*, 3 Nov. 1991; or Milan Zitny, “Meciar’s Questionable Supremacy,” *East European Reporter* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1992): 68.

38. Matúš Kučera, “F. V. Sasinek—Founder of Modern Slovak Historiography,” *Studia Historica Slovaca* 13 (Bratislava, 1984), 207.

39. Jozef Jablonický, “Boj za pravdu o povstani” (Struggle over the truth about the uprising), *Parlamentni Kourier*, nos. 7–8 (1994): 4–6.

40. For more details about this group, see Eyal, *The Origins of Postcommunist Elites*, 59–78.

41. Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York, 1980), 3.

42. Milan Šimečka, “Black Holes: Concerning the Metamorphoses of Historical Memory,” *Kosmas* 3–4, nos. 1–2 (winter 1984): 23–28; Richard S. Esbenschade, “Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe,” *Representations*, no. 49 (winter 1995): 74–75, 90–91, n. 15.

43. Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, 4. On “living within the truth,” see Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” in John Keane, ed., *The Power of the Powerless* (London, 1985), 23–96.

44. Bradley F. Abrams, “Morality, Wisdom and Revision: The Czech Opposition in the 1970s and the Expulsion of the Sudeten Germans,” *East European Politics and Societies* 9, no. 2 (spring 1995): pp. 234–55. While the discussion of the expulsions was key to the dissident memory campaign, it was by no means the only “black hole” in Czechoslovak history they sought to bring to light. From 1978 to 1989 the dissident historians published 26 volumes of a *samizdat* journal—*Historické studie* (Historical Studies)—in which they researched many issues considered taboo by the party: the influence of the Catholic Church on Czech national consciousness; religious history more generally; Masaryk’s social philosophy; Czech collaboration with the Nazis; Czech anti-Semitism. See Jan Křen, “Czech Historiography at a Turning Point,” *East European Politics and*

Societies 6, no. 2 (spring 1992): 152–69; H. Gordon Skilling, “Czech and Slovak Independent Historical Writing, 1982–1984,” *Kosmas* 5, no. 1 (summer 1986), 157–61; idem, “Czech and Slovak Independent Historical Writing, 1985–1987,” *Kosmas* 7, nos. 1–2 (summer/winter 1988): 213–18; Šimečka, “Black Holes.”

45. Historian Ján Mlynárik, quoted in Abrams, “Morality, Wisdom and Revision,” 251.

46. On “living within a lie,” see Havel, “The Power of the Powerless.”

47. Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 183–97.

48. The concept of dissimulation was brilliantly elaborated by Oleg Kharkhordin, “The Soviet Individual: Genealogy of a Dissimulating Animal,” in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson, eds., *Global Modernities* (London, 1995), 209–26. But the canonical analysis was provided by Havel’s famous “greengrocer” fable. The greengrocer hangs a sign in his shop window: “workers of the world unite!” He doesn’t really believe in what the sign says, but simply uses it to signal that he is a good citizen. In this way, however, he forfeits responsibility for the truth of his public words and deeds. See Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” 31. This analysis was then repeated in many of his other pamphlets and in various variations by many of his dissident colleagues. See Václav Havel, “Politics and Conscience,” in Ján Vladislav, ed., *Václav Havel or Living in Truth* (London, 1986), 136–57; Petr Fidelius (pseudonym for Karel Palek), “The Mirror of Communist Discourse,” in Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, ed., *Good-Bye, Samizdat: Twenty Years of Czechoslovak Underground Writing* (Evanston, IL, 1992), 193–204; Miroslav Kusý, “Chartism and Real Socialism,” in Keane, ed., *The Power of the Powerless*, 152–77; Watson, “Introduction,” 15–16.

49. “The representatives of this movement consider it vital to prevent a situation emerging in which citizens, out of fear of the future, would attempt to bring back some aspects of the old regime.” Jiří Dientsbier and Pavel Rychetský, leaders of the Civic Movement, quoted in *Lidové Noviny*, 2 March 1991.

50. Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*, xviii.

51. Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 5–6, 113–27.

52. Borneman, *Settling Accounts*, 6–8, 23–25; Vojtěch Cepl, “The Transformation of Hearts and Minds in Eastern Europe,” *Cato Journal* 17, no. 2 (fall 1997): 229–34; Václav Benda, “These are not Normal Times: Interview with Václav Benda,” *East European Reporter* 5, no. 2 (Feb. 1992): 42–43.

53. I put “conservative” in quotation marks, because in the volatile political situation after the fall of communism, the division between “conservatives” and “liberals” was up for grabs, and in many respects was determined in the course of the struggle over memory. For more about this dynamic, see Eyal, *The Origins of Postcommunist Elites*, 154–60.

54. Václav Klaus, quoted in *Respekt*, no. 13 (1–12 June 1990). On lustration,

see John P. Moran, "The Communist Torturers of Eastern Europe: Prosecute and Punish or Forgive and Forget?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 27, no. 1 (March 1994): 95–109; and Carol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation versus State* (Boulder, CO, 1997), 87.

55. Jiřina Šiklova, "Lustration, or the Czech Way of Screening," *East European Constitutional Review* 5, no. 1 (winter 1996): 57–62. The term "lustration" was adopted from the Latin. It referred to the Roman ritual, performed by the censors, of bringing sacrifice every 5 years to appease the Gods. Lumir Klimeš, *Slovník cizích slov* (Dictionary of foreign words) (Prague, 1992).

56. Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*, 34–35, 39–42, 71–72, 92–96; Ben Webb, "The Prague Spring Takes a Fall," *New Statesman*, 27 Aug. 1993, 18–20.

57. Interview with Zdeněk Kessler in Martin Komárek, *GEN—100 Čechů dneška* (GEN—100 Czech days) (Prague, 1994–1995); Pavel Dostal, "Are they Color-Blind?" *East European Reporter* 5, no. 2 (Feb. 1992): 43; Ján Kavan, "Imperfect and Wrong," *ibid.*, 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1992), 61; Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*, 367–73. Or see, for example, the debate caused by the publication in Poland of Jan Gross's book about the pogrom in Jedwabne, and Adam Michnik's call for individual Poles to assume responsibility, not for the event, but for its memory: Adam Michnik, "Poles and the Jews: How Deep the Guilt?" *New York Times*, 17 March 2001, A15–A16.

58. Jiřina Šiklova, "Dilemmas of Transition: A View from Prague," *Peace Review* 4, no. 4 (winter 1992): 24–28.

59. Tamar Lewin, "For Nations Traumatized by the Past, New Remedies," *New York Times*, 29 July 2001, 4.

60. Steven M. Weine, "Much Too Much History to Bear: Is Memory Possible or Helpful in the Aftermath of Ethnic Cleansing?" *Transitions-on-Line*, <http://archive.tol.cz/transitions/muchtoo1.html> (last accessed 17 Feb. 2004).

61. On *Memorial*, see John Varoli, "Russia Prefers to Forget," *Transitions-on-Line*, <http://archive.tol.cz/transitions/rusprefl.html> (last accessed 17 Feb. 2004).

62. Ilan Pappé, "Parashat Katz ve-Tantura: Historiyah, historiografiyah, mishpat ve-akademiya" (The Katz and Tantura affair: History, historiography, law and the academy), *Teoriyah u-Vikoret*, no. 20 (spring 2002): 191–217.

63. Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land*, 117–18.

64. Quoted in Varoli, "Russia Prefers to Forget."

65. Michnik, "Poles and the Jews," A16.

66. Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Cambridge, 1987).